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## THE CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

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### MILLER ENDOWMENT ESTABLISHED

The Center for Holocaust Studies is delighted to announce the establishment of a new endowment by Leonard (UVM '51) and Carolyn Miller. For several years the Millers have been generous supporters of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont, making possible both the Miller Symposium on German Medicine and Ethics under National Socialism, held in April 2000, and an upcoming symposium on business and industry in the Third Reich, scheduled for April 2002. Leonard Miller, who is also active on the Holocaust Studies Advisory Board, received a B.S. in Business Administration from UVM. He and Carolyn are successful entrepreneurs who have engaged in educational pursuits throughout their lives.

The Miller Endowment has been established in honor of Leonard's 50<sup>th</sup> reunion at the University of Vermont. It will sustain and enhance the Center for Holocaust Studies and thus further the University of Vermont's mission to create an engaged and service-oriented academic community. The Miller Endowment will provide annual financial resources to sustain the programming, services, and curriculum of the Center for Holocaust Studies.



*Leonard and Carolyn Miller*

## EVERYONE KNOWS...?

David Scrase  
University of Vermont

Everyone knows what happened: a distinct minority, differing ethnically and in religion, was targeted by an overwhelming majority that sought a scapegoat to blame for their current misfortune. The successes of members of the minority, especially in business, science and the professions, were matched by their achievements in the arts. Indeed their culture was a long-established and vital one, which, together with their distinct language and religion, served as a link with the widely dispersed population of the diaspora. This persecution was not new; the minority had suffered periodic pogroms for hundreds of years.

This time around the minority suffered humiliation, deprivation, and periodic outbreaks of violence leading ever more frequently to death. No one was spared, neither the aged and infirm, nor the prominent and the wealthy, nor the women and children. The nations of the world, embroiled in a world war, did nothing—despite clear and proven knowledge of what was happening. Clearly delineated steps led to the massive genocide that was the official policy of the new dictatorial regime. The persecuted were not the only ones singled out for such treatment. Other minorities were attacked with the same venomous hatred and the same murderous intent. The shootings that were initially the method of killing gave way to other, less expensive, methods such as starvation and death marches. There were camps, in which they were concentrated prior to the death marches that killed hundreds of thousands. The stages noted by Raul Hilberg in his *Destitution of the European Jews* allow us to see the chaotic process of genocide with some degree of clarity and order: definition, expropriation, concentration, deportation, and annihilation. Since this, the first genocide in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we have seen similar genocides—in Cambodia, Rwanda, and Bosnia, for example. The massive genocide I have been alluding to is, of course, the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

The similarities shared by the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust are striking and legion—the above-mentioned are only some of them. But there are also some clear, significant, and intriguing differences.

The Armenians have been a force in Middle Eastern history for a good three thousand years. Waxing and waning in the power they wielded over the centuries and in the position they held in the confused, confusing, and ever-changing mix of ethnic, religious, political, and cultural situations of the area, the Armenians were long used to intimidation, discrimination, and victimization, usually at the hands of the Turkish peoples. In the Middle Ages especially they suffered greatly and were forced from one part of Asia Minor to another—and even farther afield—until the establishment and consolidation of the Ottoman Empire gradually led to stability. As a Christian minority in the midst of diverse Moslem groups they were continually singled out for discrimination.

In modern times pogroms became more frequent and ever greater in scope and bloodier in form. Under the reign of Sultan

Abdul Hamid (1876-1909), planned massacres accounted for some three thousand dead—out of about two and a half million Armenians in the empire. They were convenient scapegoats for the economic and political decline of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century. The demise of Sultan Hamid and the reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution by the new government of revolutionary Young Turks [this is where our English expression comes from] seemed, at first, to promise better times for the Armenians. It was not to be. In April 1915, leading Armenian men were summarily arrested, deported to the provinces, and shot. The remaining Armenian population, the aged, the women and children were then told they would be 're-located,' ostensibly to join their menfolk. And join them, they did: in death. Great columns were marched towards the Syrian and Mesopotamian desert. Deprived of food and water, savagely treated by the police accompanying them and by the Turkish and Kurdish populations of the provinces they traversed, well over a million, perhaps as many as a million and a half, perished miserably (in 1914, there were just over two million Armenians in Turkey). In this way the rump Ottoman Empire, in effect Turkey, became 'cleansed' of Armenians. In the process Turkey enriched itself vastly at the expense of the expropriated victims—even asking the U.S. government to send over the life insurance policies carried by Armenians with American firms, since they and their beneficiaries were now, as they openly stated, all dead.

