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SUMMER 1996

THIRD ANNUAL SUMMER SEMINAR ON THE HOLOCAUST

During the last week of June, twenty participants engaged in an intensive seminar that examined historical, pedagogical, and moral issues related to the Holocaust. Academic scholars from UVM, St. Michael's, Trinity, Dartmouth, and the United States Department of Justice Office of Special Investigations, as well as seven eye-witnesses to the realities of Nazi terror were among the presenters throughout this third annual five-day course. University undergraduates, graduate students, and elementary, middle, and high school teachers from across Vermont were provided comprehensive insight into the people and forces that helped shape events before, during, and after the Holocaust. Combined with an evening lecture series over four nights by Holocaust survivors and scholars, the course provided a solid historical foundation for those seeking to teach the Holocaust, or issues related to the effects of prejudice, discrimination, and intolerance of others, to students young and old.

The first day of the seminar addressed several historical fallacies related to the Holocaust. Frank Nicosia, Professor of History at St. Michael's, focused on the roots of antisemitism in Germany before the Nazi period. Detailing the larger scope of European antisemitism that was not restricted to Germany, Nicosia placed the hatred of the Jews in the context of biological racism that flowed beneath the surface of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thought rather than focusing on religious differences.

Doris Bergen took on the task of debunking thirteen common misconceptions about the Holocaust. Commenting on such topics as the theory that Hitler had "Jewish blood" to the perception that Jews were the only targets of mass murder, or that the German churches, Catholic and Protestant, spearheaded a powerful resistance against Nazism, Bergen detailed with precise examples the reality behind each falsehood.

The husband and wife team of Leo Spitzer and Marianne Hirsch from Dartmouth College explained the role of film in the interpretation and teaching of the

Holocaust. Speaking on issues of gender as well as historical accuracy, and artistic interpretation, Spitzer and Hirsch offered film clips and critiques that fostered discussion.

The second day of the seminar was devoted to Holocaust survivors providing eye-witness testimony to various stages of Nazi terror. Gabe Hartstein told how he and his closest family members were rescued from forced marches to transports bound for extermination centers by the Swede, Raoul Wallenberg, in Budapest, Hungary.

Author-in-residence, Aranka Siegal, shared vignettes of her life before, during, and after the Holocaust. As a teenager, the fabric of Siegal's world was ripped asunder by the reality of Auschwitz, death marches, and Bergen-Belsen.

Gabrielle Tyrnauer commented on the impact she experienced of having her father arrested by Adolf Eichmann in Vienna and then being suddenly thrust out of Austria to begin an uncertain life as a refugee in Italy, France, and finally, the United States.

Yehudi Lindeman, a professor of English at McGill and the director of Living Testimonies in Montreal, described the uncertainty and tumultuous process of being shuttled from one hiding place to another as a young boy in the Netherlands.

Harry Conway recalled how the political, social, and economic impact of the rise of the Nazis to power transformed the Germany of his youth from a familiar, nurturing, and welcoming environment to a hostile and indifferent world his family abruptly left behind in November 1938.

Finally, UVM instructor of Hebrew and Yiddish, Henia Lewin documented her return to Lithuania and the sites where she was kept hidden from the dragnet of the Nazi juggernaut that swept the Baltic states in the summer of 1941 and throughout 1942. She also spoke about her quest to find those who rescued and harbored her during the years of German occupation.

The third day of the seminar commenced with another eye-witness perspective. Marion Pritchard began her session by showing the film "The Courage to Care", a documentary portraying the actions of some

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of those recognized as "Righteous Gentiles" for saving the Jews during the Nazi Holocaust. Pritchard, a psychoanalyst with a practice in Norwich and a position at Boston University, saved the lives of scores of Jews in her native Holland and is prominently featured in the film. Commenting on the motivation behind her deeds and her continued commitment to the pursuit of respect for civil rights, Pritchard challenged college participants to recognize the power of education to influence students for good as well as evil.

A panel of children of Holocaust survivors offered their insights and commentary in the next session on Tuesday. Fran Romanatz, Beta Frank, Judy Chaimet, and Ghani Stern discussed the joy and pain of growing up with parents who were diligently attempting to rebuild shattered lives in a new world. This presentation by those of the "Second Generation" illustrated the challenges facing survivors and their families living with the specter of the Holocaust in their daily lives.

J. Alan Moore concluded the day with a compelling lecture offering philosophical perspectives on the Holocaust. Moore, a professor of Philosophy at Trinity College, discussed how the Nazis destroyed a three thousand year-old tradition of morality and raised mass murder to the principal affair of the state by attempting to cancel permanently the basic values of life. He argued that the most compelling philosophical questions to come out of the Holocaust are why and how could the Nazis have done what they did? He finished by suggesting that all people have a moral obligation to do something about the good and evil of this world.

The fourth day of the seminar was constructed around interpretations of the Holocaust through art, literature, music, and religion. David Scrase, professor of German and Director of the University of Vermont Center for Holocaust Studies, presented a variety of artistic and literary examples illustrating how the particular artist or writer confronted the legacy of the Holocaust in his/her own life. Using slides and numerous source references, Scrase offered participants examples of materials they can use in their own classrooms. He also raised important questions about both the strengths and short comings of any artistic or literary expression in conveying the stark horrors of the Holocaust in a manner others can understand and imagine.

