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Jewish Children with Disabilities and Nazi “Euthanasia” Crimes

by Lutz Kaelber, UVM Dept. of Sociology (LKAELBER@uvm.edu)

In memory of Henry Friedlander

A Child with a Disability

Erwin Sanger was born into a Jewish family in Hamburg in 1935. He had an older brother, Jacob, whom his parents put on a children’s transport, or *Kindertransport*, to England.¹ Erwin Sanger’s mother and father, Flora and Willy Sanger, were deported to Theresienstadt in 1942 and died in Auschwitz in 1944. Curiously enough, seven-year old Erwin was not deported along with his parents, even though it would have been easy enough to do. Instead, on the very day his parents were deported, the Gestapo had him placed in the “special children’s ward” at Hamburg-Langenhorn, his expenses to be paid for by Hamburg’s association of Jews. The name “special children’s ward,” or, literally translated, “expert facility for pediatric care” (*Kinderfachabteilung*), suggested to the public a benevolent purpose, yet it had anything but. It was a medical killing station in Hamburg’s sole state facility for the mentally ill during World War II. While there, Erwin received a Christian baptism, and died in April 1943, seven months after his admission, a victim of Nazi “children’s euthanasia.” Dr. Friedrich Knigge, as head of the special children’s ward, carried out the killings of such children himself, with an overdose of Luminal; Erwin’s official but fake cause of death, as noted in his medical record, was pneumonia. His admission record had an outsized stamp in it, “Jew,” and it also noted his medical disorder: “mongolism,” or trisomy 21 (also known as Down syndrome).²

The fate of Jewish children with disabilities like Erwin in Nazi Germany is the topic of this essay. It focuses on how such children became victims of medical crimes, particularly in the “children’s euthanasia” program. Ever since Henry Friedlander’s pioneering research on the murder of Jews with disabilities has it been known that the claim by leading representatives of the Nazi state (such as Karl Brandt, Hitler’s personal physician and Reich Commissioner for Health and Sanitation, and Victor Brack, chief organizer of “euthanasia” in the Chancellery of the Fuhrer) that Jews were not included in Nazi medical killing programs, were patently false. Scholars such as Rael Strous, Georg Lilienthal, and Annette Hinz-Wessels have recently added to our knowledge about the subject matter, but none of their studies has focused on children or addressed their inclusion in “children’s euthanasia.”³

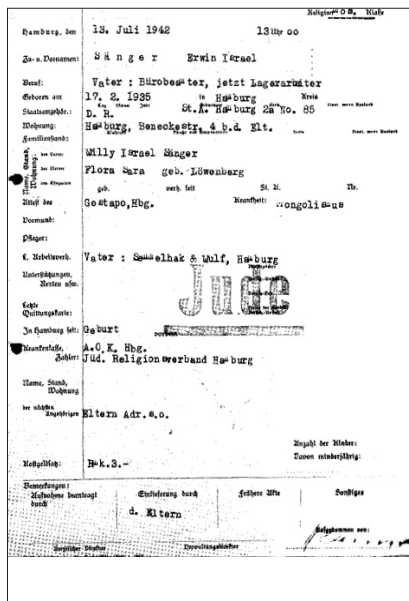
My article complements and expands existing scholarship in two ways: it addresses the fate of Jewish children with disabilities, and it uses reproductions of select original documents to illustrate what happened to

these children and Jewish adults with disabilities in Nazi Germany. First I briefly discuss the rise of social Darwinist thought in the Weimar Republic. I then turn to measures of Nazi “racial hygiene” affecting disabled Jews, particularly the murder of (mostly adult) institutionalized patients in the so-called “T4” program, before presenting case studies of children murdered in the “children’s euthanasia” program.

Death and Disability in the Weimar Republic

The experience of WWI in psychiatric hospitals and the publication of a widely discussed book by a jurist and a psychiatrist in 1920 introduced new dimensions to the discourse about mental illness and disability in Weimar Germany. Catastrophic conditions in facilities for the mentally ill led to more than 70,000 deaths, mostly by starvation, between 1914 and 1918 – about one third of the patients did not survive World War I. Their death had become a mundane occurrence. At the same time, Germany had not only lost the war but also millions of young soldiers on the battlefields of Europe. How could the nation, social Darwinists asked, endure such a “negative selection” among its population if it ever were to rise again? Karl Binding, a leading scholar of jurisprudence, and psychiatrist Alfred Hoche sought to provide an answer in the book *Permission to Annihilate Life Unworthy of Living*. Their choice of words in the title was stark: they pertain to humans unworthy of living, and not just their death, but having them actively annihilated (*Vernichtung*). Going beyond the contemporary discussion of whether physicians should be allowed to assist those requesting to die in order to shorten long and painful suffering, the authors accorded the state and the medical and legal professions a principal right to decide on the termination of human life, even in the absence of an individual’s consent. To them, persons who did not have such a right to self-determination included the “intellectually dead,” “human ballast,” “empty shells,” and “incurable idiots”—presumably because such individuals did not have the capacity to consent. For Binding and Hoche, such individuals stood at the level of low animals, and their utter lack of social productivity, the two argued, and status as “useless eaters” made their death a useful one for society, which no longer had to carry the financial burden of caring for them.⁴

Binding and Hoche’s position remained a minority position in Germany until 1933. Majorities among German politicians, physicians, lawyers,



Erwin Sanger’s admission record, Hamburg-Langenhorn facility. Source: Staatsarchiv Hamburg 352-8/7 Abl. 2000/01 Nr. 19 (30111)

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News from the Faculty



Antonello Borra (Romance Languages) taught a course on Italy and the Holocaust through literature and film. The course focused on Giorgio Bassani's *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini*, Primo Levi's *Se questo è un uomo*, and the way in which the Holocaust was portrayed by Italian cinematographers Vittorio De Sica, Liliana Cavani, Francesco Rosi, Gillo Pontecorvo, and Lina Werthmueller, among others. The course was taught in Italian. His volume of poetry *Alfabestiaro*, in

a dual language edition with English translations by Blossom S. Kirschenbaum and illustrations by Delia Robinson, has just been published by Burlington-based Fomite Press.



Andrew Buchanan's (History) manuscript *America's Grand Strategy in the Mediterranean during World War II* was accepted for publication by Cambridge University Press. The book will appear in 2014. It challenges long-standing assumptions about American involvement in the Mediterranean during World War Two. It shows that, far from being a time-wasting excursion into a "diversionary theater," Washington's engagement in the Mediterranean was well-planned, executed

by large-scale military force backed by political and diplomatic initiatives, and highly successful. In fact, America's predominant position in the Mediterranean played a critical role in laying the basis for its postwar predominance in Western Europe. Among many political issues covered in the book, Buchanan discusses Washington's refusal to challenge the anti-Semitic policies of the Vichy government in France and of its colonial outposts in North Africa.



Robert Gordon (Anthropology) is in the midst of a two-year visiting professorship at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa. He continues to work on Genocide in Settler or Neo-European societies and has submitted a chapter entitled "Vogelfrei and Besitzlos, with no Concept of Property: Divergent Settler Responses to Bushmen and Damaras in German Southwest Africa" for a volume on *Genocide of Hunter-Gatherers and Settler Societies*, edited by M.

Adhikari for the University of Cape Town Press. His jointly edited volume, *Re-Creating First Contact: Expeditions, Anthropology & Popular Culture*, is due for release in July 2013 by the Smithsonian Institution.



Jonathan Huener (History) spent the 2012-13 academic year on sabbatical. He continues his research and writing on the Catholic Church in German-occupied Poland. In the Fall 2012 semester he worked in archives in Munich, Germany and Gniezno, Poland, and for the summer 2013 he has received a grant from the German Historical Institute, Warsaw. In addition to his research at the Institute of National Remembrance-Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against the

Polish Nation, in the summer of 2013 he will also be working in state and church archives Łódź, Wrocław, and Wrocław. He has also completed an essay entitled "Auschwitz in einem Holocaust-Curriculum für amerikanische Studierende: Zugänge über Tadeusz Borowski und Primo Levi," which is scheduled to appear in April 2013 in the *Handbuch Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust: Historisch-politisches Lernen in Schule und Lehrerbildung*, edited by Hanns-Fred Rathenow, Birgit Wenzel, and Norbert H. Weber.



Lutz Kaelber (Sociology) contributed an article on eugenics to the Wiley-Blackwell *Encyclopedia of Health, Illness, Behavior and Society* and one on collective memory to the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Social Sciences*. His article "Child Murder in Nazi Germany: The Memory of Nazi Medical Crimes and Commemoration of 'Children's Euthanasia' Victims at Two Facilities (Eichberg, Kalmenhof)" was published in *Societies 2* (2012). He gave a presentation

on eugenics in North America in the 20th Century at the 3rd International Hartheim Symposium in Austria in 2012. His article "Jewish Children with Disabilities and Nazi 'Euthanasia' Crimes" is featured in this issue of the *Bulletin*.



At the May 2012 meeting of the International Novalis Society, **Dennis Mahoney** (German and Russian) gave the keynote address and also was elected President, the first non-German to have been so chosen. Novalis – the nom de plume for Friedrich von Hardenberg (1772-1801) was not only an ancestral title from the Middle Ages but also a sign of his aspiration to be a "clearer of new ground" – has long been regarded as one of the principal figures not only of German, but also European

Romanticism. For these reasons, the Society, in cooperation with the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, has recently announced plans for a biannual Novalis Prize for innovative interdisciplinary research in the field of European Romanticism. The first awarding of this prize will take place in May of 2014 at the birthplace of the poet, civil servant, and philosopher in Oberwiederstedt, Germany, accompanied by a colloquium involving the finalists. Looking more closely to home, for the fall of 2013 Mahoney is planning to co-teach a course with his colleague Tom Simone (English) on the theme "Wagner at 200: Achievement and Influence." In addition to viewing and discussing all four parts of *The Ring of the Nibelung*, arguably the most ambitious undertaking in Western music and drama, they will consider these works within the context of European history and society, including Wagner's career as a political and cultural revolutionary and theoretician. Wagner's influence does not end with music. Mahoney and Simone also plan to address the thorny question of Wagner's anti-Semitism and his reception during the Nazi era. Other areas will be considered as well, such as Wagnerian resonances in Tolkien and Wagner's impact on the movies in general (not only on "Wagnerian" soundtracks such as Howard Shore has done for the *Lord of the Rings*/*Hobbit* films).



Wolfgang Mieder (German and Russian) edited volume 29 (2012) of *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*. He is the co-author of *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2012) and "Zu meiner Hölle will ich den Weg mit guten Sprüchen pflastern." *Friedrich Nietzsches sprichwörtliche Sprache* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2012). His book "Zersungene Lieder." *Moderne Volksliedreminiszenzen in Literatur, Medien und Karikaturen* (Wien: Praesens,

2012) appeared as well, and he edited a reprint of Johann Ludwig Burckhardt's 1834 proverb collection *Arabische Sprichwörter oder die Sitten und Gebräuche der neueren Aegyptier erklärt aus den zu Kairo umlaufenden Sprichwörtern*. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2012). Among his major articles of the year are "The World's a Place'. Zur (inter)nationalen Sprichwortpraxis Barack Obamas," "Beating Swords into Plowshares': Proverbial Wisdom on War and Peace," and "Making a Way Out of No Way'. Martin Luther King's Proverbial Dream for Human Rights." Plenary lectures on such topics as "To Build Castles in Spain: The Story of an English

Proverbial Expression,” “The Nature and Future of Transatlantic Folkloristics,” and “Idleness Is the Beginning of All Philosophy’: Friedrich Nietzsche’s Aphoristic Anti-Proverbs” took him on travels in the United States and to Europe. He was also honored with the “European Fairy Tale Prize” in Germany, and since age has truly crept up on him, he received the “Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award” from the American Folklore Society in New Orleans. At the conclusion of the 2012-13 academic year, UVM announced that Mieder had been appointed to the rank of “University Distinguished Professor,” the highest honor given by the university to members of its faculty.

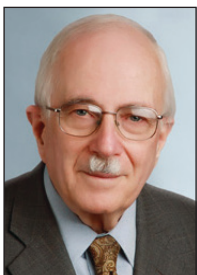


Frank Nicosia (History) was on sabbatical during the 2012-2013 academic year, writing his new book with the tentative title *Hitler’s Germany and the Arab World*. He also saw the publication of the essay, co-authored with Christopher Browning, „Heinrich Wolff und Wilhelm Melchers: Ambivalenz und Paradox bei der Durchsetzung der NS-Judenpolitik,“ in Michael Wala and Jan Erik Schulte (Hrsg.) *Widerstand und Auswärtiges Amt* (Munich: Siedler Verlag, 2013). At the German Studies

Association annual meeting in Milwaukee on 5 October 2012, he participated on a panel in honor of the 70th birthday of publisher and scholar Marion Berghahn of Berghahn Books. His paper was titled “Anthropology and History in Marion Berghahn’s *Continental Britons*.” He also gave public lectures in Berlin at the Neue Synagoge and in Hamburg at the Warburg Haus in connection with the book tour promoting the June 2012 publication by Wallstein Verlag of *Zionismus und Anti-Semitismus im Dritten Reich*, the German edition of his last book. He gave a lecture, “Hakhsharot and Jewish Emigration from Germany, 1933-1941,” at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City, and gave back to back lectures in Minneapolis-St. Paul related to the book he is currently writing. He spoke to the Minneapolis-St. Paul Committee on Foreign Relations about “Middle East Conflicts: Historical and Geographical Contexts” and delivered a lecture to the Harold C. Deutsch World War II Seminar in Minneapolis with the title “Hitler’s Germany and the Middle East: Race and Geopolitics.” In June he addressed the Holocaust Educational Foundation’s Summer Retreat in Chicago on “The Future of Holocaust Studies in a Changing Academic Environment.” While on sabbatical, he finished supervising Michelle Sigiel’s M.A. thesis in the Department of History on “Die Israelitische Kultusgemeinde in Vienna, 1938-1942.”