The killings, their extent, and magnitude were well known throughout Europe and America. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau and other U.S. diplomats in Turkey kept their government well informed. The *New York Times* carried extensive reports of the atrocities, the killings, the death marches, and the numbers of dead. The Germans, allies of the Turks in World War I, also kept careful records and expressed grave misgivings at the behavior of their ally. At the end of the war, which also marked the end of the Ottoman Empire, the new Turkish government saw itself compelled to arrange military tribunals to try the leading perpetrators for war crimes. The main perpetrators were, however, no longer in Turkey and were therefore tried *in absentia*. By concentrating on the Young Turk leadership, whom they found guilty, the authorities in effect exonerated the nation. The Turkish government to this day has never accepted responsibility, indemnified victim families, or sought out the many killers. Indeed, it has systematically denied genocide (as later defined by the United Nations) and sought to explain the deaths away as the result of a regrettable but necessary fight against the 'traitors' within its midst in time of war. The Armenians were said to have collaborated with the Russians, for example.

In this denial and refusal to take responsibility the various Turkish governments have been aided by, in particular, western governments. When, in 1935, Hollywood wanted to produce a film based on Franz Werfel's *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (the hugely successful novel, on the most famous Armenian revolt against the Turks), the Turkish government threatened to ban all Hollywood films in Turkey if the film were made. The U.S. State Department brought pressure to bear on Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and no film materialized. Small wonder that Hitler is reported to have said in August 1939, just before the outbreak of war, 'Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?'

Some progress has been made in bringing the Armenian genocide to the world's attention, and in bringing Turkey to acknowledge it: in 1984 the Permanent People's Tribunal on the

Armenian Genocide, brought together by minority rights groups in London, the U.S.A., and Germany, found Turkey guilty of genocide. They called upon the United Nations to recognize the Armenian Genocide. In 1987 the European Parliament issued a resolution calling on Turkey to recognize its past guilt in the Armenian Genocide and made such recognition a pre-condition for admittance to the European Union. On the other hand, because of the perceived, strategically crucial position in NATO held by Turkey, the U.S. Senate as recently as 1989 defeated by twelve votes Senator Bob Dole's bill proposing commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

The various encyclopedias and lexicons in the English language, with the exception of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the *Encyclopaedia of Genocide* (reviewed in the *Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 1), are singularly reticent on the Armenian Genocide. If addressed, it is often not called a genocide, and is sometimes played down and shown simply as a drastic reaction, in time of war, to a danger to the Turks within their own borders. In some cases it is simply ignored.

There are deniers not only in Turkey, but even in the United States, moreover within the hallowed walls of academe. Princeton University has harbored two prominent deniers, Professor Bernard Lewis and Professor Heath Lowry, and accepted Turkish funding for the 'Ataturk Chair in Turkish Studies.' Lewis was brought to court in France and was found guilty of civil charges brought against him for 'denying the reality of the Armenian Genocide.' Armenian Genocide deniers have also been attacked in the United States. Here prominent scholars such as Robert Jay Lifton, Eric Markusen, and Roger Smith have written on the subject, and a petition opposing Turkish denial was signed by over 150 scholars and writers (including Raul Hilberg) and printed in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Studies have been made comparing the Armenian Genocide with the Holocaust, but it is clear that Turkey's sustained denial of its crime has largely been successful. In comparison the Holocaust, despite the attempts of deniers, remains generally accepted as historical fact throughout most of the world. The literature documenting it is overwhelming, and the mass of survivor accounts so persuasive that few thinking people can dispute its existence. The Holocaust is generally accepted as *the* catalytic genocide. To think of it as the *first*, however, is wrong. The Armenian Genocide preceded it by a quarter of a century. Recognition of this does nothing to diminish the importance of the Holocaust. It helps us to understand the phenomenon better, even as further genocides continue to erupt throughout the world with terrifying frequency.

I have relied heavily in compiling this account on the above-mentioned *Encyclopaedia of Genocide*, edited by Israel W. Charney. This work contains informative articles, as well as extracts from works by scholars such as Marjorie Houspanian, Robert Melson, Valiakh N. Dadrian, and Rouben Paul Adalian, and a bibliography. I also greatly benefited from two works written by third generation Armenian survivors, namely 1) Peter Balakian, *Black Dog of Fate. A Memoir* (New York: Broadway Books, 1998), and 2) Nancy Kricorian, *Zabelle. A Novel* (New York: Avon Books, 1999). In the former, Peter Balakian describes growing up in a close Armenian family in New Jersey without ever hearing more than an allusion to the genocide, which his grandmother survived. His book is an effective mix of three differing strands:

a memoir of an American childhood and adolescence, with all the typical trials and mistakes; another memoir of an Armenian upbringing; and a brief history and documentation of the genocide and its denial by the Turks. Nancy Kricorian uses the death of her survivor grandmother to delve into the past and describe her, Zabelle's, history: surviving against all the odds, getting to America through an arranged marriage, and a new life in which the genocide is never discussed and seldom mentioned. It, too, is an effective book. *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, the 1935 novel by the Austrian writer Franz Werfel, widely read in its time, describes a famous act of resistance while foreshadowing, in an uncanny way, the Jewish Holocaust soon to take place. Not least among the differences between the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust is the dearth of survivor accounts. Does this contribute to the forgetting, or denial, of the Armenian Genocide?