Doris Bergen gave her last official UVM presentation in the form of a lecture on music and the Holocaust. Using a title from one of Raul Hilberg's books, Bergen examined the music of the perpetrators, victims, and bystanders during the Holocaust. With audio and video examples, Bergen established the importance of music to each of these groups and portrayed their different functions as either masking reality or serving as a diversionary pursuit for the killers and bystanders, or as a form of either torture or sustenance on the part of the victims.

The Reverend Dennis Marquardt provided the final presentation on Thursday. The pastor of the Assembly of God Christian Center in Vergennes for the past eighteen years, Marquardt outlined theological perspectives on how the Christian Protestant Church views and responds to the concept of evil while also address-

ing the shameful way some of those who call themselves Christians have contributed to the growth and invidious spread of antisemitism over the centuries. Making references and connections to the Holocaust, Marquardt engaged the participants in a discussion and offered commentary that cautioned others on the dangers of heavy-handed state control over religious institutions.

The final day of the seminar was created to make connections and bring the focus back on those taking the course. Steve Rogers, a chief historian with the US Justice Department Office of Special Investigations, discussed the role he and his colleagues play in tracking down Nazi war criminals in the United States, or as they attempt to enter this country, and prosecuting them for covering up their Nazi past. Making sure to point out that US law does not allow Nazi war criminals to be tried in this country for their crimes committed in Europe, Rogers meticulously demonstrated how the government goes about the Herculean task of generating reams of evidence to strip these criminals of their US citizenship and have them deported or kept out entirely if they seek to vacation in the United States.

Aranka Siegal made a second presentation on the last day of the seminar that covered important suggestions and issues to keep in mind when inviting Holocaust survivors to speak to a class or civic group. Through her presence at most sessions during the week, many of the participants got to know Siegal. This, as well as her presentation, helped dispel many of the misconceptions that Holocaust survivors are somehow unapproachable icons of our culture to be revered from a distance. Siegal encouraged all participants to be sensitive to the schedules and needs of the survivors, but that planning ahead, preparing students, sharing resources with other teachers and community members helps assure the success of bringing a former victim of the Nazis into a school.

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The session concluded with a presentation by teachers who had taken this course over the past two years. Roxanna Lovelle, Louise Baroda, Ann Messier, and Matt Messier shared the methods and ideas that have worked (as well as those that did not) in teaching the Holocaust to students in junior high and high school. These educators gave examples of school-wide seminars, mini-units, and semester-long thematic approaches to integrating Holocaust studies into the curriculum.

A final discussion that addressed how the participants could use and integrate the information from the entire seminar ended with a commitment on the part of those taking the course to meet again in the fall and spring of the upcoming academic year to share and discuss the success of their classroom, campus, and community connections.

In recognition of the contributions of the Holocaust Studies Program to UVM and to honor the publication of the Center's book, *The Holocaust: Introductory Essays*, UVM President, Thomas Salmon, and his wife, Susan made their residence available to host a reception for both the speakers and course participants. Plans are already underway for next summer's session, which is tentatively scheduled for the last week of June 1997. R.B.

SUMMER LECTURE SERIES

The University of Vermont Center for Holocaust Studies sponsored the third annual Summer Holocaust Lecture Series. Taking place over a period of four nights in conjunction with a course for educators and university students, this public lecture series by Holocaust survivors and scholars addressed the legacy of the Nazi Holocaust over five decades after the last concentration camps and extermination centers were liberated by Allied troops.

The first speaker of this series was Nechama Tec, a child survivor, whose family found refuge with Polish Christians during the Nazi Holocaust. Nechama Tec has researched, written, and spoken extensively about compassion, altruism, resistance to evil, and the rescue of Jews during World War II. A professor of Sociology at the University of Connecticut at Stamford, she is the award-winning author of six books and numerous articles about the Holocaust. As Scholar-in-Residence at the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, Dr. Tec has been conducting research for her next book on women standing the Holocaust.

In her lecture, Tec spoke briefly about her life before and during the Holocaust and referred the audience to her poignant book *Dry Tears: The Story of My Last Childhood in Poland* for further details. She took the rest of her time describing her research for and subsequent publication of *Dybbuk: The Brisker Parisians*. This book documents the story of the largest armed rescue of Jews by Jews during World War II.

James Young presented a lecture the second evening entitled: "The Landscape of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History." A professor of English

and Judaic Studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, James Young has examined how nations remember the Holocaust through memorials according to their own traditions, ideals, and experiences, and how these memorials fit into the contemporary study of the Nazi years. His research and publications have also focused on how memorials and publications have

as they commemorate, the differences between memorials conceived by victims and by victimizers; and the political uses and abuses of officially cast memory.

In this lecture, Young expressed concern that the memory of the victims not be reduced to artifacts and noted a tendency, particularly in Europe, for Jewish memorials to commemorate the moment of death rather than the continuity of vibrant Jewish history. He concluded by reminding those in attendance that memorialization is no substitute for action when it comes to the remembrance of the Holocaust or current crimes against humanity.

The third evening lecture was given by Judith Margyar Isaacson and was entitled: "The Seed of Saran: My Survival of The Holocaust." Judith Isaacson's Hungarian family was caught in the vice-grip of the Nazi concentration and death camps. As a teenager, Isaacson survived in Auschwitz and Hesselich Lehtman before being liberated in Leipzig, Germany. Following the war and a chance at a new start in the United States, Isaacson became dean of students at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. While speaking in November 1976 at neighboring Bowdoin College, her alma mater, Isaacson confronted her past and decided to write her personal story that became the foundation for the highly acclaimed *Seed of Saran*.