Nicole Phelps’ (History) book, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference: Sovereignty Transformed*, is being published in 2013 by Cambridge University Press. She was selected to attend the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Summer Institute in 2012. She served as a member of the committee for the Center for Austrian Studies Dissertation Prize and is currently the president of UVM’s chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.



Robert D. Rachlin co-edited, with Alan E. Steinweis, *The Law in Nazi Germany: Ideology, Opportunism, and the Perversion of Justice*, published by Berghahn Books this March. He also contributed an essay to that volume, “Roland Freisler and the Volksgerichtshof: The Court as an Instrument of Terror,” and translated some of the documents in the appendix. In non-Holocaust related activities, he performed as pianist with internationally-acclaimed violinist Kevin Lawrence in October

at St. Paul’s Cathedral, Burlington, the violin and piano sonata by Maurice Ravel, the violin and piano sonata op. 96 by Beethoven, and the “Devil’s Trill” sonata by Giuseppe Tartini. In November, he was the featured speaker at the Las Vegas annual meeting of PilotLegis,

an insurance purchasing consortium of law firms throughout the United States. His topic was Lawyer Dysfunction: Unhappy, Unhealthy, Unethical? What We’ve Learned Since Patrick Schiltz Said “Yes,” (52 Vand. L. Rev. 871 (1999)).



Susanna Schrafstetter (History) submitted a chapter on immediate postwar relief and restitution for Holocaust survivors in the British zone of occupation for publication in an anthology on reparations for victims of National Socialist persecution. The volume, edited by German scholars Christiane Fritsche and Johannes Paulmann, is scheduled for publication (in German) in 2014. She also contributed to an anthology entitled “*Nazi Self-Help*” and *Recast Identities: Post-*

War Fates of Nazi Functional Elites, edited by Katrin Paehler and David Messenger. This volume will examine the persistence of National Socialist networks in the West Germany of the 1950s. Schrafstetter’s contribution, “Siegfried Zoglmann and His Men of Many Names: Politics and Nazi Journalists in Postwar Germany,” deals with the subversion of the West German Free Democratic Party (FDP) by National Socialists who hoped to gradually take over the party. In April 2013 she participated in a conference on Jewish resistance to the Nazi policy of extermination in Europe, 1933-1945. This international conference on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was organized by the Moses Mendelssohn Zentrum, Potsdam, and the Deutsches Polen-Institut, Darmstadt. She presented a paper on one of her new projects: Jews who went into hiding in her hometown of Munich during the Holocaust. The conference proceedings will be published in an anthology.



Helga Schreckenberger (German and Russian) had two publications: “Ingeborg Bachmann’s Radio Play Ein Geschäft mit Träumen in the context of Post-War Austria” in *Die Waffen nieder! Lay down your weapons!* *Ingeborg Bachmanns Schreiben gegen den Krieg*, ed. by Karl Ivan Solibakke and Karina von Tippelskirch; and “Communism, Immigration and the Necessity of Faith: Dimitrè Dinev’s Engelszungen” in *Modern Austrian Prose*, Volume II, ed. by

Paul F. Dvorak. She also delivered the presentation “Coming to Terms with Intergenerational Trauma: Jurek Becker’s *Bronstein’s Children* (1986)” at the conference “Engaging the Other: Breaking Intergenerational Cycles Repetitions,” 3rd International Multidisciplinary Conference at University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, in December, 2012.



Alan E. Steinweis (History) completed his first term as Director of the Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies at UVM. He published *The Law in Nazi Germany: Ideology, Opportunism, and the Perversion of Justice*, co-edited with Robert D. Rachlin (Berghahn Books, 2013). The volume is the product of the 2009 Miller Symposium held at UVM. He also published the review article “German Popular Reactions to the Persecution of the Jews and the

“Final Solution,” in *Yad Vashem Studies*, 2012, and submitted for publication the article “Coming to Terms with the History of the Humanities in the Third Reich,” forthcoming in Bernard Levinson, ed., *The Betrayal of the Humanities: The University in the Third Reich*. He published book reviews of “*Deutsche, kauft nicht bei Juden*,” *Antisemitismus und politischer Boykott in Deutschland 1924 bis 1935*, by Hannah Ahlheim, in *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus; Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp*, by Christopher R. Browning, in *Central European History*; and *Reluctant Accomplice; A Wehrmacht Soldier’s Letters*

from the *Eastern Front*, by Konrad H. Jarausch, in the *Journal of Modern History*. He delivered an invited lecture, "The Kristallnacht in the History of the Holocaust," at Manhattan College. He continued his service on the fellowship committee of the Holocaust Education Foundation. In 2012 he was appointed to the academic advisory committee of the Institute for Contemporary History, Munich-Berlin and to the editorial board of its journal, the *Vierteljahrshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte*. He has been serving as a consultant for the Institute's forthcoming scholarly edition of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and will be a member of the faculty for the Institute's 2013 summer workshop on the Holocaust for graduate students, to be held in cooperation with the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure. In 2013-14 he will be on leave from UVM in order to hold the Chair for Jewish History and Culture at the University of Munich.



Richard Sugarman (Religion) published two articles: "Through the Lens of Levinas: Reflections on Holiness," *Levinas Studies Annual* (Volume 8), 2013; and "Political Phenomenology: Pure and Applied," in *Political Phenomenology*.

Steve Zdatny (History) published an article, "The French Hygiene Offensive of the 1950s: A Critical Moment in the History of Manners," *Journal of Modern History* (December 2012).



Report from Linz UVM Graduate on a Fulbright Scholarship in Austria

by Katherine Sacks, UVM Class of 2011



In my final semester at the University of Vermont, as graduation day approached, I began to consider ways in which to further lay the stepping stones in my pursuit of a career in Holocaust studies. Having missed out on a study abroad experience and with my nearly non-existent German language skills, I was immediately interested when a German professor told me about a unique opportunity to live and work in a German-speaking culture through the Fulbright program. After countless hours of poring over my personal statement, when I was sure my parents and Professor Steinweis would finally refuse to read another draft, I reluctantly handed my application to the Burlington Post Office. Now all I could do was wait. In the meantime, I would be spending a few months interning at the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memory to the Holocaust. Acceptance to the Fulbright program is extremely competitive, and I had little hope of receiving an acceptance letter. However, to my surprise, in April I learned I had been invited to join the program as an English teaching assistant (TA) at two schools in the Upper Austrian city of Linz. I was overjoyed, not only to have been accepted, but also for what this meant for my Holocaust studies education: this was the city where Hitler had grown up, the city he imagined becoming the cultural center of the Third Reich and where the notorious Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp is located not 20km away. I knew right away this experience was going to be invaluable to me.

This past year has been meaningful and eye-opening for me in so many ways. First, I have the wonderful job of teaching Austrian high school students alongside hard-working and—for the most part—friendly teachers: I get to be an ambassador for the United States in a nation that, fortunately, loves and admires my country. I design lessons that introduce my students to life in America, as I know it. It is incredibly gratifying to see their enthusiastic participation as I teach them about anything from the Civil Rights Movement in America to different English words for being intoxicated (anything goes in an Austrian classroom, which was something that was simultaneously shocking and refreshing to first experience). I have come to appreciate the effort and anxiety that can go into planning a lesson for teenagers—sometimes they are anything but appreciative teenagers, but I am inspired and moved by their insight and creativity. Though I am still left feeling unsure about a career in teaching, I know now that this is undoubtedly the best job I'll ever have as a young person.

Living in this small, prosperous country for nearly a year has taught me so much, not only about Europe, but about America as well. Sharing an apartment with four young Austrian men has certainly been an experience in itself and one I credit for much of my success and happiness in Linz. I have been able to live downtown in a lovely city, struggle with the hilariously

incoherent dialect, enjoy the local cuisine and experience Austria in wintertime. Though it is admittedly difficult to meet and befriend Austrians, who tend to be a bit stand-offish, I have constantly enjoyed the company of the select few whom I know. At the same time, I have resolved to never be this far from my family for this long again and to appreciate the open-mindedness and sensitivity of Americans (in this regard I was certainly spoiled in Vermont).

There are many American and British TAs also living in Linz, and over 300 in all of Austria, many with whom I've become close friends. I spend most of my free-time with several of those living in and near Linz and together we delight and commiserate over our shared experiences. I know I have found life-long friends in two Americans from Michigan, a part of the country I would otherwise know nothing about, let alone have met someone from there.

Though I remain concerned and frustrated with the decided lack of remembrance and acknowledgement of the Holocaust in Linz and throughout Austria, I have not failed to note the few Austrians who are determined to change this. Anti-Semitism and the perception of Austria as a victim of the Third Reich are things I have experienced all too often living here and I truly hope this eagerness to forget the Holocaust is something that can and will be reversed. Nevertheless, my travels while here have undoubtedly shaped my understanding of the Holocaust and been a constant source of education and interest for my most passionate area of study. As I near the end of my teaching assistantship in Austria, I'll be sure to continue to make the most of it and remember what Anne Frank said: "in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."

Not only have I been fortunate enough to be immersed in the beautiful, traditional Austrian culture for over nine months, but I have also had the opportunity to travel to many amazing places. This experience has taken me all over Austria, Italy, France and Israel, to parts of Eastern Europe and Germany, and to many important sites of the Holocaust throughout. I have reveled in the vibrant Italian culture, had the most memorable New Year's Eve in Berlin, skied the slopes of the beautiful South Tyrolean Alps, braved the boisterous Munich beer tents, been left speechless by the beauty of Prague and felt right at home in unassuming Krakow. Furthermore, the opportunity to visit such places as Auschwitz, Theresienstadt and Sachsenhausen has been a particularly rewarding part of my time here.

This year's experience will remain important to me as I return home and decide where these stepping stones will take me next—graduate school or law school?—and I have no doubt I'll keep them with me for the rest of my life. As one of very few TAs who decided not to extend my contract for another year, I can confidently say this Fulbright opportunity has been an incredible journey for all of us and one which we are so thankful for every day we get to help shape young minds and explore this splendid part of the world. *Servus!*

Student News



Mark Alexander received his Bachelor's Degree from UVM in January and has begun pursuing his MA here this spring. He received the Salmore Fellowship from the Leonard and Carolyn Miller Center for Holocaust Studies in November, and he is currently the Center's graduate assistant. In December, he was inducted into the Alpha of Vermont chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa Society. His Senior Honors Thesis, *Nazi Collaborators, the Cold War, & U.S. Intelligence: The Case of Radoslaw Ostrowski*, required him to travel to Washington, D.C. in order to conduct research at the National Archives and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. This travel was funded by a David Scrase Research Grant. This summer, Mark will travel to Germany to participate in the summer seminar, "German Sources and Archives of the Holocaust," held by the University of Munich (LMU) and the Institute for Contemporary History (IfZ) in Munich, Germany. In addition to obtaining special access to several major archives, participants will meet with leading scholars of the Holocaust and Nazi Germany, visit the Obersalzberg, Nuremberg, and Dachau Concentration Camp, and have the opportunity to conduct interviews with German witnesses. Professor Christopher Browning of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will give the keynote address, and UVM faculty members Susanna Schrafstetter and Alan Steinweis will be among the scholars present to guide participants in research and discussion.

(UVM graduate Jordanna Gessler, who is now working toward her MA in Holocaust Studies at the University of Haifa, Israel, will also be a participant in the Munich seminar).



MA student **Meagan Ingalls** received a David Scrase Grant to study Ukrainian at the Ukrainian Catholic University's School of Ukrainian Language and Culture. This summer, she will travel to L'viv, Ukraine to participate in an intensive language program that will allow her to conduct research for her master's thesis on "The Holocaust in Rivne'ska Oblast 1941-1945: A Case Study," currently under the direction of Professor Steven Zdatny. At the culmination of the program, she will travel to the villages of Berezhne, Mokvyn, and Rivne, Ukraine to conduct research in local archives, and interviews with local villagers regarding the largely neglected August 1942 *Aktion* by the *Einsatzgruppen* where 3,680 Jews were killed. Her thesis will explore themes of Jewish-Ukrainian relations, collaboration, eyewitness testimony, and problems and politics of Holocaust remembrance and memorialization in Ukrainian historical culture.