## CLAIMS ON SWISS BANKS

The Swiss Bankers Association has published the list of dormant accounts. A six-month deadline to file claims began on 5 February, and ends on 5 July 2001. The list of dormant accounts and information on how to file claims can be found under [www.dormantaccounts.ch](http://www.dormantaccounts.ch). (Information received from the AHO Listserv.)

## SEPHARDIC MUSIC AT UVM

Friday, 9 March 2001. La Nef, a Quebec-based group specializing in medieval and Sephardic Music will perform at UVM. This Lane Series Concert will be held at the UVM Recital Hall at 7:30 p.m. The event is co-sponsored by the Center for Holocaust Studies. For ticket information contact the Lane Series at (802) 656-4455.

## A QUIET SPRING FOR UVM CHS

Professor David Scrase, Director of the Center for Holocaust Studies at The University of Vermont, is on sabbatical for this academic year, although he continues to edit the *Bulletin*. In his stead we are pleased to have Arthur S. Kunitz, M.D., Professor Emeritus of the College of Medicine, serving as Acting Director. Kunitz is not new to the position, having served in a similar capacity two years ago.

Holocaust history professor Jonathan Hthener is on teaching leave this semester, while he prepares a book manuscript for publication. "German Deeds, Polish Soil, Jewish Shlosh: Auschwitz and the Politics of Commemoration" is scheduled to appear in 2002.

Due to the absence from the classroom of these two instructors, we do not expect to host any public events this spring. Instead we will be working on various publishing projects, and planning for the summer lectures.

## REPORTS

### EMBACHER EXPLORES AUSTRIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS IN THE POST-SHOAH ERA

*Katherine Quimby Johnson*

The fall of 2000 was a busy semester for the Center for Holocaust Studies at UVM, with no fewer than three lectures in October. The first of these, "Fractured Identities: Jews and Austrians after the Shoah" was delivered by Professor Helga Embacher of the Department of History, at the University of Salzburg. Embacher's lecture expanded on material she has already addressed in this publication (Volume 4, Nos. 1 and 2). "Fractured Identities" gave the receptive audience a solid overview of relations between Austria, the Jews, and Israel from the immediate post-war era through the Waldheim affair of the 1980s and the Freedom Party's rise to power in the 1990s, closing with the election of Jörg Haider as Prime Minister in February 2000.

The roots of the problematic relationship between Jews and Austrians in the post-war era can be traced back to the Moscow Declaration, which proclaimed Austria the first victim of Nazi Germany (the source of the so-called "Victim Thesis"). Austria used this declaration to exclude itself from complicity in any of the crimes of Nazi Germany, ignoring the fact that a majority of Austrians welcomed their country's annexation by the Germans, and that many Austrians participated in the perpetration of the Shoah. Politicians not only inflated the role of the Austrian resistance, but also drew parallels between Austrian sufferings during the war and Jewish suffering in the Holocaust.

The small number of Jews who returned to post-war Austria could do little to counter the official illusion. Of the 6,000 returnees, most expressed a belief in the Victim Thesis, in part because they, too, wanted to share this belief, and in part because they were afraid to criticize Austria, fearing a new wave of anti-Semitism if they did.

The relatively warm relationship that existed in the post-war period between the new state of Israel and Austria also reinforced the Victim Thesis. Israel neither demanded reparations from Austria, nor imposed restrictions on travel to Austria, nor forbade the import of goods from Austria, in contrast to its policy toward Germany. Diplomatic and trade recognition were in part due to Austria's importance as a neutral country during the Cold War; in addition, Austria's small size and less robust economy made it a less likely source of reparations. Embacher did note that the Israeli press, however, was frequently at odds with the official attitude, drawing attention to Austria's intimate involvement with Nazi Germany.

The Waldheim affair in the 1980s resulted in the first crack in the facade provided by the Victim Thesis. Waldheim, who had been Secretary General of the U.N., was campaigning for the post of Austrian Prime Minister in 1986 when the World Jewish Congress accused him of concealing his past. Evidence had been found revealing a closer involvement in Nazi war crimes

than Waldheim had previously acknowledged. The vehement reaction of the anti-Semitic right in Austria revealed the illusory nature of the Victim Thesis.

Not until Chancellor Franz Vranitzky's 1993 speech to the Israeli national assembly did Austria admit complicity in the events of the Nazi era and not until 1995 was a reparations fund established. By this time the Jewish Community in Austria had developed into a moral authority. As Embacher noted, this itself was not an unproblematic development, because it made possible the instrumentalization of Jews in defense of Austria. For example, Austrian politicians distinguish between Jews who are willing to show Austrians forgiveness and those who are not.