During the lecture, Isaacson read selected passages from her book and explained her reactions to those moments she described. She also treated the audience to excerpts from her latest book project, which serves as a companion volume to *The Seed of Saran*.

The final speaker of the week was Sonia Schreiber Weitz presenting: "I Promised I Would Tell: My Life as a Holocaust Survivor and Poet." As an eleven-year-old, Weitz was wrenched from her home in Krakow, Poland and forced into a ghetto. From there began a living nightmare of five Nazi concentration camps, including Auschwitz-Birkenau. Through her writing and poetry, Weitz has examined her experiences and wrestled with perplexing issues and questions. She ponders whether the Holocaust was a "pilot project" for the destruction of humanity? Or whether we are to perceive it as an event, unprecedented but not inevitable whose lessons cannot, must not, be ignored?

In this presentation, Weitz read from her collection of published poems and also shared as yet unpublished material detailing her reflections on her return trip to Poland and her work as an educator.

A limited number of copies of each speaker's books is available through the UVM Center for Holocaust Studies. Please call (802)-456-4022 and leave a message to receive an order form.

R.B.

Paul Celan (1920-1970) was a German-speaking Jew from the Bukovina. Both parents were killed in the camps. Celan is best known as the author of the poem "Tongue of Death," He studied in Paris in 1947, where he wrote some of his finest poetry in German in the post-war period. He committed suicide in 1970 by throwing himself into the Seine.

Translated by David Scrase

Aspen trees, your leaves pierce white the darkness.
My mother's hair never did turn white.

Dandelions, Ukraine is just as green.

My blonde-haired mother did not come home.

Rain cloud, are you lingering at the fountain?

My quiet mother is weeping for the world.

Round-eloped star, why the golden bow,
My mother's heart was shattered by the lead.

Oaken door, who lifted you from the hinges?
My gentle mother cannot come to me.

Paul Celan.

HE WARSAW MEMORIAL

2 lightning bolts of
 2 shattered summers
 2 ashes on the trees,
 2 scars on the walls
 2 seal the dead.
 2 shoeless feet freeze
 2 the dew of the roses.
 2 vely blood,
 2 nting
 2 the city's every vein,
 2 wall of
 2 runded flesh
 2 is the mouth.
 2 Iron
 2 ntered on the
 2 nce behind the teeth.

Peter Huchel

hiel (1903-1981) first made a name for himself as
 he late 1920s/early 1930s. A lifelong socialist,
 2d relatively little during the Third Reich. After
 the German Army for six years, Huchel settled
 rmainly, where he fell out of favor and from
 2as finally forced to emigrate.

by David Scrase



Photo courtesy of Joseph Bornstein

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Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich

by Doris L. Bergen

Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1996, xiii, 344 pp.

The National Socialist transformation of Germany is visible to us both in the form of the whole Nazi apparatus and in the worsening circumstances of the Jewish people and other "enemies" of the Third Reich. Our efforts to grasp the rationale that explains the systematic escalation of the Nazi persecution of the Jews in the prewar years has naturally concentrated on the centrality of the idea of racial determinism in the Nazi *Weltanschauung* and its relation to the measures the government immediately began to undertake to preserve and strengthen the Aryan race.

But what has always been harder to see is the extent to which the German people were predisposed to the Nazi racial view of the Jews. This is crucial, for it was upon their complicity, or complaisance, that the success of the whole Nazi program ultimately depended. After all, civil servants and university pro-

After Dachau

Judith Chahner

The man in the pinstriped johnny felt himself apart from the common air. Suits and handbags floated by the wall. Voices sank between the curtained beds.

The man in the laundered johnny had a devout heart. He brought up from the heart an ungrateful smile. He had been a patient before. He was many floors up at the Millard Fillmore. The town was Buffalo, the state New York. It was 1952. The man in the pinstriped johnny was duly naturalized. He was U.S. Army Sergeant 32689354. He had many new sets of numbers. For instance, there was, by then, Social Security. His number, SS 114-26-4020. The man in the cotton johnny was worn out.

He refused the nurse's hand. He refused the glass of good water. The nurse was young. She was pretty sure. Water is water, she told him. No, he said. This water has bubbles. It's been standing. I want fresh. Bring me some fresh. The man in the pinstriped johnny ran his sleeve under his nose. His sleeve did not cover the river blue vein. He was lucky to be at the Millard Fillmore Hospital though he would die soon anyway, perhaps in just a month. He had a small problem with his heart. The nurse tapped her foot. She tried to think of a way to cheer him.

fessors who had worked without conflict colleagues suddenly were willing to accept a test that these people were fired from government, driven into exile, or taken to concentration camps. They were increasingly subject to violence by neighbors and roving gangs of SA Jewish children were set upon by their classmates because nobody could point to any authority in the German people committed by "the accusations made by civic, educational, and religious leaders became ever more hysterical. The few later from the rest of society, possessions or were "Aryanized" or destroyed, families were up and children terrorized, without anyone raising a finger to help them. As Gerhard one-time constitutional judge in postwar Germany, it was as if people at a dinner repeatedly hauled off and shot in the adjo while those who remained behind whispered terrible," and continued to dine as before. I tended to think this transpired despite theologies of Christianity. Those who admire G

Continu

The guests did not speak. They moved their parcels. They shifted their gaze. The man was unreasonable. The struggle he was having was over the value of air. It was only common air which had settled in the hospital water in the tall glass at the top of many metal stands. What the man knew, exists, Breschbone, thumbnail, rounded tooth, sometimes it surrounds even the rupture of ordinary death. He had tasted it in water he once stooped to drink. He had heard it seeping. He knew how it enters the veins, is let through the veins. The nurse had learned from her teachers and from books about the cycles of water and air, the capacity of a living human body. The guests may or may not have known what was transpiring in the slight chill of the hospital air. Some would say a kind of sharpness could be heard sucked into the back of the throat. The man's wife held on her lap a year-old baby. She lifted up the struggling child. The man saw a child he was too weak to hold. Fresh water, he said. He wished to pass to the child a bit of a legacy, some useful bit of knowledge. He insisted they look at the air, look here at this water.