Forrest Parsons completed his MA thesis under the direction of Professor Nicole Phelps (History). After an intriguing conversation during a seminar with professor Alan Steinweis in the spring of 2012, he decided to investigate the persecution of Jewish athletes during the 1936 Olympics. In 1931 Germany had been chosen by the International Olympic Committee to host the 1936 Olympic games, symbolizing Germany's return to the fold of nations after its defeat during the First World War. When Hitler came to power in 1933, many people in the United States, especially in the athletic community, raised concerns about a "Nazi" Olympics. In spite of his party's stance on internationalism, Hitler quickly assured the world that Germany would do everything possible to host a successful Olympic festival. For the next two years a massive debate raged in the United States about whether or not an American team should be sent to Germany in light of Hitler's treatment of Germany's Jewish population. Ultimately, the boycott movement was

defeated and the United States sent its largest team yet to the Olympics. Interestingly, his research led him to focus primarily on cultural and racial identity in America and how it related to Olympic athletes. During media coverage of the Games the success of African American athletes was the dominant story – completely overshadowing the real problem, which was the persecution of Jews in Germany. This phenomenon reflects the fact that by the 1930s most Americans came to view race in terms of "black" and "white."



Kassandra LaPrade Seuthe will begin graduate study at the University of Vermont in the Fall 2013 semester, after completing three years as a German Language Specialist and Research Assistant in the exhibitions division at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. She contributed to the museum's most recent special exhibition, *Some Were Neighbors: Collaboration and Complicity in the Holocaust*. In the course of her professional research she has become familiar with an array of primary source collections, including the Linz Gestapo files, which she reviewed for voluntary denunciations implicating individuals accused of behavior deemed criminal by the state. Kassandra earned a B.A. in Germanic Languages and Literature at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in 2008. While an undergraduate there, she completed a certificate in Medieval Studies and participated in the Baden-Württemberg academic exchange at the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität in Heidelberg, Germany. Her recent experience with the US Holocaust Memorial Museum has informed her ambition to pursue a master's degree in History at the University of Vermont, and has narrowed her scholarly focus to Modern German History and the Holocaust. Kassandra's particular areas of interest include the experiences of German women who encountered, and in isolated instances, became perpetrators in mass violence, and Nazi policies concerning foreign forced labor in rural agrarian communities. She is the recipient of a UVM Graduate College Fellowship.

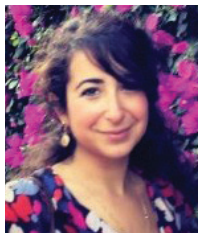


Last summer, **Michelle Sigiel** traveled to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC to conduct research for her MA thesis on the leadership of *Die Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien* (The Jewish Community of Vienna) from 1938 to 1942. She successfully defended her MA thesis in March 2013. The thesis analyzes the decision-making process of the *Gemeinde* leadership regarding emigration from Austria, social welfare, and health services within the Jewish community during years of persecution and deportation. It focuses on how community leaders chose which groups of people to provide aid to in the before-mentioned fields, and the factors shaping their decisions. For example, one chapter explores the influence of anti-immigration sentiment in English-speaking countries on the *Gemeinde* leadership's selection of suitable youth candidates for emigration. In July 2012, Michelle Sigiel also enjoyed the opportunity to participate in a summer fellowship program co-sponsored by the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City and the Auschwitz Jewish Center in Oswiecim, Poland. The program took graduate students on a study tour of major cities and smaller towns in Central and Western Poland where they explored Polish, Jewish, and Holocaust history. Students attended seminars at Jagiellonian University in Krakow where they explored topics in Polish-Jewish history ranging from the early modern period to the post-WWII era. She has also been nominated to the Phi Alpha Theta Honors Society in the field of history. After graduating in May 2013, Michelle will be studying Yiddish in Lithuania at the Vilnius Yiddish Institute's summer program.

Report from Haifa

UVM Graduate Pursuing Advanced Study of the Holocaust in Israel

By Jordanna Gessler, UVM Class of 2011



As the grandchild of Holocaust survivors, information and conversation about the Holocaust were never lacking in my upbringing, and I have always had a particularly strong interest in the topic. Whereas my father and his family were never fond of discussing their struggles to survive and often shied away from any Holocaust related topic, I was enthralled by the subject, constantly asking and learning more about that specific time in history. I assumed that studying the subject would remain just a hobby, confined to my local library and bedroom walls. While in my second year at the University of Vermont, I discovered the Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies and realized that my passion could be pursued at the academic level. The plethora of Holocaust studies classes afforded me a place where my interest and knowledge could flourish, and I began to tailor my academic pursuits toward preparing myself for a continuing education in Holocaust studies. During my senior year I took a seminar in Modern Europe: *Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*, for which I wrote a research paper delving into the issue of mixed marriages in Germany during the Holocaust. Based on my research, I argued that intermarried couples faced unyielding hardships and degradation, yet continued their fight to survive while crippling the ambitions of the Nazis, and for that reason, were resisters.

After my graduation from the University of Vermont, I was hired as an account manager at a technology company, but I slowly realized that I was not truly satisfied with a simple office job and yearned for more satisfaction out of my work. Following countless hours of contemplation and self-reflection, I discovered that I would benefit both emotionally and academically from going back to school and pursuing a Masters degree in a field that I was passionate about, which was without question Holocaust studies. With a little help from Google, I discovered the Weiss-Livnat International MA Holocaust studies program at the University of Haifa, Israel, which, luckily, is taught in English. I was immediately drawn to their assortment of classes, ranging from History of the Final Solution to Psychological Perspectives of the Holocaust. My class is made up of 29 students who not only cover a wide age range, but also come from numerous countries. I thoroughly appreciate the different opinions that the diversity of our group provides.

Despite the difficulties in uprooting and moving to another country and culture, I have truly enjoyed my unique experience studying the Holocaust in Israel and all the opportunities that have been afforded to me. While working on my degree, I have been interning in the Righteous Among the Nations department at Yad Vashem where I analyze, collect, and organize data and evidence in order to initiate potential righteous candidacy files. This research highlights the few but remarkable benevolent moments that took place during the Holocaust; at such a horrific and abhorrent time in human history, people were somehow able to muster the courage and exhibit true heroism. This reminder

is never lost on me. In addition to my internship, I have had the opportunity to volunteer with Amcha, an Israeli organization for Holocaust survivors. I meet with a charming lady named Yehudit, once a week. She speaks four languages without formal education and has a love for books. Despite her being legally blind, she continues her passion for literature through audio books. Yehudit also happens to have survived Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, yet her past hardships do not seem to have had any negative effect on her humor and generosity.

One of the most moving experiences I have encountered occurred while I was working on my final paper for my course, titled Qualitative Research Techniques for Historians. We were instructed to interview someone as part of our final, and I chose to interview a survivor named Esther, whose life story I knew had never been officially documented. I was extremely nervous in the days leading up to my interview, terrified that I would somehow upset Esther or cause her pain. I ended up spending over four hours with Esther talking about everything from her Holocaust experience to my future plans. We both opened up and had an incredibly deep, intimate conversation. She gave me advice that I will always carry with me, and we shared a bond during those hours that will never be replicated. My time with Esther personified the importance of documentation and interaction with Holocaust survivors.

This particular masters program is comprised of three semesters of interdisciplinary courses plus an additional year to work on the MA thesis. My thesis will be a comparative, historical study of specific Holocaust memorials in Paris, Vienna, and Berlin. My intention is to capture the correlation between Holocaust history and Holocaust memorials with regards to the specific countries' own experiences with Nazism and the systematic murder of the Jews. My desire is to research the history of the German occupied countries, their relationship with Nazi Germany, their relationship to those of the Jewish faith, and the correlation of the subsequent memorials.

My tremendous experiences thus far have not only provided me with sentimental satisfaction and intellectual growth, but have furthermore affirmed my desire to be a scholar in the Holocaust field. Continuing dissection of the actions and subsequent consequences of the Holocaust is imperative to both maintain remembrance of the past and continue future education. I have grown both emotionally and mentally during this program; I am dedicated to the importance of maintaining the conversation of Holocaust research. I want to work on ensuring that events of this historically significant time period are never forgotten, because survivor testimony is literally dying out. My grandfather's personal story died with him due to his aversion to discussing his experience. I hope to work to guarantee preservation of survivors' stories, memories, and experiences for future scholars. Continuing research for generations to come is incredibly important to me. I want to make certain that research in this field does not falter. I believe that preserving the experience of struggle, perseverance, and freedom is an imperative for the Jewish people, as it for all peoples.

Holocaust Studies Courses Offered at UVM

Fall 2012

Modern Germany (Schrafstetter)
Moral and Religious Perspectives on the Holocaust
(Sugarman)
The Holocaust in the Netherlands (Barnouw)
Seminar: Vichy France (Zdatny)
Seminar: Nazi Germany (Steinweis)

Spring 2013

The Holocaust (Steinweis)
World War II (Buchanan)

Fall 2013

History of Zionism to 1948 (Nicosia)
History of Poland (Huener)
The Holocaust (Huener)
Seminar: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany (Nicosia)

Through the Crystal - Lessons from a Father

By Deborah Hilberg

Following is the text of the speech delivered by Deborah Hilberg at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, at the event marking the Hebrew-language publication of her father's work, The Destruction of the European Jews, in 2012. The Miller Center for Holocaust Studies at UVM is grateful for her permission to reprint these remarks.

A few days ago, while looking for images, photographs that might possibly accompany these short words, I came across a first draft of an essay or bookchapter that my father had written and shared with the family. The essay was about the limitations of the historian, but what stood out to me at this particular time was the sentence: "Almost inevitably the researcher will transverse three phases. During the first phase a bewildering array of sources and pieces of information are revealed. During the second phase connections are made, insights drawn, and finally, a picture emerges."

My father noted this process as applicable to others, and indeed it is a sequence familiar to many students. As students, especially children, we have a great advantage: We are allowed to ask almost anything and we do not know yet which questions we are not supposed to ask: Daddy, why did the Shoah happen (when I was older he referred me to Christopher Browning)? Where does lightning come from? Do you consider yourself a survivor? Why was Grandpa arrested by the Nazis - what did he do wrong? Are you a historian? Well, then why is the Holocaust taught in some universities? Do you think that facts can stand alone or do you believe that individual facts cannot speak for themselves (this prompted by the war crimes trials of the 1980s)? Are you an American? Do you think in English or in Austrian German?

Parents inevitably and unavoidably are - by commission, omission or total absence - teachers to their children. While my father did not always teach me directly about the Holocaust, he did often teach through the lens of the Holocaust.

When reading this essay he had written, I debated whether to emphasize today the third phase he had written about. This would show a more sophisticated picture: how much my father was able to teach me, the extent to which father and daughter were able to continually engage in this learning process, no matter how wide the gaps in our fields of interest.

By coming to Israel at the age of 18 and deciding, three days before the start of my freshman year, to stay here and become a dual citizen, I could not possibly have found a less convenient way of transitioning into young adulthood. He tried, but could not hide his delight with my choice of a home here in Jerusalem. The topics of study I had chosen, on the other hand ... Religion? He claimed he was allergic to it. Education? Mediocrity. Psychology? For this he reserved a special word which I cannot use in mixed company.

But the strength of the father-daughter discourse could not be suppressed. There were surprises. We found his teachings in my choices of work and study. We discovered that we were often using a different language to grapple with issues bound at their roots.

As an educator in Israel I was faced early on with the challenge of Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day); even kindergarten-children with special needs were aware of the day. I realized that quickly I would need to quickly formulate and provide a basic context, which would help the children organize and understand the frightening snippets of information they were hearing.

With this goal, I questioned my father as to the details of his early childhood experiences in Nazi-occupied Vienna, and with his blessing turned his story into a little improvised storybook which I continue to use with the children I teach. My father was pleased with the children's response and their questions. "Do the Germans today still want to kill Jews? Why not?" "If the Germans today know that it is wrong to kill Jews, why didn't they know it then?"

These children are as good as my students, my father said, and better than some. At this point, I was also suddenly aware that just as the writings of survivors reflect their experiences, so my father as a child had watched and was acutely aware of the details of the German occupation and later with this eye for detail wrote about and greatly expanded upon what he had witnessed.

To describe this phase would provide a picture more sophisticated - and would most likely be more familiar to you.

The other choice today would be to address the beginning, the first messy phase, the confusing pieces which slowly become a foundation. This does not show as complete a picture, but I am fairly sure it will show a picture less familiar to his colleagues and more appropriate to this section of the day.

You are familiar with his published works. I am doubtful, however, that many of you are familiar with some unpublished originals, such as the story of "The Cabbage Soup Sofa." No one has heard it? Original laundry detergent "commercials" performed for his children in the laundry room? Moisturizing properties of Dove soap? No one has ever gone grocery shopping with the professor? You have missed out.

So, we will go with the first phase, the beginning of the teachings.

Beginning: Evening

I recall these lessons as a conversation, one long conversation, that evolved, took different forms - one that spanned years and continents. There is a definitive moment that stands out to me as the beginning of this conversation.

It is dusk. From the windows one only sees the muted green of grass and trees, tall, and as far as the eye can see. Silence; only an occasional rustle of leaves in a gentle breeze. A sweet smell, of lawn, forest and flowers brings this world through the windows and into the house. Here too it is quiet. Sounds muffled by thick carpets. The colors of furniture, paintings and other works of art just discernible in the glow of a night light.