Embacher closed her lecture by describing the current situation. Following the election of Jörg Haider and his Freedom Party in February 2000, Israel broke off diplomatic relations with Austria. The country has portrayed itself again as victim of the world's misperception. Haider himself has a rather diffuse relationship to Jews, both claiming friendships with individual Jews and attempting to use those same friendships for political gain. He has also attempted to link reparations payments to Jews with those to Austrian POWs and Sudeten Germans. The Freedom Party is not specifically anti-Semitic, but is hostile to foreigners and the language used by Haider and his associates shows how thoroughly they have been incultured with Nazi ideology. After fifty-five years, it would seem that what little has changed in the relationship between Austria and the Jews has not necessarily changed for the better.

### HILBERG LECTURES TO NEW YORK ALUMNI

On 15 November 2000, Raul Hilberg, Professor Emeritus of Political Science presented "The Holocaust: Who Knew What When" to an appreciative audience of 175 alumni, parents, and friends of UVM and the Center for Holocaust Studies. Dean Magliari (UVM '67) introduced the speaker. This enormously successful event was sponsored by the New York Regional Alumni Board and the Center for Holocaust Studies, and was hosted by Stephen Penwell (UVM '84) at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter.

### ANTONY POLONSKY ON POLISH SOCIETY AND THE HOLOCAUST

*Erica B. Browne*

On 18 October Professor Antony Polonsky, Albert Abramson Professor of Holocaust Studies at Brandeis University, delivered a lecture in John Dewey Lounge on Polish society during World War II. The author of numerous books and articles on Polish history and Polish-Jewish relations, Professor Polonsky based his lecture on his recent article "Beyond Condemnation, Apologies and Apologies: On the Complexities of Polish Behavior Toward the Jews During the Second World War" (*Studies in Contemporary Jewishry*, vol. 13, edited by Jonathan Frankel, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 190-224).

Ninety percent of Polish Jews lost their lives during the Holocaust, a grim statistic that prompted the central question addressed in the lecture: Why did so few Polish Jews survive and how do we characterize the reaction of the Polish nation? Due to the high number of victims of Nazism who were Polish citizens, explaining the behavior of Polish society is an important theme in Holocaust research. Professor Polonsky provided the audience with some historical background on relations between Poles and Jews, and then went on to explain the Nazi occupation regime's effect upon relations between the two groups. He approached this issue first by describing the nature of the genocide, then explaining the extreme brutality of Nazi rule in Poland, and finally discussing the behavior of non-Jewish Poles during the Holocaust.

The chronology of genocide in occupied Poland, from the work of mobile killing units to the establishment of extermination centers, raises many moral and ethical issues in the Polish context. Before condemning Polish society for its action of inaction, Professor Polonsky noted, the role and character of the Nazi occupation regime must be examined. Polonsky also discussed the "widening gap between Poles and Jews" that was made more extreme during the first two years of Nazi occupation. Anti-Jewish propaganda was prevalent; Jews were often associated with parasites and diseases like typhus. Poles were also encouraged by the Nazis to participate in anti-Jewish violence. All of this in combination caused further deterioration of Polish-Jewish relations.

In explaining Polish behavior during the Holocaust, Professor Polonsky tried to describe what happened rather than to assign responsibility to a specific group. Because ties between Poles and Jews were broken, Jews moved further outside of the ordinary Pole's "universe of obligation." Although the majority of Poles did not help alleviate the tragic situation that the Jews faced during World War II, Professor Polonsky reminded the audience that many did help, such as members of Żegota, a resistance organization devoted to aiding Jews in a variety of ways. The acts of Żegota and others were significant, and should not be overlooked.

The following day, our history seminar "The Holocaust in Poland" had the privilege of meeting with Professor Polonsky. We then had the opportunity to discuss the previous day's lec-

ture and pose questions relating to our areas of interest and current research projects. Discussion in the seminar covered a variety of topics, including the controversial film *Sztybel*, the work of historian Christopher Browning, and the debate surrounding the work of Daniel Goldhagen. Professor Polonsky is a fascinating individual, and our class was fortunate to have three hours to speak freely with such a respected scholar.



### OMER BARTOV PRESENTS NINTH HILBERG LECTURE *Katherine Quimby Johnson*

On Tuesday, 24 October 2000, Omer Bartov, John P. Birkeland Distinguished Professor of European History at Brown University, presented the 9<sup>th</sup> Hilberg Lecture to a large and appreciative audience in Carpenter Memorial Auditorium. "The Holocaust: From Event and Experience to Memory and Representation" was more theoretical than many recent Hilberg lectures, focusing on approaches to the Holocaust rather than the event itself. Bartov's central argument may be summarized as follows: historians of the Holocaust tend to fall into the same categories as those directly involved in the catastrophe itself—that is to say, there are historians of the perpetrators, historians of the victims, and, to a far lesser degree, the bystanders.

Many historians, especially those in Germany, have been interested in the perpetrators and have concentrated on the objective, factual records kept by the bureaucracy that implemented the Final Solution. Yet, for those studying the Holocaust from the victim's point of view, the bureaucratic record appears secondary to the reality of the victim's experience. Further, when one considers who is writing the history, one comes to realize that the way an event is experienced, subjectively, has some bearing on the way the event is reconstructed from a historical perspective.