Judith Chahner is a poet and teacher who lives in Montpelier, Vermont. Her books of poems Out of History's Lullaby and runs published by The Bragg Books in 1995.

Twisted Cross

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ture still find it fathom that men and women reared in such sensibilities could so readily become accomplices of the Nazis. Indeed, this is what always has lain behind the question, "How could people do such things?"

The great service of Doris Bergen's book, *Twisted Cross*, is that it shows with clarity and sweeping scope that the assumption that the onslaught against the Jewish people happened "despite" the ideologies of Christianly reflects a basic misunderstanding of the Nazi revolution. She does this by analyzing a German Protestant movement called the *Deutsche Christen* (German Christians). Forming themselves into a movement in 1932, the German Christians were motivated by a desire shared by most Protestants to fuse Christianity with National Socialism, to seek a synthesis of Nazi ideology and Protestant tradition and to agitate for a people's church based on blood. This was a goal, Bergen writes, which directly reflected the aspirations of many Germans to retain their religious traditions while supporting the Nazi fatherland.

The significance, then, of the German Christian movement is that it brings to light "an often overlooked movement: the centrality of religion in National Socialist society." Bergen's argument, and hence the importance of the German Christians, is predicated on the fact that most Christians in Germany did not share the view, as expressed by Bartholomew, for example, that Christian Nazis stood in fundamental opposition to those of Nazism. Bergen's book elaborates in an insightful, clear, and interesting way the extent to which the climate of Nazi Germany "built on and perpetuated existing tendencies in European Christianity," tendencies which helped make the Nazi commands "comprehensible to the rank and file who carried out measures against Jews as well as those who passively condoned them."

Those "tendencies in European Christianity" are, of course, the legacy of Christian antisemitism. Bergen cites the Aryan Paragraph of Ludwig Müller, the first and last Reich Bishop and himself a German Christian, in which Müller writes that "Christianity did not grow out of Judaism but developed in opposition to Judaism." The German Christian movement defined their "people's church as essentially and primarily anti-Jewish." Race provided the orientation for all German Christian pronouncements and activities, for race was regarded by them as "the fundamental truth of human life," and "it played a role for German Christians comparable to that of the Bible in traditional Christian teaching."

A basic proposition of *Twisted Cross* is that the German Christians were not dependent on Nazi doctrine for their racial views. Rather, they recognized their own notion of race as a legacy which bound them to the tradition of the church. For the German Christians, "race" was valued as a "revelation from God" that consecrated their cause. This was the fundamental principle of human life for the German Christian movement; and from this principle, they derived the ten guidelines of the movement, which they published in 1932. Even before the Nazis took power, the German Christians had formalized their view of race and its relation to Christianity.

In a cleanly structured and erudite fashion, *Twisted Cross* makes an important contribution to our understanding of "the deep down dark thing" in German tradition which formed the bridge between the man and the Nazi program: the predisposition to evaluate life racially. The racial view, however, grew out of the deeply imbedded legacy of antisemitism in the eyes of the people; it was the moral and intellectual habits of antisemitism which validated race theory, and hence the Nazi program generally. The consequence is, as Bergen points out, that Nazism and the German Christian movement were twin effects of the same cause.

Nowhere in prewar Germany do we have a more vivid example of moral derangement and utter failure of intellect than we do in the German Christians. Ultimately, the failure of the German Christian movement was not restricted to their absurdly contradictory effort to deify Nazism. They also failed to understand that the Nazi drive for domination built on racial purity included Christianity in any form.

Bergen is an historian who has written her account "from the bottom up," to use Browning's phrase, which she achieves "through a thick description of the common experiences of ordinary people." By focusing on the racially sculpted Christianity of many of the Protestant laity and local pastors, Bergen makes an argument that parallels the one recently made at UVM by Saul Friedlander. Bergen and Friedlander highlight the local initiatives spontaneously undertaken by two groups, the German Christians and university professors and administrators, to expel Jews from their respective communities on purely racial grounds. In neither case were these activities instigated by the Nazi leadership; instead they were meant to help fulfill the government program for a racially reinvigorated and resurgent Germany. The conclusion drawn by both Friedlander and Bergen is that such spontaneous initiatives were a necessary element in isolating and setting apart the Jewish people. Once this was accomplished, the genocide that was to come was made possible.

Leo Spitzer, the acclaimed Viennese philologist, once published a short article entitled "Kato > race," in which he clarified the semantic development of the German *Rasse* from the Latin word, *ratio*. He drew specific attention to the contemporary political connotations of the term, *Rasse*, and noted the grim incongruity attendant to its ideological deformation. The events that followed the publication of that article, in 1941, consumed that most horribly the irony of Spitzer's allusion: namely, that as "reason" mutated into the Nazi drive for racial purity, it culminated in a rising paradox of every thing that stands opposed to reason. The deteriorating course followed by "ratio" in the political climate of post-WWI Germany was well expressed in Himmler's remark, "Intellect rots the character."