We could be anywhere. The countryside? Somewhere in Western Europe? There is no peanut butter here, no ketchup in these kitchen cupboards. Any windows facing the reality of an American suburb are closed with heavy drapes. This summer evening, I am about five. As usual at bedtime, my father closes the drapes and pulls up the purple-flowered bed covers. Occasionally, I would ask to learn a new German word or to hear a story (if time would allow I would gladly share with you "The Thief and the Stained Glass Window," or the continuation of "The Cabbage Soup Sofa on Fire.")

This particular night as he closed the drapes, I did have a question: "Daddy, did the Nazis kill children, too?" After quickly weighing his options, he later told me, he decided on the truth and answered "Yes."

"But that is unfair." I exclaimed. He nodded his head affirmatively, and so father and daughter agreed. We understood each other. With that one word, "Yes," I already knew a great deal. This was a beautiful world. It was also a world in which people did very bad things. They sometimes killed other people for no good reason at all, even little girls like me, and no, it was not fair.

The Context

It took many years of observing others, and of my own search for a home, to understand where exactly we were, this beautiful place where the seasons swirled around with hues of green, white snowflakes, and falling leaves the colors of flames.

My father had always been an extension of the quintessential wandering Jew. Driving through the city he would sometimes point out the Jewish cemetery directly opposite the small airport. There are only two ways of leaving here, he would say. This is an exile within an exile.

He had been evicted from his home in Vienna at gun point. He had "wandered." Cuba, America, Europe, America, Puerto Rico, Israel, America -and had concluded that there was no home. This eerily sad beautiful bubble was a creation of an Austria lost - not the Austria from which he had been driven out of, but grief for

an Austria that never was - an Austria that might have resisted the German occupation whose citizens did not betray their Jewish friends and neighbors.

This is a context not understood by children, but known and felt. A context of grief, betrayal, and the homelessness of the eternal refugee.

The Crystal

This wandering Jew traveled often. Upon his return from distant places I would often find a small gift on my bedside table: a small exotic doll, a bar of soap with an unfamiliar scent, a box of intricate mosaic. On one such occasion I was drawn to the bedside table by an object sparkling in the sun. I already had a small family of turtles, each hewn from a different source. This new addition was a crystal turtle, with jeweled eyes and a faceted shell.

"It's beautiful," I gasped. "But look, Deborah," my father said. "Hold it up to your eye." I did so and saw this was the type of crystal through which one could look into the world, and suddenly prisms with rainbows of color would appear. One could turn the turtle and with each new angle, look at the same person, room, or window and see it very differently.

The Baby Monkey

A few years later he took me on a short trip, from the gentle hills and streams, to a Big Noisy City with trains thundering overhead and underground, for goodness sake, with impossibly high buildings, and concrete and more concrete. Most important, however, was that this strange city had a zoo - the Bronx Zoo? Here we wandered together, looking at the animals until we came upon a troupe of small monkeys in a cage behind a pane of glass ... Transfixed, I pleaded for a monkey to take home (I already had a kitten. Kitten monkey, why not), one like the smallest baby who had caught my attention. My father reassured me that we could come back next year and I could visit my baby monkey again. But no, I explained, by then he will be bigger, I won't know which one he is - and Daddy, how do they tell each other apart? "That, Deborah," he said, "is what they are saying about us."

Readings and Connections

As children we grow, and like the researchers described in my father's essay, we try to make connections, fill in the blanks.

I do not recall when I was first aware of the Holocaust. It was simply another presence in the house, an additional member of the family, that changed and grew - and magically, like anything peered at through my crystal turtle, took different forms when seen from different angles. Rather early in elementary school I asked to read books from my father's library. The first book he found for me was "I Cannot Forgive" by Rudolf Vrba and Alan Bestic. The second, Elie Wiesel's "Night," then "I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz," and the "Diary of Adam Czerniakow."

Later I was confused when my father was perceived by others as focusing on the perpetrators, because these books - the survivor's story - was my introduction to the Holocaust. The people who wrote these stories recalled being frightened, humiliated and victimized. My father spoke of them in admiration; those who, from circumstance, or from some kind of fortitude, or a combination of both, had survived. I thought of the emotion behind my father's words of admiration, the very different feelings these authors had felt, and I remembered my crystal. I was a bigger girl now, almost thirteen, and thought I knew much more. Like my father's second phase of the researcher, I could begin to make connections.

In this complex world there is grief with beauty. Life with death. The familiar with the strange. There are killers, there are the dead that still have a presence, and there are those who emerge and describe places so dark I was sure that had I been in their place, I would not have had their courage, I would not have survived. No matter how jarring the closeness, the relationship between all of these truths was inevitable. I knew that the world can look quite different when looked at from different perspectives - like my crystal turtle. The world also looks different depending on who is holding the turtle. There are different groups of people. Sometimes we are on opposite sides of the glass. But the transparency is an illusion.

Sometimes a group looks so different that its members look alike to me and seem to lose their individuality.

Sometimes people look different to me. Sometimes people don't look different to me but someone decided that they are. Sometimes "different" means "less than"; this isn't fair and the results, as I read, and had long known, are catastrophic.

Charades and Shopping

Going to the zoo is special. Going to ordinary places with my father was also special (and some might be surprised) fun. If you are American or familiar with American colloquialisms, you will understand the phrase "Can't we take you anywhere?" Usually a phrase aimed at children, this was almost always reserved for my father.

In some department stores, if you find an item that you wish to buy - a rake, a hammer, a kitchen clock - you cannot simply take it off the shelf and purchase it. You have to fill out a long form and only then the item, if it is in stock, will be brought to you. Filling out forms; these were things my father had not much patience for.

Much more interesting to him would be to initiate a performance in which, to my delight, sales people would unwittingly take part. For example, on eyeing a long detailed form necessary for the purchase of a lawn mower part, my father handed the pen back, shaking his head sadly. "I'm sorry, but I am illiterate and cannot write." "Oh, that is just fine," said the kindly sales lady. "I will fill it out for you."

I don't think he ever filled out one of those forms. There was always a different reason, another performance. Sometimes I would start to giggle and he would turn around and say, "Now you ruined it."

Occasionally someone would fall into one of these charades and not know how to get out.

My father could drive, but preferred trains and walking, and did not carry a driver's license. Inevitably he would be asked to produce this as a form of ID along with a credit card or check. "Oh, they don't give driver's licenses to ex-cons like me," he might say. If checks without driver's licenses were not accepted, he might ask, "Do you accept national treasury notes?" "Do you know what a national treasury note is?"

When we arrived home after one of these outings, I announced to Gwen, my stepmother: "Daddy was torturing the sales people again." "No," he said, pausing, "I was educating them!"

The one he was educating was his daughter. Don't believe everything you are told. It is easy to look and not see, listen and not hear. Details are important. Mistakes can be fatal.

The Janitor

Without a driver's license he would often use his university ID. "Oh," people would usually ask, "and what do you teach?" "Oh, I am the janitor," he would answer. This went on for years. When I noticed he had stopped doing this, I asked him why. Because, my father answered, someone finally knew and said, "You are not the janitor." "How do you know this?" my father had asked. "I know this because I am the janitor!"

This was another lesson. The truth can be found in surprising places. Janitor. Professor. In what context might I be a janitor? In another a professor? Who is to judge? Who holds the truth? Don't assume you know where it is to be found, don't assume you know it.

Facts, books, humor stories, performances. These were the building blocks of the foundation my father passed on. This father-daughter conversation continued over decades, across continents. With each increment of development, at each stage of life, the crystal turns just a bit and the emerging picture widens, or changes. I cannot say when or if there was an end to this conversation, but I can say it began one summer night long ago. Yes, the Nazis also killed children.

DEBORAH HILBERG is a special education teacher and lives in Jerusalem. She was born in Burlington, Vermont and emigrated from the US to Israel in 1989. She studied at the B'not Chayil Seminar for Girls Bayit V'Gan, David Yellin Teacher's College and The Hebrew University. For ten years she taught at the newly formed mainstreaming Communication Kindergartens for Children with Autism Disorders. She continues to work as a special educator and specializes in the field of autism.

The Ordinary Soldiers Project

by Jody M. Prescott, UVM Class of 1983

Under the auspices of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the West Point Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, a multi-disciplinary team has created a lesson plan that uses a case study of a particular Wehrmacht battalion in German-occupied Belarus to teach military cadets and civilian students leadership and ethics in the context of orders to commit genocide. Waitman Beorn, Assistant Professor of History & Louis and Frances Blumkin Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha, provided the basis for the Ordinary Soldiers Project with his University of North Carolina doctoral dissertation on the execution of Jewish civilians by Wehrmacht units conducting rear area security missions in the area around Mogilev, Belarus in October 1941.

In the first week of October 1941, the commander of 1st Battalion, 691st Regiment, an infantry unit, ordered each of his three company commanders to kill all the Jews in their respective areas of operation. One commander complied immediately. A second commander refused outright. The third commander initially avoided complying with the order, but once it was confirmed, he ordered his company's first sergeant, the senior non-commissioned officer in the company, to organize the executions and then absented himself from the scene. Three different officers – each with the same command position in the battalion – had three different responses to an illegal order. Further, the officers and soldiers in this unit were among the most ordinary of men, significantly older than average, whose duty prior to conducting security operations in Belarus had been occupation duty in the Loire Valley in France. Unbloodied in combat, likely substandard in equipment and training, this battalion presents an excellent case study in leadership and ethics for students to consider how and why different commanders had such different responses to an illegal order.

Composed of Holocaust historians and educators, and a military lawyer, the team created a modular lesson plan that can be taught in either a one hour lecture, a two hour case study, or a six hour small group discussion format. The six hour small group discussion format is very intensive, and it uses Army Regulation 15-6, Investigations, as the vehicle to conduct the small group discussion and report back to the class. With the support of the Miller Center for Holocaust Studies and the UVM Army ROTC battalion, this lesson plan was first delivered in March and April 2012 at UVM. It was then briefed at a workshop held in May 2012 at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum for service academy faculty. As a result, the lesson plan was taught in the fall of 2012 at the U.S. Air Force Academy and at West Point. This spring saw the one and two hour lessons taught to ROTC cadets at Princeton and Creighton, and to a civilian Holocaust class at UVM.

This spring also saw the first testing and delivery of the six hour lesson format, using Army ROTC cadets at UVM and Norwich to conduct peer-to-peer training. First, the freshman and senior UVM cadets attended the one hour historical lecture. The freshmen were to serve as the test bed for the seniors to hone their small group discussion facilitator skills upon. The next week, the seniors were trained in facilitating small group discussion using the lesson plan. For the third



meeting, the senior UVM cadets then each took a group of freshmen and led them through the lesson plan to address an investigation into the executions. In the meantime, the senior Norwich cadets received the historical lecture. Finally, on April 24, on the floor of Kreitzberg Arena at Norwich, twelve UVM discussion facilitators each linked up with groups of about six Norwich cadets.

The groups were each tasked with using the Army investigation format to come up with what they believed were the relevant facts, the standards that were material to determining why the executions occurred, their findings as to whether the 1st Battalion commanders were criminally or morally culpable, and what their recommendations would be to prevent these sorts of atrocities in the future. The scribes at each table, Norwich cadets, then briefed back to the entire group what their results were, and explained them to the rest of the students. Norwich juniors who were Journalism majors served as process observers, and briefed the entire group on what they had seen play out as the discussion groups worked through their tasks. Finally, two Norwich seniors summed up what they believed were the important points of the lesson regarding the protection of civilians, and how those points were relevant to the new jobs they would be shortly taking on as Army platoon leaders.

The reception to the lesson plan has been favorable on the part of the cadets across the span of format styles. The one hour and two hour lesson plan formats provide useful historical and discussion material, and are well suited for a typical classroom with either civilian or military students. Although the six hour lesson perhaps lends itself best to a military audience because of the greater familiarity required with group dynamics and operations at the small unit level, the next logical step is to test it with mixed civilian and military groups. Ideally, the six hour lesson plan should then culminate in what might be the most challenging, but perhaps the most rewarding, format – U.S. and German cadets in mixed discussion groups.

JODY M. PRESCOTT is a retired U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps colonel. His assignments included teaching at the Command & General Staff College and West Point, and serving as the Chief Legal Advisor in Afghanistan from 2008-2009. He is a Senior Fellow, West Point Center for the Rule of Law, and an adjunct professor for the University of Vermont's Department of Political Science. In addition to being part of the Ordinary Soldiers Project, his research and writing focus on three major evolving national security topics: gender, alternative energy, and cyber conflict. His recent work includes: *NATO Gender Mainstreaming and the Feminist Critique of the Law of Armed Conflict*, *GEORGETOWN JOURNAL OF GENDER AND THE LAW* (Winter 2013); *Ridgelines and the National Security Implications of Commercial Wind Energy Development in Vermont*, *VERMONT JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW* (Fall 2012); *Direct Participation in Cyber Hostilities: Terms of Reference for Like-Minded States?*, *PROCEEDINGS, 4TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CYBER CONFLICT*, NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence (Summer 2012).