The varieties of approaches taken toward the study of history in the post-Holocaust era bear this out. In reaction to the denigration of the Nazi era, many post-war scholars insisted on a scientific approach to history, studying long-term processes and broad trends. However, this adherence to objectivity meant that subjective experience of life in the Third Reich, whether as a supporter of the regime or as one of its targets, was missing from

(Continued on the following page)



cost you your life," in Klemperer's text. "To pay with one's life" (*Mit dem Leben bezahlendes Leben kosten*), illustrates the literal death threat contained in the conflation of word and deed (98).

Colloquial sayings were more to the point in capturing unfolding events, in conveying the situation at hand, as well as revealing the emotions of the author. They characterize and crystallize the anger, fear, weariness, and despair that Klemperer shared with many other Jews who were persecuted under National Socialist rule. Clichés such as "to keep my nerves" (*die Nerven behalten*), "to get on my nerves" (*auf die Nerven gehen/fallen*), or "to lose one's nerves" (*die Nerven verlieren*) had to be taken literally and came to be an effective way to express the concrete fear of death (81) as well as to reflect the psychological effects on the individuals. Within this context, he uses a German word, *Judenängst* (Jew fright), that captured the Jews' fear for their lives during the year of Nazi terror (10).

For Klemperer, the ever-deepening grim situation for the Jews led him to document events as a strategy of survival (28). We might even say, "As long as he wrote, he lived," as a variation of the Latin proverb *diu spero, spero*, "Where there's life, there's hope." In the end, what Klemperer witnessed and experienced gave truth to the changed proverb, "In lingua veritas." Mieder notes how Klemperer recorded the mixed signals of both the phrases of pervasive anti-Semitism as well as occasional voices of humanism (55). If some neighbors told him to disappear, others welcomed him into his building's air raid shelter. In a play on the proverb *vox populi, vox dei* (the voice of the people is the voice of God), Klemperer insisted it was not as simple as asserting that the voice of the people was actually one common voice; the ambivalent expressions he heard were multiple expressions, i.e., people's voices were *voes populi* (69, 73). In short, while surrounded by a hellish Nazi inferno of nationalism and hate, there were still those who expressed their individual humanity.

Mieder chose to head the chapters of his book with twelve commonly known phrases or proverbs, some altered by Klemperer to reflect the precarious reality of the Nazi period. These function as mottoes, which Mieder discusses as each occurs in Klemperer's texts. The academician's profound knowledge of German proverbs enables him to recognize and find them no matter how obscure or disguised they may be. For example, in Klemperer's diary title *Will Bear Witness—And Exact Witness* (*Ich will Zeugnis ablegen, und exakt Zeugnis*, 8) Mieder identifies its origins in the eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." From this it is clear that Klemperer was also thinking litigiously about the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, as he wrings a bitter irony from the biblical saying. Mieder states that the reference pertains to Klemperer and all Jews as victims of false witness, i.e., the calamities of the Nazi regime.

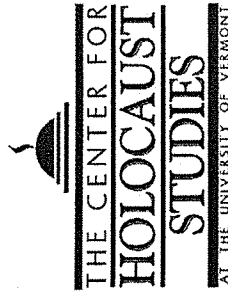
In the book's unusual appendix, Mieder lists chronologically fifty-one entries from Klemperer's diary. They all contain proverbs or proverbial expressions which, as Mieder explains, present in a nutshell a single life history within the larger picture of Germany's history under the National Socialists. These entries mirror facts and moods expressed in Klemperer's autobiographical writings, writings that are in fact cultural and linguistic-historical documents. I will cite one such example: "27 January, 1945: the sense of the impending catastrophe is getting stron-

ger; for us wearers of the Star, nine tenths happy (because this will be over soon), yet one tenth fearful, even in fear one says, 'I'd rather have a frightful end (than no end at all)'. This diary entry also shows, if not Klemperer's acceptance, then his usage without distancing quotation marks, of the Third Reich term *Sternträger*, which denoted the visible stigmatization of Jews and which he called the "yellow rag with the black imprint." *Jahre*.

Mieder, as always, writes with ample explanatory notes and furnishes an extensive bibliography of both proverbs and Nazi German language. He further illustrates how Klemperer's personal experience and suffering were reflected in his and the country's language. Klemperer saw, contrary to the National Socialists, that the true German national affinity was in language rather than blood (i.e., race, 26); this in spite of the fact that the Nazis excluded him from their community (*Volksgermanischer Tag*) on the basis of race.