This deterioration of reason is directly reflected in the invasion of Christianity in Germany. Bergen writes that for the German Christians, the church was not the fellowship of the holy spirit described in the New Testament but a contrast to it, a vehicle for the expression of race and ethnicity. "When the idea of living as a Christian transformed itself into living as a German Christian, then truly had 'a shape of life grown cold.'" And Spitzer's and Bergen's readers know where that course led.

J. Alan Moore

Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust

by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen

New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996, 619 pp.

Daniel Goldhagen's new book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, focuses on the perpetrators of the Holocaust. His questions are simple. Who were the killers? What motivated them?

How did they perform their murderous deeds? The answers Goldhagen offers are just as straightforward. The killers were first and foremost Germans, he maintains, motivated by a uniquely German variety of "eliminationist antisemitism." Far from reluctant or indifferent, he argues, they were "willing executioners," enthusiastic and even eager to perform their grisly tasks.

Goldhagen describes his book as a "radical revision of what has until now been written" about "why the Holocaust occurred." (9) Probably no single work could live up to such a claim, and Goldhagen too falls short of his ambitions. Nevertheless, with *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, Daniel Goldhagen has done more than sit up another round of debate in the often fractious field of Holocaust studies. His insistence on the centrality of antisemitism is an important corrective to some recent trends, and his research on the death marches at the end of the war draws readers' attention to issues that are familiar from memoir literature but commonly neglected in scholarly works. A propensity to overstate and sometimes oversimplify his case makes Goldhagen vulnerable to criticism, but even with its shortcomings, his book makes a valuable contribution to the discussion of the perpetrators initiated by Raul Hilberg and continued by people like Gitta Sereny and Christopher Browning.

The first and probably least compelling part of Goldhagen's book is titled *Understanding German Antisemitism: The Eliminationist Mindset*. Goldhagen argues that antisemitism was both the necessary and sufficient condition for the Holocaust. He dares what he considers the uniquely German variety of eliminationist antisemitism back to the nineteenth century and contends that as soon as conditions became propitious, what had been a latent murderous urge burst into genocidal reality. Goldhagen is right to point out that some studies of the perpetrators have downplayed or ignored antisemitism altogether. But the sweeping overview of German history that he offers is not likely to convince skeptics. Other scholars — people like Uziel Tal, Robert Weisbach, James Harris, and Donald Niewyk — have written more carefully and subtly about German and European antisemitism. Moreover, Goldhagen's tendencies to repeat himself, lapse into social science jargon, and make inaccurate, sometimes unsubstantiated claims can turn reading these early chapters into something of a chore.

In Part II, *The Eliminationist Program and Institutions*, Goldhagen outlines the Nazi agenda and identifies the main structures of killing. He establishes himself as a member of the intentionalist historiographical camp, those scholars who insist that Hitler's will to genocide was a constant already from the early 1920s, even if the specific means toward that destructive end evolved in

response to changing conditions. Elsewhere in the book, Goldhagen states his refusal to label the perpetrators "Nazis" or "SS"; his preference is to call them "Germans." In this section, however, he opts for finer distinctions and refers repeatedly to the Nazi leaders who devised an ideology of death and developed the agenda for its implementation.

Parts III, IV, and V present the core of Goldhagen's original research. These sections examine three "case studies" in the organization of German mass murder of the Jews: the police battalions, Jewish "work" and the death marches. Goldhagen's detailed look at the police battalions posted in eastern Europe is powerful, but much of the material is familiar since the 1992 publication of Christopher Browning's acclaimed *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins). Goldhagen does make two important correctives: unlike Browning, he takes seriously the antisemitism of the killers, and he tries to give a clearer picture of what those men did when they were not slaughtering Jews.

Goldhagen's reconstruction of the off-duty life of the killers makes for some chilling reading. He juxtaposes their bowling matches, theater events, and spousal visits with their sadistic, vicious killing of Jewish children, women, and old people. The result is a view of the members of the police battalions as perpetrators of a genocide embedded in specific social and cultural contexts.

Goldhagen's discussion of the brutal, murderous "work" used to kill Jews is passionate and draws our attention to conditions in some lesser known camps. Nevertheless, it brings little that is new to anyone who has read even a small bit of the vast memoir literature on the Holocaust. In the German plan for the Jews, Goldhagen concludes, work was not a productive relationship but a means of torture, humiliation, and death — a depressingly familiar view that few scholars, at least on this side of the Atlantic, would contest.

Goldhagen's most significant contribution may be his description and analysis of the death marches. During the final phases of the war, German guards, SS, and their accomplices drove their desperate victims from site to site in a frenzied attempt to escape the advancing Allies.

Survivor testimony and memoirs have given us many powerful accounts of those forced marches. Gerda Weissmann Klein and Elie Wiesel are only two examples. But Holocaust scholarship has been silent on this aspect of the Shoah, perhaps because of the lack of the kind of documentation upon which the field has generally depended. Goldhagen's attention to the death marches brings this part of the story to the center and raises important questions about how we explain the tenacity of the killers, even in the face of certain defeat. His answer, not surprisingly, is to point to the eliminationist antisemitism that he identified in the opening pages of his book. It was the Germans' lust for Jewish blood, Goldhagen would have us believe, that drove them to continue hounding, torturing, and killing their victims even when that courage meant violating orders rather than obeying them.