EVENTS OF THE PAST YEAR

October 17, 2012

Vichy and the Holocaust: New Perspectives on History and Memory

Henry Rousso, Institut d'histoire du temps présent, Paris

Since the end of the 1970s, the memory of the Holocaust in France has been a vivid and controversial issue. The continual debates of recent decades over the behavior of the Vichy regime, the French population, and the Jews themselves have led to tremendous changes in perceptions of French national history. At the same time, French and foreign historians have produced a great amount of work about Vichy France and the Holocaust. Nevertheless, many issues remain unresolved. Why has the balance of casualties been less important in France than in other Western countries? Why were the majority of the victims foreign Jews? Why, despite the great efforts provided in terms of reparation, is France still accused, especially in the US, of not being able to “cope with its past”? Whatever the answers, historians can not deal with these issues without leaving the national framework and adopting a comparative perspective.



Henry Rousso is Senior Researcher at the Institute for Contemporary History, Paris, and professor at the University of Paris-Ouest Nanterre. He coordinates the European Network on Contemporary history (EURHISTXX). He has published: *The Vichy Syndrome. History and Memory in France since 1944* (1987 & 1991); *Vichy, An Ever-Present Past*, with E. Conan (1994 & 1998); *The Haunting Past. History, Memory, and Justice in France* (1998 & 2002); *Stalinism and Nazism* (Ed.) (1999 & 2004); *Vichy. L'Événement, la mémoire, l'histoire* (2001); *Le dossier Lyon III. Le racisme et le négationnisme à l'université Jean-Moulin* (2004); *Le Régime de Vichy* (2007), *Das Vichy-Regime in Geschichte, Erinnerung und Recht* (Göttingen: 2010). He is currently writing a biography of Serge Klarsfeld.

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Two Events with David Barnouw

Visiting Professor at the University of Vermont, Fall 2012

A senior member of the staff at the Netherlands Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam, David Barnouw is the co-editor of the definitive scholarly edition of the diary of Anne Frank, as well as the author of numerous works on the Dutch experience in World War Two. During the Fall 2012 semester he was based at UVM, where he taught a course on the Holocaust in the Netherlands.



September 14, 2012

Lecture

Laughter and Amusement in Confinement: Jewish Culture in Westerbork

Almost every week a train with thousands of Jews left the Westerbork Transit Camp for Auschwitz, Sobibor, Theresienstadt, or Bergen-Belsen -- more than 100,000 Jews in all, only 5,000 of whom would return. And almost every week there was cabaret, light music and serious music, theater, and ballet performed by the Jewish inmates, sometimes including famous performers from Germany. The German camp commander, SS-Obersturmführer Albert Konrad Gemmeker, was proud of his camp, with its well-constructed barracks, its perfect administration (by the Jewish inmates), the absence of open resistance, the minimal number of escapes, and the smoothly running train. He was so delighted with “his” camp, that he produced a documentary (filmed by the Jewish inmates) to show how efficiently it ran. The Jewish prisoners had to work, but there was a school for the children, a very good hospital for sick prisoners, and a prison barrack for those who violated the rules. There were also sports events and cultural events, with Gemmeker and his staff seated in the front row at every premiere, which took place mostly in the evening, after the deportation train had left “to the East.” The Jewish performers tried to save their lives in this way, and the Jewish audiences tried to enjoy the distraction.

Lecture in honor of Cecelia Dry upon her retirement from UVM, with financial support from the employees of UVM Student Financial Services

EVENTS OF THE PAST YEAR

November 16, 2012

Seminar

Recent Trends in Holocaust Research in the Netherlands

In this informal presentation, Dr. Barnouw discussed the emergence and development of Holocaust scholarship in the Netherlands, focusing on how views of Dutch society during the Nazi occupation have become more scholarly and nuanced over time.

February 22, 2013

Seminar

Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*: Toward a Scholarly Edition

Edith Raim, Institute for Contemporary History, Munich

In 2015, the copyright for Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, which is currently owned by the Bavarian Ministry of Finance, will expire. This prompts the question how Germany will deal with Hitler's problematic literary legacy. The Institute of Contemporary History in Munich has been entrusted with the task of preparing an annotated scholarly edition of *Mein Kampf* in order to preempt the mass publication of uncritical editions of the book. A member of the team in Munich that is preparing the scholarly edition, Dr. Raim discussed how historians can confront the challenge of presenting Hitler's repulsive text to a mass readership.



Edith Raim studied history and German literature at the University of Munich and at Princeton. Her doctoral dissertation culminated in a book about the 15 Jewish subcamps of Dachau concentration camp in the last phase of the Second World War (*Die Dachauer KZ-Außenkommandos Kaufering und Mühldorf. Rüstungsbauten und Zwangsarbeit im letzten Kriegsjahr 1944/45*). She has taught at the Universities of Durham and Liverpool in Great Britain, has worked at the Haus der Geschichte in Bonn, Germany, and has been a fellow at the Mémorial – un musée pour la paix in Caen, France. Since 1999 she has been employed by the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, working on a database encompassing all West and East German judicial investigations and trials for Nazi crimes. In 2012 she earned her Habilitation at the University of Augsburg, where she is also on the faculty, with a study of West German prosecutions of Nazi crimes in the years 1945 to 1949. Since 2010 she has been working on the scholarly annotated edition of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

Monday, March 18, 2013

The Memory of War and Atrocity in Contemporary French Politics

John Flower, University of Kent at Canterbury

Understandably the dramatic years of the Nazi occupation of France (1940-45) have remained deeply ingrained in the national psyche and its memory forms an indelible part of what the former prime minister, François Fillon, coined (in connection with the Algerian War) the country's sense of "collective guilt." The ways in which the years of Nazi occupation have been recalled and presented have been subject to a variety of factors – to the distance with which each subsequent generation views it, to the discovery of new material, as well as to how the events of those years could be adapted for subsequent purposes. This lecture traced – with reference to novels, films, and newspaper surveys – some of the ways and the reasons for which the recollection of the Occupation has shifted. In particular it examined how, especially prior to and after the presidential election, there was a marked political maneuvering of its history and memories.



John Flower, Officier de Palmes académiques, has held the chair of French in the UK at the universities of Exeter and Kent, where he is now Emeritus Professor, and in France has been professeur invité at Paris-X Nanterre, Bordeaux and Avignon. He has published widely on the literature and culture of France in the 20th century, especially the work of writers of the Left and of François Mauriac. His recent publications include *François Mauriac et Jean Paulhan; Correspondance 1925-1967* (2001), *Autour de la 'Lettre aux directeurs de la Résistance' de Jean Paulhan* (2003), *Joan of Arc: Icon of Modern Culture* (2008), *François Mauriac, journaliste: les vingt premières années* (2011) and *Historical Dictionary of French Literature* (2012). He is Editor of the *Journal of European Studies*. **Sponsored by the Department of Romance Languages**

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EVENTS OF THE PAST YEAR

March 22, 2013

Seminar

German Intelligence and the Holocaust

Katrin Paehler, Illinois State University

Walter Schellenberg, the last head of Heinrich Himmler's political foreign intelligence service, filled many roles in Nazi Germany. As Reinhard Heydrich's right hand man, he claimed to have been central to the negotiation of the Einsatzgruppen agreement of April 1941. He signed the decree that made impossible the emigration of Belgian and French Jews in May 1941. He briefed Himmler on the infamous AB-Aktion in Poland and on racially and politically defined enemies in the Low Countries. He attempted to rethink and to conduct intelligence and counterintelligence—and an independent SS foreign policy—in racialized and ideologized terms. How, then, did Schellenberg manage to remake himself into a diplomat at war's end? How did he eke out a place in the history books closer to Canaris and Speer than to his erstwhile associates Himmler, Heydrich, or "Gestapo-Müller"? How did his writings come to be seen as a reasonably reliable historical source, especially on the last months of Nazi Germany?

This seminar addressed Schellenberg's unusual and surprisingly successful attempt to reconfigure his past. Rather than downplaying his role in Nazi Germany, he crafted a coherent narrative that embraced certain roles. He portrayed himself as the ultimate insider, willing to assist the Allies in their post-war efforts to bring Nazi perpetrators to justice; as a cosmopolitan diplomat respected abroad; and as a humanitarian and thwarted peacemaker, who had played a key role in the Bernadotte Mission and who, in late April 1945, had persuaded Himmler to offer conditional surrender to General Eisenhower. Schellenberg thus created a usable past for himself that still reverberates in the history books.

Katrin Paehler, Associate Professor of History at Illinois State University, specializes her research and teaching on Nazi Germany, the Holocaust, foreign intelligence, genocide studies as well as history, memory, and representation. She authored a subsection of *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit. Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (München: Blessing, 2010) and has published chapters, in German and English, in edited volumes on the Nazi Security and Intelligence Service; on Foreign Intelligence and the Holocaust; on the West German memory on the Siege of Leningrad; and on film. She is revising for publication with Cambridge University Press her book *Making Intelligence Nazi: The SD, Foreign Intelligence, and Ideology*, and is co-editing with David Messenger the volume, "Nazi Self-Help" and *Recast Identities: Post-War Fates of Nazi Functional Elites*, for the University Press of Kentucky.



April 8, 2013

Yom Hashoah Lecture

Photography, Jews, and the Holocaust: The Eclipse of a Field

Michael Berkowitz, University College London

In the context of the Holocaust, historians are aware that certain socio-economic realms in which European Jews were heavily involved were 'Aryanized' and almost thoroughly destroyed. Yet traces and memory of such activity remains. That is, we know that Jews were well out of proportion to their numbers as market-square traders in much of pre-war Eastern Europe. Jews were heavily involved in Poland and elsewhere in textiles. In Central and Eastern Europe Jews dealt with wholesale and retail ready-to-wear clothing. Establishments such as bookshops, liquor stores, and tobacco shops were often in Jewish hands. Jews were a major part of the diamond trade in the Low Countries (and Germany, until the Nazis). The visual evidence from Kristallnacht alone reveals many clusters of businesses in which Jews were notable if not prevalent. One area, though, where there has been little notice of a Jewish presence, is in photography. Jews were conspicuous in establishing commercial premises, devising and popularizing studio practices, advancing film and optical technologies, participating in empire and state-building photographic expeditions, photojournalism, advertising, fashion and sport photography, the retailing of cameras, film, and photo equipment, and the merging of photography into the fine arts, avant-garde, and social-political movements. Some attention has been paid to the photographing of Jews "as Jews" particularly in interwar Europe, but the integration of photography in most of the historiography on European Jewry from 1900 to 1945 tends to be illustrative rather than analytic. Jewry's complex, and often Jewishly self-conscious engagement with photography world-wide—beyond "Holocaust representations"—has generally escaped scholarly notice. This is part of an effort to reconstruct and interpret a critical dimension of Jewish life that was in great part decimated in the Nazi onslaught, about which there is scant recognition of what was lost.

EVENTS OF THE PAST YEAR



Michael Berkowitz is Professor of Jewish History at University College, London. A native of Rochester, New York, he received his BA from Hobart College and his MA and PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he studied under George L. Mosse. His scholarship has dealt broadly with modern Jewish identity formation and political self-representations, 1881-1948; relationships between art, politics, and culture; sport (especially boxing) and spectacle; the politics of religion in Mandate Palestine; perceptions of criminality and social deviance from early modern times to the present; Jews and German culture; ties between charity and nationalism; and modes of understanding and misunderstanding the Holocaust. His many books include *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (1993); *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality* (2007); *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project, 1914-1933* (1997), and *The Jewish Self-Image: American and British Perspectives, 1881-1939* (2000). Professor Berkowitz's current work is on the engagement of Jews and photography. He is preparing a book tentatively entitled *Jews and Photography in Britain: Connections and Developments, 1850-2007*.

Underwritten by the Henry and Lili Altschuler Endowment

April 15, 2013

The Annual Raul Hilberg Memorial Lecture

German Churches and the Holocaust: Assessing the Argument for Complicity

Robert P. Ericksen, Pacific Lutheran University

During the first years after 1945, the history of German churches during the Nazi period was mostly written by and for the churches themselves. The result was a story of moral opposition to Adolf Hitler and his ideology, coupled with tales of Christian suffering and adversity under the Nazi regime. Both Catholic and Protestant historians told variations on this story. Furthermore, many on the Allied side were prepared to listen. They could point to people like Martin Niemöller, representatives of the churches who really did suffer for their opposition to the Nazi state. Christians in the Allied world much preferred a story in which Christian values were understood to be antithetical to Nazi values, rather than supportive. As early as the 1960s, some Catholic scholars began to question this story, noting, for example, the silence of Pope Pius XII. By the 1970s and 1980s, Protestant scholars started to poke at the mythology of the "Church Struggle" and the heroic, anti-Nazi image of the Confessing Church. Robert Ericksen has contributed to this reconsideration in a number of important works. In this lecture he assessed whether "complicity" is the best concept for understanding our new, more complicated sense of the relationship between churches and the Holocaust.