Mieder's slim volume on Victor Klemperer, which he dedicates to Raul Hilberg, underscores the importance of language in general and its significance to a nation's proverbial heritage in particular. The reader understands how both the use and misuse of a vernacular can be an historically significant signpost for those who look into the past. Mieder's empathy, together with his years of study and his documentation, characterizes his research and his teachings about the German language. This book on Victor Klemperer is meaningful for its discussion of an additional significant aspect of the Nazi period that is often undervalued or not considered, namely the importance of language and proverbial speech as an instrument of coercion and indoctrination as well as echoing the voice of the oppressed.

Karin Daerr  
Concordia University



Michael J. Neufeld and Michael Berenbaum. *The Bombing of Auschwitz: Should the Allies Have Attempted It?* New York: St. Martin's Press/U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2000. 352 pages. Hardcover, \$29.95. ISBN: 0-312-19838-8.

In the more than fifty years that have passed since the end of World War II, numerous debates have developed over the many complex issues surrounding the Nazi "Final Solution." Michael J. Neufeld and Michael Berenbaum's recent publication, *The Bombing of Auschwitz*, represents the first attempt to bring historians together over the controversial issue of the Allies' failure to aid the Jews of Europe during World War II by compiling articles from the most prominent historians involved in the controversy. The book is based on a symposium held on 30 April 1993, at the Smithsonian Institution, and Neufeld and Berenbaum have assembled an impressive sampling of the central arguments involved in the debate over Allied culpability. Reputable scholars, including Martin Gilbert, Henry Feingold, Walter Laqueur, and Gerhard Weinberg (to name just a few), provide an eclectic and interesting range of perspectives on Allied culpability. To date, the controversy has remained disorganized and contentious, with historians presenting conflicting facts and analysis and openly contentious views. It is apparent that one of the unspoken goals of Neufeld and Berenbaum's work is to provide a forum to resolve some of this conflict and provide a path for future synthesis.

As David Wyman was able to illustrate in the 1970s, it is impossible to claim that Auschwitz-Birkenau could not have been bombed. The controversy that has ensued over the past twenty years has focused on how many lives, if any, could have been saved by such an operation and what operational capabilities were needed to do so. *The Bombing of Auschwitz* provides the reader with a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses involved with both the controversy over Allied culpability and the counter-factual history in which the debate is involved. What is clearly evident from the collection assembled by Neufeld and Berenbaum is that two distinct groups have developed in recent years. The first, led by Wyman, is focused on condemning the Allies for failing to aid the Jews in the face of a clear moral imperative (regardless of any likelihood of success). Although Wyman himself chose not to be included in this collection, his work is well covered by the other participants and by Michael Neufeld's detailed and thorough accounting of Wyman's work. Historians opposed to the moralistic condemnation of Allied inaction cite the lack of technical ability, the unlikelihood of success, and the historical context to cast considerable doubt on Wyman's thesis. Over the past twenty years these two camps have become ever more entrenched in defense of their views. However, Neufeld and Berenbaum point out that in recent years several historians, including Gerhard Weinberg, have come to the conclusion that, while it is likely that little, if anything, could have been done to save the Jews, an air raid would have been a symbol of the Allies' condemnation of the Nazi's "Final Solution." *The Bombing of Auschwitz* represents an attempt to bring both camps toward this new middle ground of understanding the Allies' inability to accomplish much in the way of aiding the Jews, while also remaining critical of Allied inaction.

What the authors fail to address is the significance of the period in which the debate is set. It is easy for contemporary historians to look back fifty years and use the emotional fervor

of what is often viewed as history's most horrific event to implicate the Allies. The use of contentious vocabulary such as "culpability," "complacency," and "guilt," is distracting. It is important for historians to remove themselves from the emotion of the event and remember the problems of "if" history. Can we expect the Allies to have grasped the significance of the Holocaust for the future? Can we expect the Allies, in the midst of a war of survival, to have diverted resources for little or no appreciable gain? What role, if any, did the democratic nature of the United States and Great Britain play in the politics of such an attack? Did the political implications involved in such an attack hold any significance for the stability of the Allied alliance? Lastly, what about the multi-national composition of Auschwitz? Historians of the controversy speak only to the Jewish population; however, it must be remembered that any attack on Auschwitz would have involved Soviet POWs, British airmen, Polish prisoners, and German citizens, to name just a few. The answers to such questions are unclear and will remain so because of the nature of "if" history. As unsettling as these questions seem in the face of what many historians perceive as a clear "moral imperative" they are questions that must be asked in an attempt to keep historians honest. The absence of such questions (and others) rests not entirely on Neufeld and Berenbaum, but rather, on the historians who will continue with this controversy in the coming years. All the same, some historians might find the absence of such discussion from Neufeld and Berenbaum's work a little frustrating, if not shortsighted.