Goldhagen's evidence is compelling, and his use of photographs, here as elsewhere in the book, deepens the emotional impact of his discussion. His focus on

forced marches of women is especially valuable in a field sometimes characterized by a restrictive gender blindness. But does the moving story Goldhagen tells in this section really substantiate his claim of a uniquely German eliminativist antisemitism? A more nuanced reading of the evidence might find additional—and complementary — explanations for the Germans' persistence: a desire to deny the evidence of their own criminality, rage at the Jews for refusing to die and let Nazi war aims be realized, a desperate effort to retain control of some part of the once massive Nazi "empire," a patriotic attempt to prove their own usefulness in the safety of the homefront rather than risk dispatch to zones of combat where the enemies would not be starving columns of emaciated women but armed American or Soviet soldiers.

After the moving case studies, the last section of Goldhagen's book, "Eliminativist Antisemitism, Ordinary Germans, Willing Executioners," seems rather antithematic and even redundant. He concludes in a more tempered and nuanced way that softens some of his introductory claims. In fact, the tone of the final chapters suggests that additional editing of the earlier material might have reduced the amount of controversy and misunderstanding that has accompanied Goldhagen's book since its appearance earlier this year. Still, Goldhagen ends on a confident note that conceals the many questions left unanswered and even unaddressed. How did German antisemitism fit into the network of interlocking prejudices — against people deemed handicapped, Gypsies, homosexuals, Slavs, and so many others — that constituted Nazism? Was "eliminativist antisemitism" really, uniquely German, or was the specific German contribution to the Holocaust rather the mobilization of an entire society, from its bureaucracy to its gender relations, in the service of that genocidal goal? Did the "excess" brutality and sadism of so many of the killers reflect nothing but an unflinching hatred of Jews, or might it also have stemmed from a perverse effort to quash the remnants of some universal moral instincts, to ease their own murderous tasks by reducing their victims to something as close as possible to the inhuman, loathsome stereotypes they had constructed of them? Goldhagen's book leaves us much to ponder. It is unfortunate that he provides no bibliography to guide readers to some of the excellent literature available to address questions left open or outside the scope of his inquiry.

Doris L. Bergen

The Raul Hilberg Lecture
"Crossing the Line in Nazi Genocide
On Becoming and Being
a Professional Killer"

Presented by Professor Gerhard L. Weinberg
 William Rand Kenan Jr., Professor of History at
 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Wednesday, October 23, 1996

at 8:00 p.m.

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OUR NEW BOOK

The Background

One of the greatest pieces of good fortune which came our way when we began to put into practice our mission of educational outreach was the presence of Robert Bernheim. Robert came to Vermont from Maine, where he had already organized a very successful seminar on teaching the Holocaust, and seeing the need for a similar seminar in Vermont, needed only some organizational support and a host to repeat the event. So with the help of David Scrase and the Center for Holocaust Studies, in particular Professor Doris Bergen, and UVM's Division of Continuing Education, the first Summer Seminar on Teaching the Holocaust was given in July 1994. It was a great success, and we did some fine tuning and repeated the seminar in June 1995. Robert's energy, enthusiasm, and expertise were matched by an assemblage of excellent teachers, including a group of witnesses (survivors, rescuers, and liberators), and a series of public lectures, which were well attended and well received by our faithful supporters in the community.

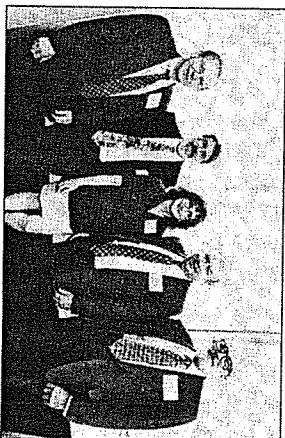
After the second seminar in 1995, it was felt that those attending the seminar needed a textbook specifically designed both for the course and for their own teaching back in their schools after the seminar. A committee consisting of Robert Bernheim, Frank Nicotia, Wolfgang Meier, Doris Bergen, and David Scrase met to discuss this possibility and draw up a blueprint. With Meier and Scrase as editors the project was launched immediately with the charge to produce the book in time for the third annual seminar in June 1996.

We achieved our goal. The authors of the chapters and the lay-out of the book are given elsewhere in this newsletter. *The Holocaust: Introductory Essays* is available from the Center for 10.00 Dollars.

CELEBRATING OUR BOOK

The publication of our book *The Holocaust: Introductory Essays* deserved a celebration. In the event, it received not one but three! A mere two or three days before a farewell party for Doris Bergen, we received the book, and the editors decided to keep its arrival secret until the party. The sadness of saying goodbye to our dear friend and colleague was therefore somewhat mitigated by our joint satisfaction over the book.

A larger and less private celebration was the one arranged through Advancement and Alumni Relations and organized and sponsored by Jerry Jacobson in New York City. Jerry, who is very active on our Advisory Board, put on a wonderful Reception for about 120 people. After a few words about the Center and about the production of the book, the Director of the Center for Holocaust Studies, David Scrase, introduced Doris Bergen, who delivered a stimulating, informative, and balanced talk on Ordinary Germans in the Holocaust, centering to a large degree on Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's controversial book *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (see Doris' review of the book elsewhere in this newsletter). A number of probing questions attested to the interest and sound knowledge of the audience, some of whom were survivors and many of whom had taken the courses offered by Raul Hilberg and Sam Boygrd at UVM. Jerry Jacobson proved a generous and genial host, and everyone was most appreciative of this outreach effort.