Robert P. Ericksen, Kurt Mayer Chair in Holocaust Studies at Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA, studied with James Joll at the London School of Economics, where he earned his Ph.D. in history in 1980. He is the author of *Complicity in the Holocaust: Churches and Universities in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). His first book, *Theologians under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emanuel Hirsch* (Yale, 1985), appeared in German, Dutch and Japanese translations. In 2005 it became the subject of a documentary film, *Theologians under Hitler*, by Steven Martin of Vitalvisuals.com. Ericksen is the author of more than three dozen scholarly articles or chapters on German churches and universities, and has edited three books, including *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust*, co-edited with Susannah Heschel (Fortress Press, 1999). He is a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, serves as chair of the Church Relations Committee of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and is a founding member of the board of editors of *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte*.

The Raul Hilberg Memorial Lecture is made possible through a generous gift from Jerold D. Jacobson, Esquire, of New York City, UVM Class of 1962

EVENTS OF THE PAST YEAR

April 23, 2013

The 24th Harry H. Kahn Memorial Lecture

“When Suddenly Tomorrow Is Another Day”

**German-Jewish Writer Jurek Becker:
His Life and Literary Legacy**

Christine Becker

Christine Becker grew up in a German publishing family and studied German Literature and Publishing at the Free University of Berlin. She was married to Jurek Becker from 1986 until his death in 1997. Their son Jonathan was born in 1990.

Becker edited a collection of letters written by her husband between 1969–96, entitled *You Nonpareils* (2004) followed by a collection of essays, interviews and lectures, entitled *My Father, the Germans and I* (2007), both published by Suhrkamp. She also edited a compilation of essays in the English language – some of them translated by Jonathan Becker. In 2009 she edited an audiobook of readings by Jurek Becker followed by an audiobook of his novel *Bronstein's Children* read by Christoph Grube, which she directed. Since 2007 Becker has visited various Universities in the US to give lectures, introduce film screenings or present books. She is currently working on an English edition of Short Stories written by her husband. Becker lives in Berlin.



Sponsored by the Department of German and Russian

PREVIEW OF NEXT YEAR'S EVENTS

October 8, 2013

Lecture

*Zionist Responses to Nazism in the Jewish
Community in Palestine*

Mark Gelber, Ben Gurion University, Beer Sheva, Israel

October 28, 2013

The Raul Hilberg Memorial Lecture

*Franklin D. Roosevelt and the First News of
the Holocaust*

Richard Breitman, American University

November 5, 2013

Lecture

Richard Wagner in the Third Reich

Pamela Potter, University of Wisconsin-Madison

March 13, 2014

Seminar

*The German Resistance to Hitler and the
Persecution of the Jews*

Peter Hoffmann, McGill University

March 31, 2014

Lecture

Recent Trends in Holocaust Research in Italy

Franklin H. Adler, Macalester College

April 8, 2014

Lecture

*On the Peripheries of the Holocaust: Killings and
Pillage of Jews by their Neighbors in Occupied
Poland*

Jan T. Gross, Princeton University

April 28, 2014

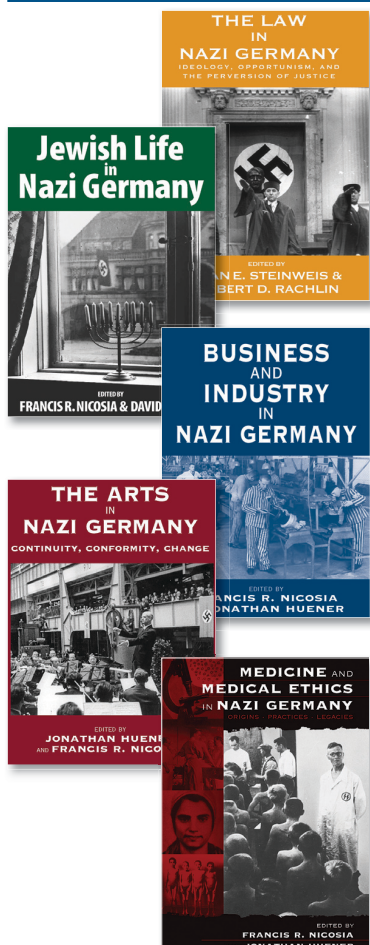
Yom Hashoah Lecture

*Religion, Race and Emotion: The Aryan Jesus in
Nazi Germany*

Susannah Heschel, Dartmouth College

For venues, times, and further details, please visit our website: <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmchs/>

Volumes from the Miller Symposia



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"This slim volume accomplishes a remarkable feat. It provides concise, beautifully crafted essays that provide access to the best scholarship in Nazi cultural history even as they represent the current state of research by leading experts...supplemented with illustrations and primary sources, this work would make an ideal addition to undergraduate and graduate courses on the Third Reich, sure to provoke lively discussion and further study on the arts in Nazi Germany." **German Studies Review**

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BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY IN NAZI GERMANY
Francis R. Nicosia and Jonathan Huener [Eds.]
176 pages • 978-0-57181-654-2 Paperback

"With its five concise case studies, the book gives good insights into methods, trends, and results of recent research." **Historische Zeitschrift**

about the authors

Francis R. Nicosia is the Raul Hilberg Distinguished Professor of Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont.

Jonathan Huener is Associate Professor of History at the University of Vermont where he teaches courses on the Holocaust, German history, and Polish history.

David Scrase is Professor Emeritus of German and Founding Director of the Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont (1993-2006).

Alan E. Steinweis is Miller Distinguished Professor of Holocaust Studies and Director of the Leonard and Carolyn Miller Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont.

Robert D. Rachlin is Senior Director and General Counsel of Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC, in Burlington, Vermont.

*Forthcoming Symposium***Ethnic Minorities and Holocaust Memory: A Global Perspective**

July 11-13, 2013, Jena Center for 20th Century History, University of Jena, Germany

Holocaust memory undoubtedly constitutes a central component of historical consciousness and political culture – in unified Germany as well as in the state of Israel, and in the United States. Yet can we make the same claim about other parts of the world? The study group “Global Holocaust? Memories of the Destruction of European Jews in Global Context” (University of Augsburg, University of Vermont, University of Haifa, Jena Center) has been exploring this and related questions since 2011. Two past conferences focused, for example, on the development of Holocaust memory in Israel, Eastern Europe, and Asia as well as its impact on international relations. The third and final event, a symposium at the Jena Center, now explores how ethnic minorities and immigrants have engaged with the development of Holocaust memory in a variety of national and regional contexts in Western societies. We ask, for example, how minority groups with their own history of violence and/or persecution have responded to manifestations of Holocaust memory. Beyond exploring Western memorial cultures in a transnational context, we investigate the implications of demographic change for Holocaust memory: How have immigrants engaged with the crucial role Holocaust history plays in Western political culture, the media, and educational systems? We thus seek to locate and discuss contradictions in and challenges to a development that scholars have come to refer to as the “globalization” or “universalization” of Holocaust memory. The symposium will be co-sponsored by the Miller Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont, the Jena Center for 20th Century History at the University of Jena, the University of Augsburg, the Stiftung Deutsch-Amerikanische Wissenschaftsbeziehungen, and the research network EURHISTXX.



One of the historic buildings at the University of Jena, Germany

*Forthcoming Symposium***German Society under National Socialism:
Viewpoints and Perspectives**

September 30 - October 2, 2013, Center for Research in Contemporary History (ZZF),
Potsdam, Germany

Co-sponsored by the Center for Research in Contemporary History (ZZF), Potsdam and the Miller Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont.

Organizers: Winfried Süß (Potsdam), Rüdiger Hachtmann (Potsdam), Thomas Schaarschmidt (Potsdam), Alan E. Steinweis (Vermont).

Further details will be posted on our website, <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmchs/>



*The Center for
Research in
Contemporary
History (ZZF)
in Potsdam*

Jewish Children with Disabilities, continued from Page 1

and other participants in the public sphere expressly rejected it. However, the discourse on disability in Germany was now latently different. For the discursive habituation to the idea of the existence of a group of “useless eaters” situated below humanity and threatening Germany’s economic prosperity and public welfare allowed for the possibility that the latent devaluation of disability could be activated and Binding and Hoche’s idea be implemented in social policy under the right circumstances.⁵ In fact, as historians of disability and medicine and cultural historians have pointed out, once manifest and holding root in a culture, the notion of the disabled as not fully human and being the “other” can transcend particular political conditions and become part of the cultural substratum for a longer period of time.⁶

Nazi Rhetoric and Policies Toward Jews with Disabilities and Mental Illnesses

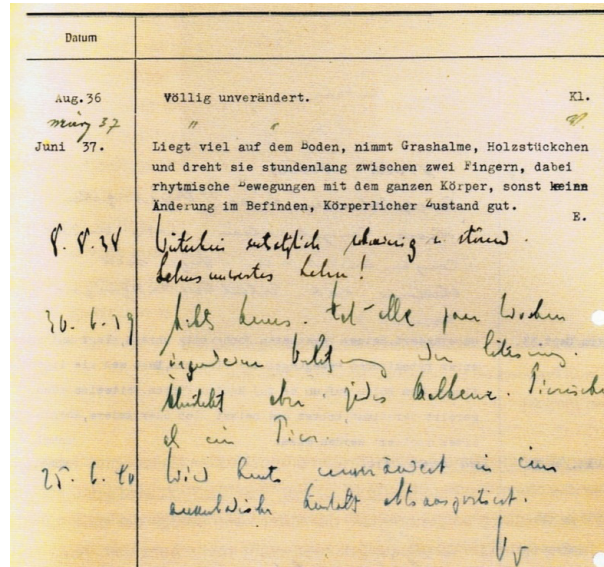
The circumstances to implement overtly social-Darwinist policies became ripe with the Nazi assumption of power in 1933. Given the salience of “racial hygiene” in the Nazi state, it does not surprise that one of its first major new social policies was the passage of a compulsory sterilization law targeting individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities along with mental disorders. The law itself was not particularly original, for it had a strong similarity to a model sterilization law propagated by American eugenicist Harry Laughlin in 1922. The main targets in Laughlin’s model law and the Nazi law of 1933 were nearly identical. The Nazi sterilization law had much to draw on, as by 1933 more than 30 states in the U.S. had passed eugenic sterilization laws, especially after the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Buck v. Bell* in 1927 made states much less cautious in passing such laws and applying them. The German federal law went beyond these laws, in that it provided for the compulsory sterilization after a decision by a Hereditary Court and expressly allowed for the sterilization of individuals not housed in state facilities, a provision that also existed in a few American states’ sterilization laws (including Vermont’s) but remained the exception overall.⁷

Rael Strous has correctly noted that Jews were victims of Nazi sterilization policies, and those with mental illnesses and disabilities were further victimized by Nazi policies over the course of the 1930s. Jews who fled Nazi Germany, he points out, often had to leave disabled family members and relatives behind, and after 1938 Jews were excluded from public assistance, which meant that for those in public care the Reich Association of Jews in Germany, local or regional Jewish associations, or private citizens had to pick up the tab. Discrimination also extended to excluding or removing Jewish patients from German state (and many private) hospitals.⁸

Strous’ argument that Nazi sterilization policies targeted disabled and mentally ill Jews in particular is on less solid ground, however. A recent study shows that the percentage of Jews killed in the “T4” gas murder program of the mentally ill (see below) who had previously been sterilized was lower, not higher, than the percentage for non-Jews. Neither requests for sterilization nor the decisions of the Hereditary Health courts used different forms for Jews and non-Jews, nor was race mentioned in them. In fact, while Nazi leaders aimed to have offspring of darker-skinned French soldiers and German mothers during the occupation of the Rhineland (whom they termed the “Rhineland bastards”) sterilized on racial grounds, they succeeded in doing so only by breaking their own law. Sterilization of Jews, as of non-Jews, was heavily concentrated in the years 1934 to 1938. Moreover, as historians such as Michael Schwartz have convincingly argued, there was no straight path from sterilization to extermination of the disabled. For sterilization policies in Nazi Germany had broad and enthusiastic support even among groups not friendly to Nazi causes, precisely because some of these groups thought that support for, or at least acquiescence to, a policy that prevented the disabled from

begetting children should alleviate the possibility of the implementation of a much more radical policy toward them, i.e., Binding and Hoche’s annihilation, or “euthanasia.”⁹

In the 1930s general conditions for the disabled and mentally ill in institutional care deteriorated markedly and rapidly, as state appropriations for state hospitals were cut back, leading to severe shortages of medical personnel, food, equipment, and other supplies. The case of the Jewish patient Adelheid B., diagnosed with “idiocy,” at the state mental hospital in Wiesloch evinces how much more radical views toward Jews with disabilities and mental illnesses came to the fore at the same time. Her medical and administrative records were among the approximately 30,000 records of “T4” victims that miraculously survived the war and were rediscovered around 1990 (hereafter referred to as “R179” records, named after their signature in the Federal Archive in Berlin).