Neufeld and Berenbaum have done historians a service in bringing together this collection of essays. This work not only provides a standard for future progress in the research and publication of work on the surrounding controversy, but also provides amateur historians with an in-depth and well-assembled overview of the strengths and weaknesses of both sides of the debate. Counter-factual histories such as the controversy over the failure of the Allies to bomb Auschwitz pose many significant problems not only to the writing of objective histories, but also to the just presentation of such histories to the public. Neufeld and Berenbaum succeed in not only presenting prominent works involved in the controversy, but also in providing an objective analysis of some problematic issues involved in the debate. In providing an assembled volume of work on the failure of the Allies to bomb Auschwitz, Berenbaum and Neufeld have taken the first step toward finding some form of historical middle ground. As with many historical debates, finding an acceptable middle ground is an arduous and time-consuming process of documentation, debate, and revision. In the end, most readers will find *The Bombing of Auschwitz* an informative and well-assembled work on one of the more contentious debates surrounding the Holocaust. However, scholars looking for a significant contribution to the field will likely find the work incomplete, due to the failure of Neufeld and Berenbaum to challenge the scholarship and address the significant shortcomings of the debate.

Edward O'Connor

Jews proved themselves worthy of becoming productive citizens through a process of acculturation. Such a viewpoint, Robertson observes, not only made emancipation contingent on "good behavior," but also continued to draw attention to Jews and their supposedly distinctive qualities long after full civil emancipation in Austrian and German territories had taken place in 1867 and 1871. Finally, Moses Mendelssohn—the greatest representative of the Jewish Enlightenment, at whose request Dohm wrote his treatise—de-emphasized Judaism as a revealed religion, with concomitant stress on its rational morality. In so doing, Mendelssohn left unanswered the question as to why Jews, if they were not the Chosen People, should not turn to some similar system of belief, such as Christian deism or Kantian idealism, particularly if there were societal advantages to be gained in renouncing their religious heritage. Indeed, of Mendelssohn's six children, four of them converted to Protestantism or Catholicism, as did many other members of the cultured Jewish middle class in the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

During that time, many of those who retained their cultural identities as Jews also identified themselves with liberalism, the political movement that had grown out of Enlightenment ideals. Robertson gives Heinrich Heine, Arthur Schnitzler, Stefan Zweig, and Sigmund Freud as the most prominent literary representatives not only of the eras of Liberalism, but also of its apogee, Enlightenment faith in the progress of reason, for example, suffered severe blows when modern anti-Semitism emerged as a movement that claimed science in support of its depictions of Jews as a parasitic race depleting the vitality of the German body politic.

In his chapter on anti-Semitism, Robertson points out its uncanny ability to change shape whenever one variety became untenable. Richard Wagner's notorious essay on "Das Judentum in der Musik" ("Judaism in Music," 1850), which became a treasure trove of anti-Semitic images for the next hundred years, advances a linguistic variant, in that it claims that Jews speak European languages only as foreigners: cut off from the vital energies of the "Volk," they can only mimic the creative impulses of others. Wagner put such theories onto the stage in the character of Mime in Act 2 of *Siegfried*, whose "hidden language" of murderous greed Wagner's hero learns to decipher with fatal consequences for Mime (p. 162). Robertson points out the frustrating character of this shape-shifting anti-Semitism for assimilationist Jews: "While the Enlightenment had complained of their rigid adherence to traditional beliefs, their opponents now denounced their willingness to adopt Western values" (p. 195).

While many German and Austrian Jews, along with their philo-Semitic supporters, formed groups such as the *Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus* (Society for Defense against Anti-Semitism, 1891), under such circumstances it was not surprising that others internalized anti-Semitic images of Jews in the way described by the writer Theodor Lessing in his book *Der jüdische Selbsthaß* (Jewish Self-Hatred, 1930). Others responded by attempting to become "more German than the Germans." Robertson calls this phenomenon "hyperculturation," giving as real-life examples Jewish Wagnerians such as the conductor Hermann Levi and the right-wing Jewish groups who petitioned Hitler for incorporation into the new social order. Last we too quickly shake our heads incredulously at such extremes, Robertson recommends the reading of Friedrich Wolf's exile

drama *Professor Atanlock* (1934), whose title figure exemplifies the mistreatment and disillusionment of patriotic German Jews who identified with their country, only to find themselves vilified by Nazis and left undefended by the majority of their neighbors and erstwhile co-workers—a scenario that corresponds all too closely to Victor Klemperer's diary entries between 1933 and 1945.

The final section of Robertson's study addresses the Jewish "disimilation" from German culture in the decades immediately before and after World War I: the "Jewish Renaissance" initiated by figures such as Baber and Scholem; the growing interest in forms of Jewish life and religiosity in Eastern Europe, including the depiction of Galician life in novels by Karl Emil Franzos and Joseph Roth; plays and poetry by writers such as Richard Beer-Hofmann and Else Lasker-Schiller that drew upon the image of the Jew as Oriental; Theodor Herzl's literary and imaginative talents employed in giving shape to his visions of Zionism; and Arnold Zweig's advocacy of, and growing disillusionment with, Zionism in his novels *Der Streit um den Sergeanten Grischa* (*The Dispute over Sergeant Grischa*, 1927) and *Die Freunde kehrt heim* (*The Friends goes home*, 1932). That this latter novel features an account of the 1929 violence between Arabs and Jews because of disputes over access to the Walling Wall (p. 499) suggests that its tale of dissemination not only between Arabs and Jews, but within the Jewish community—the title figure is an ultra-orthodox Dutch Jew who is murdered by a young Zionist from Poland—has more than mere historical interest.