Left to right: Wolfgang Meier, David Scrase, Doris Bergen, Jerry Jacobson '62, Robert Ruchlin.

The third celebration was arranged by courtesy of President and Mrs. Salmon — both very enthusiastic supporters of Holocaust Studies at UVM — and was hosted by Vice-Provost Andrew Bodman at Englesby House. In attendance were some of the speakers and teachers at this summer's Seminar, contributors to the book, students attending the Seminar, and some of our generous contributors to Holocaust Studies. This garden party in the attractive setting at Englesby was blessed by glorious weather and was a relaxed and pleasant occasion.

D.S.

Au revoir Doris

After five years, during which she endeavored herself to us all, Professor Doris Bergen has taken a two-year leave of absence during which she will be teaching at the University of Notre Dame. Doris has been a mainstay of our program here at UVM, teaching enormously popular courses, lecturing in the community, and helping to establish the Center for Holocaust Studies with tremendous energy and verve. We are all sad to see her go, but wish her every success and happiness. We shall miss her.

D.S.



Guests at the New York Reception

OUTLAW PROFESSIONS

or Seth, upon becoming a Bar Mitzvah in Naples, VT, United States, 27 Iyar 5735

th the window curtain's milky
l, Seth in coveralls at the edge
wing room sea, kneels,

ve — one bald nub
eat up sneaker poking out
he light — to line up his pirates
out them off by name:

in Bradford, Earl and Herschel.

o odd, that gentle mess
nor you, Seth, so naive,
g bobbed by then

: family's needle-sharp
s, lashed to us and nearly
ed. The company

ek — you knew it even
— might be lodged in a heap
zen lumps or tossed

mid of nodding waves, identity
l together in bliss, sewn on
: pennants and hung over

l, if necessary, of matzah
naple syrup. Treasure's
ound, I'm afraid, mainly
en moments, brief raids

: few peaceful islands.
ith good help
:hinny comrades

orld over, Herschel and you
oulder the burden
: honesty upon which

: and thieves, in all
y, insist. The way
reat Aunt Mausel,

id again in '45, scavenged
t for shabos candlesticks
. years before on the lam.

defied the train's loud
gal command, risked the
ig hard gaze of her only child

egged band of outcasts
:ernany's civilized plan.
ay Emmae Poldervaart

ried them out of The Hague
bike that day flings open
inkled fabric of her rebel smile,

hing sent abroad even now,
:lders which once kidnapped
om Nazi guards.

ly great Grandma Jennie took
nds on the sidewalks of Western
ork, selling contraband
:epives in 1935 apron pocket
ked back door. The way your

Uncle Paul with a pack of twenty bad
managed conspirators, swarmed
the office of a bare boned school
in Chester, Pennsylvania, 1963,
demanding an equal shake for all kids
in a time of canonized segregation.

Herschel's stocky back and sides,
the two poked soles of his stubby leggo
feet and the one perfect bump growing up
round at the crown of his head, stick fast
to this, among your family's ideals:

one shouldn't be too enamored of the law.
Cast a pious pose before any great body
of water and you fall into that same
admonition, upheld by learned

forebears who sputter to the surface
like a brace of jostling gentle fish.

Child named Seth for the father of Noah,
you claim today, in a voice burnished
almost to alto, a heavy ark packed tight
with fierce players. May you add your
bold cast to them. Let the trouble-makers

in. Let them sing their vinegary tunes.
Help them reach the far mountains.
Lord, in their mouths let them
always hold our names.

Judith Chalmir

HOLOCAUST STUDIES/CVU PRESENTATIONS

On January 12, 1997, 35 junior and senior Champlain
Valley Union High School (CVU) students made their
final presentations for the 1996-97 fall semester course,
Holocaust & Human Behavior Studies, taught by Robert
Bernheim and Robert Kurzman.

Two hundred community members, friends, and par-
ents enjoyed a dinner prepared by Mrs. Vicki Matthews,
parent of a student who participated in the first CVU
Holocaust and Behavior Studies course. It has become a
tradition for Mr. & Mrs. Matthews to serve a celebratory
meal for those attending the final symposium. This year,
Mrs. Matthews featured recipes from *Recipes from Terzich*.

Through the fall semester, students had weekly lec-
tures on government, democracy, world wars, and the
meaning of community leading up to an in-depth study of
the Holocaust using *The Holocaust: Introductory Essays* ed-
ited by UVN-Professors David Scraese and Wolfgang Mieder
as one of the pertinent readings. With reading, study,
research, analysis, discussion, daily journals, reflections,
and an intensive field trip behind them - each student was
a true scholar of the subject. The week long field trip
included visits to the Washington, D.C. Holocaust Memo-
rial Museum, a D.C. inner city high school, the Boston
Holocaust Memorial, Holocaust survivors, and

continued on page 12

STUDENT WORK

The following section is devoted to works by Vermont stu-
dents. In this issue, two students from Champlain Valley
Union High School have provided poems. If you would like
to submit a poem, short story, or make other contributions for
possible publication in future issues, please send a copy to:

The Center for Holocaust Studies
German and Russian Department
415 Waterman Building
University of Vermont
Burlington, Vermont 05405

A RARE TESTIMONY

Amy Dreibelis

Size 2, size 6, and size 12.
Sandals, slippers, and boots.