Adelheid B.’s medical record, Wiesloch facility.
Source: Bundesarchiv Berlin, R179/24497

In 1938 the physician who treated her noted that she was “terribly difficult and disruptive,” then entered into the record “isn’t worth living!” (*lebensunwert*) with an exclamation mark. Binding and Hoche’s term had become part of the medical language in Nazi Germany. It is impossible to tell whether in this case the fact that Adelheid B. had a mental illness, or perhaps rather a developmental disability—according to a local historian trained as a psychotherapist with access to her records, she may in fact have had autism, which did not exist as a diagnostic category at the time—or was Jewish, or the coexistence of these conditions, “prompted” the physician’s remark. What is known is that the same physician also entered another such remark into a (non-Jewish) girl’s medical records, and that he was heading a small station dedicated to “hereditary biology” at Wiesloch at the time, trying to establish family genealogies of disease and disability.¹⁰ Meanwhile, psychiatrists and physicians were not the only ones to subject Jewish

patients to discriminatory treatment. Reported incidents of hostility from other patients indicate that they were increasingly isolated in psychiatric facilities.¹¹

The “T4” Gas Murder Program and Jews

Adelheid B.’s life ended in the gas chamber of Grafeneck in June 1940, at a time when the wholesale extermination of Europe’s Jews by Germans had not been systematically planned as such. Death in a “T4” gas murder facility would become the typical fate of Jews institutionalized in mental hospitals, of whom there were an estimated 2,500-5,000 in Germany.¹² There were children among them.

The “T 4” gas murder operation formally commenced on 18 January 1940, when a group of mostly older men were transported from the Bavarian asylum Egfling-Haar to their death on that day. The very first name on the transport list was a Jewish man: Ludwig Alexander.

While this fact has been known in the literature at least since Henry Friedlander’s analyses, new research has shed more light on Jewish victims of the gas murder program. Scholars have analyzed a large group of extant administrative and medical records of “T4” victims that had previously been discovered, and subsequently hidden, by the East German Stasi. Among the documents is a unique record, that of Klara B.

Klara B. was a Jewish patient at the asylum Am Steinhof (which also housed the “Spiegelgrund” “special children’s ward” in Vienna when she was deported to the T4 gas murder facility at Hartheim. Her diagnosis was given as schizophrenia, her symptoms as “personality in decline” and “fizzled out,” and her ability to work as “useless.” The sheet that contains this information is the form the central “T4” office in Berlin sent to the individual psychiatric hospitals, to be assessed by a group of “T4” evaluators. What makes the record unique is that it is the only one

known to have survived with remarks in the black box at the bottom left: the actual "evaluation" by "T4" physicians. The first is a red "plus" by the physician "N," who also appears to have been the one who highlighted "Jew" and "schizophrenia" in light red pencil in the record. The second and third physicians also entered a red plus, as did the physician who entered his plus below those of the others, the chief evaluator.¹³ The "evaluated" form was sent to the gassing facility at Hartheim on 7 August 1940 along with the patient, where she was murdered on the next day.

Her death is recorded in a section on the form at the top right, where information is filled in the blanks of a stamp. The stamp has four lines. On the first line the bureaucratic term "resolved...on" (*erledigt... am*) is used. Here "C," which stands for the Hartheim gassing facility, is entered into the record. On the second line, the date of death is given as 8 August 1940. On line three, the term "certified in..." is used, and on line four space is provided for the recorded date of death. Here, X11 and 7 January 1941 are filled in. The patient's death was thus not recorded until about 5 months after the actual death had occurred. The X is a prefix that appears to have been given solely to Jews. The number behind the X was likely assigned in a continuous order (of notarized death, not date of actual death). Such X numbers were used in correspondence to relatives of murdered Jewish patients, including notifications of their death, from a fictitious Cholim Lunatic Asylum in Poland, to where these patients had allegedly been sent (all patients there had been murdered by SS units in early 1940). The reason for this charade was two-fold: it was a cover for the transport of patients to the actual gassing sites and murder there, and it allowed for the extraction of money until their deaths had been certified. In Klara B.'s case, for about 5 months the Reich Association of Jews was fraudulently made to pay her continued expenses: a long period typical for murdered Jews compared to non-Jews, for whom the period was typically 2-3 weeks.¹⁴

Klara B. was sent to Hartheim along with non-Jewish patients from her home institution. Her transport was not specifically set up for Jews. Being Jewish was certainly considered a negative factor and might by itself have been enough of a reason for an evaluator to enter a red

plus, which then marked the patient for what was officially called "disinfection." Jewish patients, on average, had been hospitalized for a shorter period and were transported more quickly than their non-Jewish counterparts. Other criteria such as ability to work appear to have played less of a role in determining the outcome of the "evaluation." At least 400 Jews were murdered in this way.¹⁵

Recent research has shed new light on transports, called "special action," specifically set up for and comprised solely of Jews, as part of the "T4" murder program. Evidence of such transports exists for Hadamar and Hartheim, but the best evidence comes from Brandenburg/Havel, which is located not far from Berlin.

By spring and summer 1940 it was apparent that the Nazi federal policy of physically separating Jewish psychiatric patients from the rest had failed. A decree of the Reich Ministry of the Interior of 22 June 1938 demanding such a separation could not be implemented fully, for the austerity policy toward psychiatric facilities left no funds to construct separate wards or pay for the additional costs in personnel. Existing Jewish facilities did not have space for expansion, and new constructions were equally unfeasible. Regional initiatives to bring about such a separation were equally unsuccessful overall. Thus in the spring and summer of 1940 a new policy commenced, concentrating Jewish psychiatric patients in certain designated hospitals and from there transporting them collectively, irrespective of the length of their hospitalization, their ability to work, and other criteria, to their death in the "T4" gas chambers. Included in this "special action" were German, Polish, and stateless Jews, whereas Jews of other nationalities and so-called mixed-race Jews of the

Klara B.'s "evaluation" on her "T4" reporting form. Source: Bundesarchiv Berlin R179/18427

first and second degree (*Mischlinge ersten und zweiten Grades*—those with two Jewish grandparents or one Jewish parent, and those with one Jewish grandparent) were not. In July 1940 likely more than 500 Jewish patients were murdered in such a "special action" at Hartheim, and more than 300 in August at Hartheim. Hadamar also participated in this special action, as did Pirna/Sonnenstein, which became the destination of a transport of Jews who had been brought together at a facility in Silesia. A series of such actions continued until May 1941. Not a single record of these patients has been found among the R179 records, which indicates

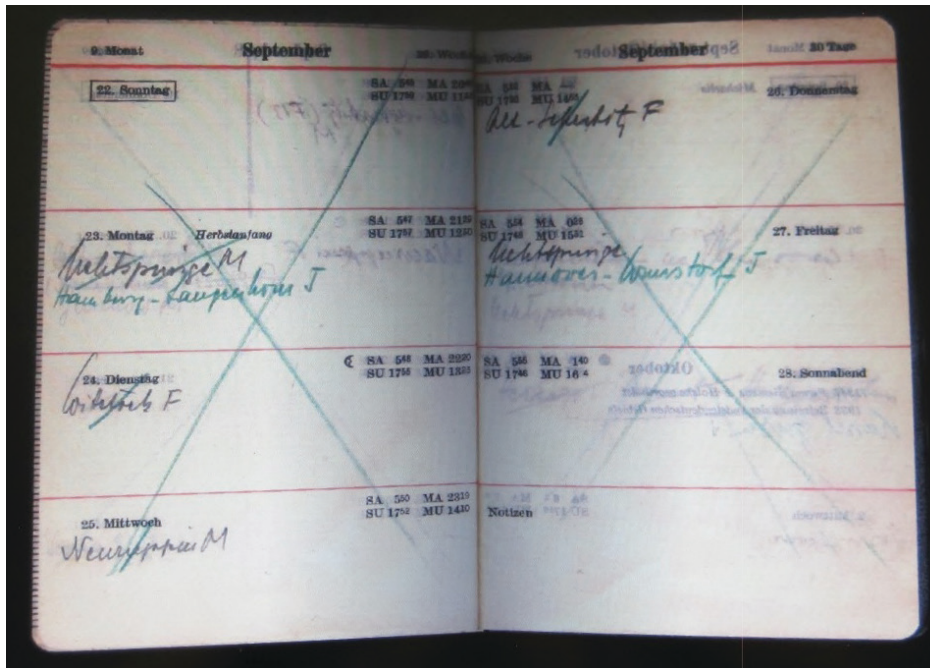
that the operation was meant to remain a secret from the beginning. In fact, when the Brandenburg director and gassing physician Dr. Irmfried Eberl kept his “appointments” in a pocket calendar, he did so for personal use and off the official record, and scholars have been able to match the entries in the calendar with transports recorded elsewhere. Shown here is one such entry for two groups solely comprised of Jewish patients: a large one of 136 patients from Hamburg-Langenhorn on 23 September 1940, and another large one of 158 patients from Hanover-Wunstorf four days later. Both transports are noted in green pencil, with a “J” for Jews. In both cases it would have been the physician’s job to operate the gas valve, as this activity was seen as an exercise in medico-hygienic pruning of the “body of the people.”¹⁶

For the Brandenburg/Havel facility, more than 10 percent of the victims were Jewish, which represents more than 10 times the percentage of Jews in Germany as a whole in 1933, and almost 3 times the share of the Jewish population in nearby Berlin. The aforementioned X numbers allow for an estimate of the total of Jewish patients killed there and at the other five facilities in this way. By February 1941 the number had exceeded 2,000. This number closely tracks the number of victims established in the most exhaustive study to date, by Georg Lilienthal, which arrived at a number of more than 2,000 murdered in the “T4” gas chambers (up to August 1941). This number includes only the victims who are known and have been identified by name so far. By July 1942 the X numbers fictitiously notarized at Chelm had reached 2,500, most of whom derived from the “special action.” This number exhausts the figure of 2,500 Jewish patients in public care facilities by the Reich Association of Jews for Germany in May 1940, and it attests a near total and systematic annihilation of the Jewish psychiatric population in Germany by summer 1941—months before Chelmno began its operation to commence the Nazis’ mass murder of all European Jews.¹⁷

Based on an analysis of the R179 records, scholars have put the percentage of minors among the more than 70,000 “T4” victims at about 6 percent, which represents about 4,000-4,500 children and youths under the age of majority. Generally, the predominant marker for the selection of children for murder was whether they were considered uneducable, which “T4” physicians considered predictive of them remaining a “burden” on society for the rest of their lives. In Brandenburg, the percentage of minors among the victims was almost 11 percent (885 minors), reflective of the fact that large pediatric facilities for children and youths with mental disorders and developmental disabilities, particularly those in Uchtspringe and Brandenburg-Görden, were in its vicinity. Several transports from Görden consisted solely of children, including three in May, possibly to make place for the establishment of the first “special children’s ward,” and a very late one in October, for at least 59 children. For the latter group, historian Thomas Beddies has called their demise a “killing on demand,” as children had apparently been preselected based on scientific criteria that made their brains useful for dissection at the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute for Brain Research at Berlin-Buch by noted neuropathologist Prof. Julius Hallervorden. Consistent with figures available from the other “T4” centers, there were children as young as two years old among the victims.¹⁸ The victims included three Jewish children housed at Görden as early victims of the “T4” operation, as they were included on the basis

of their reporting form,¹⁹ while the vast majority of Jewish minors who became victims must have been included in the “special action.” It is almost certain that more Jewish minors died at the Brandenburg “T4” facility—based on a calculation using the figures for Jewish victims and minors among the dead, the figure must have been close to 100—than at any other “T4” facility.

Beyond being recorded in the victims’ memorial book accessible at the newly expanded Brandenburg “T4” memorial site, their identities have generally not been revealed to the public. For the aforementioned transport from Langenhorn that was part of the “special action” noted by Dr. Eberl in his calendar for 23 September 1940, I found 105 victims listed by name in the Memorial Book of the Federal Archives for the Victims of the Persecution of Jews in Germany, including 11 minors, though none younger than 13. Among them were the brothers Max and Julius Daicz. Both were intellectually disabled and had been residents at a home for children with mental disabilities in Lübeck-Vorwerk since 1931. At the time of their death, they were 19 and 17 years old. Their older sister Esther was deported to Minsk in 1941, and their mother Anna and older and younger sisters Gisela and Hanny were deported to Riga at the end of the same year. Of the family, only the father, Albert, who had emigrated to Shanghai in 1939, survived the Nazi period. Among the residents of the Vorwerk home, six other Jewish minors with disabilities accompanied the Daicz brothers to the assembly center at Hamburg-Langenhorn, where they stayed only for about a week before being transported to Brandenburg.²⁰

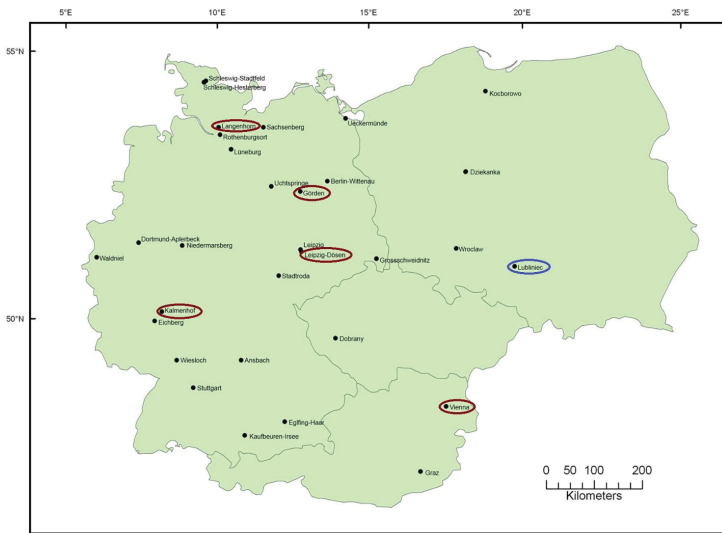


Irmfried Eberl’s pocket calendar. Source: Brandenburg Memorial; original at the Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Wiesbaden, 631a, 1611. Picture taken by the author.