Indeed, Robertson provides such a wealth of vignettes and concise treatments of literary figures and their works that this book review could turn into a listing of names and titles and still not exhaust its riches; readers interested in specific authors and their literary works will find Robertson's index (pp. 521-534) most helpful. His book is extensively researched, with over 340 footnotes and a "Select Bibliography" (pp. 505-520) of primary and secondary sources that receive mention more than once. Without a doubt, *The "Jewish Question" in German Literature, 1749-1939* deserves to become a standard work for historians, literary scholars, and the interested general public.

Dennis F. Mahoney  
University of Vermont



## THE CONTRIBUTORS

Erika B. Browne is a senior political science major at the University of Vermont.

Karin Doerr is Professor of German at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada.

Dennis Mahoney is Professor of German and Director of UVM's European Area Studies Program. His scholarship focuses on the literature of the Age of Goethe, German Romanticism, German intellectual movements, and German film.

Edward O'Connor is a graduate student in the Department of History at the University of Vermont.

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Editor: Professor David A. Scrase  
Associate Editor: Katherine Quimby Johnson

The Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont was established in 1993 to honor the scholarly and pedagogical legacy of Raul Hilberg, professor emeritus of 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.

Richie Robertson. *The "Jewish Question" in German Literature, 1749-1939: Emancipation and its Discontents*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. 534 pages. Hardcover. \$99.00. ISBN: 0-19-818631-2.

In the introduction to this stimulating, wide-ranging, well-written, and thoroughly researched investigation of German-Jewish literary relations from Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's philo-Semitic play *Die Juden* (*The Jews*, written in 1749) to the 1939 publication of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, Ritchie Robertson outlines previous methods of approach to this period. As late as March of 1939, shortly before leaving Nazi Germany, Martin Buber still spoke of a German-Jewish "symbiosis." Zionist writers such as Gershom Scholem, on the other hand, already regarded Jewish assimilation into German culture as a mistaken ideal, whose perceived successes had turned out to be delusions. More recently, scholars like Lucy Davidowitz, Paul Lawrence Rose, and Daniel J. Goldhagen have seen in German history a mounting frenzy of exclusionist anti-Semitism whose inevitable conclusion was the attempted destruction of European Jewry. Not only does Robertson disagree with this latter argumentation on the grounds of historical evidence; he also maintains such an interpretation of German history has the potential to turn German and Austrian Jews into tragic figures blind to their impending doom — in effect blaming them because they lacked the knowledge we possess in hindsight. His goal therefore becomes the following: "to go back to the period when the Holocaust was still unimaginable and understand the age of assimilation as contemporaries did" (p. 4).

To be sure, for all the wealth of historical information he provides on the particulars of Jewish life in German-speaking Europe from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries, Robertson is not striving for a old-time historicist depiction of "how it really was." Arguing that terms like "German" and "Jewish" are cultural constructs whose form and contents shift over time, he turns to literature—expository tracts as well as novels, short stories, poetry, plays, and autobiographies—for an analysis of the role it played in shaping such images. Hence, he organizes the five main sections of his study more thematically than chronologically, with a stress on how individual authors constructed models of German-Jewish interaction based on one of the following five paradigms: Enlightenment; liberalism; anti-Semitism; assimilation; and dissimulation. Nor does Robertson shy away from an evaluation of the consequences of these various attitudes and approaches to the question of Jewish Emancipation. This is a book intended not only to inform its reader, but also to challenge comfortable assumptions. On both levels, it succeeds brilliantly.

With respect to the German Enlightenment, for example, Robertson argues that its emphases on toleration, mercantilism, and rationality "in the long run assisted the dissolution of traditional Judaism without affording Jews more than qualified acceptance in German society" (p. 32). In Lessing's plays *Die Juden* and *Nathan der Weise* (*Nathan the Wise*, 1779) cultural diversity is not so much championed as it is bypassed, in that Jews are portrayed as figures of exceptional virtue, but also as devoid of characteristics or beliefs that would distinguish them from their Gentile counterparts. In similar fashion, the Prussian civil servant Christian Wilhelm von Dohm argued in 1781 for gradual Jewish emancipation into civil society, but only to the extent that

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**27 April 2001**  
Memorial Lounge  
Waterman Building  
4:00 p.m.

**The Twelfth Harry H. Kahn  
Memorial Lecture**  
"Separate Realities:  
Jewish and Gentile Representations  
of the Holocaust"

by  
Dagmar C.G. Lorenz,  
University of Illinois at Chicago

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