Cloth and leather.

So many different shoes survived,

Each pair belonging to a different Jew.

An identification tool.

A tool not able to determine which pair belonged to whom.

But rather aids our mind in making a connection:

Each shoe belongs to a victim of the Holocaust.

That size 2, leather one, belongs to a child.

The one next to it.

The child's mother.

They were killed, but their shoes survived.

For some
Shoes were a blessing.

Providing protection.

The shoes worn by death marchers,

Probably worshipped.

But, when worn in the camps,

A long-term curse.

"Instruments of torture."

Catalysts of infested sores.

They were killed, but their shoes survived.

An obvious difference amongst the shoes,

Yet a similarity:

They have traveled the same journey.

See the holes-

A journey of torture.

No owners-

A journey of persecution.

No owners-

They were killed, but their shoes survived.

Each shoe was a part of a victim,

Yet the shoes survived because

They were of cloth and leather

Not Jewish flesh and bones.

Thus they are witnesses,

They provide a shadow of their owner

And at the same time

A shadow of all the Holocaust victims.

They are a memorial.

IMAGES

M.S. Valentine

This is a poem about my grandfather who served in the U
Military and assisted in the liberation of the concentration
Ohrdruf and perhaps others. The poem, modeled after a Br
song, *A Hart Kahn's Agonize Fall*, reflects the feelings he
felt and the feelings I felt on my Holocaust Intensive Jour

Oh where have you traveled my big tall man?
Where have you gone?

I've crawled across the shatters of Germany.

I've ridden a train over a river of hatred.

I've wandered through enemy lines,

To find a mirror amongst the dead.

I've stumbled through the gates of hell.

And come back again.

Oh what have you seen, my towering grandpa?
What did you witness?

I saw a river of blood and a mountain of hate

A city once plentiful brought to the ground.

And a look of fear that can consume a soul.

I saw a one man crush the lives of millions.

I saw a sixty year-old man in a ten year old's

I saw more death than this world will ever k

Oh what did you hear, my blue-eyed elder?

What sounds were there?

The sounds of bombs were all around us.

The sounds of the dying crying out in the nig

The sounds of anguish, death, and despair.

The sounds of a nation consuming it's own.

The sounds of a million crying for mercy.

The sounds of a friend going mad in the dar

Oh who did you meet my hero of war?

What people were there?

I met one man that lost several hundred.

I met a young boy that was taken by hatred.

I met a young woman who was the only one

I met an old man that witnessed the killing.

I met a small child as skinny as the grass.

I met Satan himself in the face of a human.

Oh what will you do now, my educated grandpa?

What will you teach?

I will teach all the sights that are burned in m

I will argue the people who defend all these

I will tell all my friends the people I saw.

I will show my family the people I helped.

I will teach them how wrong and late that w

I will share the truth that was never revealed

Oh what do you want now, my witness of Ohrdr

What do you want them to remember?

Don't let them allow this to happen again.

Don't let my pictures turn into them.

Don't ever let hatred blind their eyes.

Don't allow anyone to lead them to this.

Make sure they never forget all their values.

SUMMER SEMINAR PREVIEW

The fourth annual Summer Seminar for Educators on the Holocaust and Holocaust Education will be offered 23-27 June 1997 at the University of Vermont. As in previous years, the seminar is open to teachers as well as undergraduate and graduate students for three credits through the office of Continuing Education.

The seminar provides teachers and students with a solid historical foundation and a general introduction to the study of the Nazi Holocaust. The education staff at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum estimates that at least 95% of American educators have not had a college-level course on the history or literature of the Nazi Holocaust. While teachers engaged in seminars and lectures on the American Civil War or the plays of Shakespeare while in undergraduate or graduate school, few had the opportunity to examine the Holocaust in a formal academic setting.

As a result, the seminar offers educators and students numerous points of entry into the study of the Nazi Holocaust. In addition to historical overviews, the subjects of literature, art, music, drama, and philosophy will be explored. Holocaust survivors and rescuers from across the state and the Montreal metro area will share their experiences. Those taking the course will also receive a complementary copy of *The Holocaust - Introductory Essays*, a collection of writings by many of the seminar instructors.

Center for Holocaust Studies

The University of Vermont
Dept. of German & Russian
415 Waterman Bldg.
Burlington, VT 05405

Throughout the week, the Center for Holocaust Studies will also sponsor a Summer Holocaust Lecture Beginning at 8:00 PM in Rowell 103, these lectures and open to the public. On Monday 22 June Dwork will present a lecture. The Rose Prokescaust History at Clark University and author of *a Star*, Dwork's latest book is *Auschwitz - 12701* which she co-wrote with Robert Jan van Pelt.

CVU Studies

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representatives from the Kraft family, who on England Patriots and the New England Revolution intensive trip amplified the student experience.

Each student's presentation was unique, insightful. As a parent of one of the students proud and impressed with the students' ability late the lessons learned. It was also clear that earnestly undertaken the endeavor of questioning issues around the Holocaust.

During that Sunday evening, the audience listening to the outcome of this course. Each student semester a different person - with a better understanding of the community of family, society, government, and the world. Robert Bernheim and Robert Kujala applauded by students, parents, and the CVU for their orchestration of this incredible course.

Sarah W. Springgren

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