Beyond the “T4” operation, Jews with disabilities and mental illnesses were victimized in other ways. After the stop of “T4” in August 1941, there were still Jewish patients at the Jewish hospital at Bendorf-Sayn, which according to a general decree of 12 December 1940 had become the sole facility that was supposed to admit them. After their deportation, the facility was closed in November 1942, and its designated replacement, the psychiatric station at the Jewish hospital in Berlin, was closed at the end of 1943; its patients, too, were deported to the death facilities in the East. However, given the insufficient capacity of both facilities, Jews continued to be admitted to regular psychiatric facilities, where they subsequently became victims of the so-called “decentralized euthanasia.”²¹ In addition, from fall 1939 onward Jews had become victimized as residents in the many psychiatric facilities in eastern Europe that saw their patients murdered in shootings, a stationary gas chamber at Poznan, and gassing vans. The murders sometimes went beyond patients in such facilities, and they included infants and children. For example, in October 1940, 290 old, infirm, and mentally ill Jews who resided in a geriatric home in Kalisz, Poland, were killed in a gassing van, as were 214 disabled children in the local children’s home of Jeisk in the Ukraine in October 1942, and 54 seriously ill infants in Spa-Teberda on the Crimea in January 1943. In the annexed and occupied Polish areas, as historians have noted, “Jewish and Polish-Jewish mentally ill had no chances of survival” and were murdered “in principle.” This does not mean, however, that in homes and asylums with German or non-Jewish patients those would be spared, as in many cases all inmates were killed indiscriminately, and any reprieve tended to be temporary.²²

Jewish Children and “Children’s Euthanasia”

Targeting infants, children, and youths mostly in family care, the National Socialist “children’s euthanasia” program was originally set up to include infants and small children up to three years of age, although it would



Map of “special children’s wards.” Red circles: Locations with confirmed Jewish child victims. Blue circle: Location where “Luminal booklet” was found²⁵

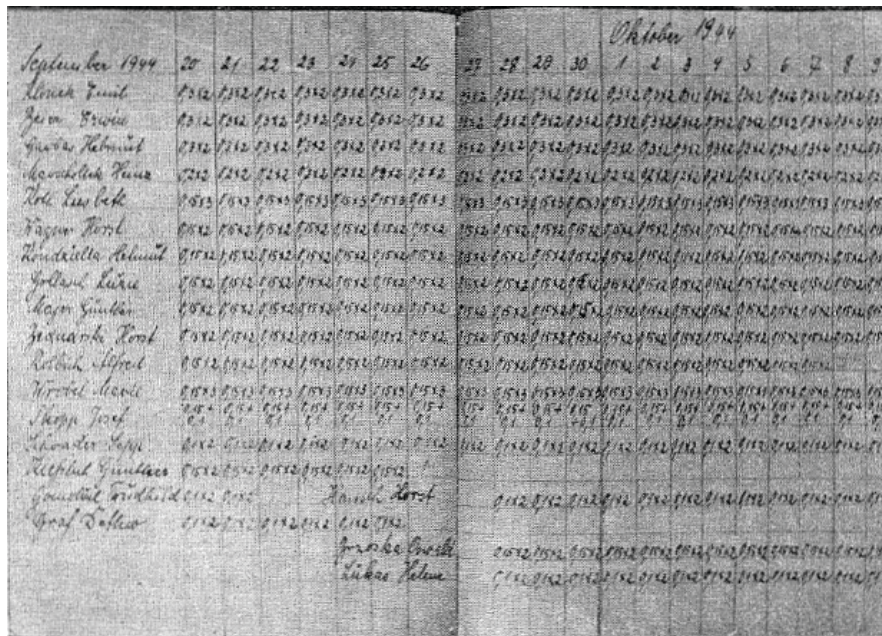
soon be expanded to youth up to the age of 16.²³ About 30 killing centers, or “special children’s wards,” were established. Pediatricians, nurses, and other health practitioners were to report children with disabilities, congenital illnesses, and malformations to local public health offices, which then notified via a reporting form a benignly labeled but fictitious “Reich Committee for the Scientific Registration of Severe Hereditary Ailments” (*Reichsausschuss zur wissenschaftlichen Erfassung von erb- und anlagebedingten schweren Leiden*). It was actually located in a branch office of the Chancellery of the Führer in Berlin. Reporting forms were also sent from asylums and hospitals in which pediatric care was provided. The Berlin office, after an administrative screening of the reports there, commissioned a permanent board of three medical evaluators to determine the fate of the children, with a “positive” result being the admission of the children in a “special children’s ward” either for “treatment” (the authorization of murder) or further observation.

The children’s parents were contacted and told that their children would receive expert treatment in these wards to entice the parents to consent to the children’s admission; threats or financial incentives were provided if they did not comply. The children, termed *Reichsausschusskinder* (Reich Committee children), were killed by physicians and staff members, typically with an overdose of a barbiturate called Luminal, after which parents were notified of the “sudden unexpected” death of their child. The physicians’ participation was always voluntary, and they had the ultimate authority to order or decline a killing once authorized from Berlin. The total number of casualties of this procedure was at least 5,000.

As historian Herwig Czech has noted in the context of the murders at the Spiegelgrund facility in Vienna, one of the deadliest facilities of its kind, the procedure did not represent indiscriminate extermination, but rather a medicalized process of deliberate observation, evaluation, selection for life or death, and murder.

The perfidious nature of this killing program may be obvious today, but even before the Nazis came to power the right to life of an infant with a disability could not always be taken for granted in Germany, not even among the parents of such infants. That was the utterly surprising result of a survey taken in 1925. Ewald Meltzer, a physician and the well-respected director of one of Saxony’s oldest and largest educational and residential facility for disabled children, and also a vocal critic of Binding and Hoche at the time, asked parents of children in his facility whether they would agree to a painless curtailment of their child’s life if experts established that it suffered from incurable idiocy. To Meltzer’s consternation, about three fourths of the parents or guardians answered in the affirmative.²⁴ A year later, the Nazi party still won only 2 of the 96 seats in the Saxon Diet; therefore, the results cannot be explained by reference to a purported manifestation of an early pro-Nazi attitude in the population. The latent acceptance of the notion of the killing of a disabled child as an act of “mercy” that shone through in the parents’ response may well have encouraged the planners of the “children’s euthanasia,” thinking, perhaps, that such killings might not even be considered particularly offensive or malicious among significant numbers of Germans.

Vital records have not survived for all of the about 30 “special children’s wards,” and for some facilities it cannot even be determined whether children were designated *Reichsausschusskinder* or just otherwise housed in a facility. The typical response of archivists and local medical historians with access to the remaining records to my inquiries has been that no known records of Jewish children exist. This is particularly true for facilities in which the “special children’s ward” came into existence relatively late in the early 1940s, by which time all or almost all Jewish patients of any age would already have been transferred, deported, or killed. For some facilities, there are records, but they are incomplete. For the four “special children’s wards” located in Poland, with typically a much larger portion of Jews in the population than in Germany, extensive death records exist but do not include the patients’ religion, or cover only the years before a “special children’s ward” had been established there. At the large psychiatric facility at Dobruany (Czech Republic), for which historians have firmly established the existence of a “special children’s ward” and relevant records are believed to have survived, the hospital directorship has not granted researchers access and even claimed that none of the patients had become victims of “euthanasia.” The scant record of Jewish “Reich



Pages in “Luminal booklet.” Source: Dionizy Moska, “Eksterminacja w zakładzie ‘Loben,”” *Przegląd Lekarski* 32 (1975): 113.

Committee children” thus does not mean that only a handful existed, although their number was certainly not large.

One of the most revealing and incriminating pieces of evidence about the operation of a “special children’s ward” can be seen for the one in Lubliniec (Poland). At the end of WWII a medical booklet was discovered there (the “Luminalbuch”) that contained the dosages of barbiturates (phenobarbital) given to children, of whom all or almost all were in the “special children’s ward.” Two Polish physicians reported at the time that 235 children from ages up to 14 were listed in the booklet, of whom 221



Berto Goldstrom. Source: Yad Vashem, Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names. Available at <http://namesfs.yadvashem.org/>

had died. An investigation revealed that the medical records of the children had been falsified, as those records showed a far lower dosage of Luminal given to them than was entered into the Luminal booklet. For example, the medical records for Marianna N. showed for 16 January 1943 (she died on that day) a dosage of .1 gram of Luminal, whereas the Luminal booklet showed the actual dosage as .4 grams, or four times the dosage

recommended for her body weight. A page from the booklet shown here is a record of the systematic poisoning of children in the "special children's ward." It is a precise accounting of murder, meticulously recorded and executed.

Jewish child victims can be documented for a few of the "special children's wards." The one at Leipzig-Dösen was established in October 1940 as the fourth one overall and the first in what today is the state of Saxony. It continued to operate until December 1943. The number of children who died in the ward is among the highest confirmed: about 550. There are two known Jewish victims among them. Ruth Kirschbaum was murdered at Leipzig-Dösen at age 7 in November 1941, having been transferred there from the asylum Grossschweidnitz. She had an intellectual disability and was considered a *Mischling* of the first degree. Divorced since 1929 from her non-Jewish husband, her mother was Jewish and remained herself a resident of a care institution until her death in 1942, possibly a victim of "decentralized euthanasia."²⁵ The second Jewish victim was Elfriede Thieberg, who died at the age of 10 three months earlier. Born in Poland, she too had an intellectual disability. She was institutionalized at Dösen at age two and then transferred to two other care facilities before returning to Leipzig-Dösen in March 1941. Her parents, Ciwie and Josef Thieberg, who had left for Belgium in 1939, were transported to Auschwitz in August 1942. A sister survived hidden in a convent.²⁶

A number of Jewish children who died in facilities with "special children's wards" have also been identified for the psychiatric clinic Brandenburg-Görden and Vienna's Spiegelgrund facility. Görden is notorious for a variety of reasons. It was termed "Reich training station" for "children's euthanasia" physicians (they attended several-week-long seminars there that very likely involved medical training in killing methods); it housed about 4,000 psychiatrically disabled or ill children and youths between 1938 and 1944, of whom almost 1,300 died, not including the 430 who were gassed in the "T4" program; it had a mortality rate of almost 90% among the "Reich Committee children"; and it had a research station for carrying out medical experiments on minors. Although the connection between the "special children's ward" and some of the victims still appears tenuous, records indicate the existence of at least 8 Jewish victims who were minors. One of them was Berto Goldstrom. His parents, Sally and Liesbeth Goldstrom, perished at Auschwitz, while a brother survived. Berto was admitted to Görden at age 3 and died within about 3 months in 1941. A marker in his and two other children's memory was placed in Görden's small Jewish cemetery in 2010. Recent research has established how many of the "children's euthanasia" victims at Görden in particular were utilized as suppliers of tissue samples used in scientific research.²⁷

About 800 children died at Vienna's Spiegelgrund. In the context of medical crimes, its name has become near synonymous with Dr. Heinrich Gross, a "child euthanasia" physician who tormented children with particular zeal.²⁸ There are five confirmed children among the victims who were Jewish.



Jakob (Jakovas) Nemecinskis and Walter Kaposi. Source: Wiener Stadt-und Landesarchiv.³¹

For Margarethe Glaser, no medical records have been found, and her familial background is unknown. She dies at the Spiegelgrund at age 15. Wilhelm Kaposi suffers from injuries during birth and is delayed in his physical and mental development. When his parents emigrate to Britain in 1938, the eight-year-old boy suffers from the separation, and he goes through five different homes, hospitals, and institutions before ending up at the Spiegelgrund, where Dr. Gross examines him on admission and from there on calls him "Israel." Dr. Gross also notes typical signs of a "near-Asian race." Less than four months after his admission, the child dies at age 12 from pneumonia, a typical manifestation of Luminal poisoning. Jakob Nemecinskis, too, dies of pneumonia, at age 11. Born in Lithuania, his familial background is unknown.²⁹ Dr. Gross discovers during Jakob's exam upon admission that the boy is circumcised. The boy dies less than 3 months later. Ilse Philippovic and Max Reichmann both develop meningitis early in their childhood. As a consequence, Max Reichmann becomes deaf and is intellectually delayed. His parents flee to Australia in 1938. During his stay at the Spiegelgrund, Max appears to be starving. The report of his case to the Reich Committee notes that he is Jewish and is unlikely ever to be able to work. He dies at age 14. After her meningitis, Ilse Philippovic, who has a Jewish mother, suffers from epilepsy and a delay in her physical and intellectual development. She dies at age 12, less than a month after being admitted. Her mother survives the war and gives testimony in investigations against Spiegelgrund physicians.³⁰

At Hadamar, which after the stop of "T4" became a site of "decentralized euthanasia," a different and unusual series of events occurred in 1943. The nearby facility Kalmenhof had a "special children's ward" located on a floor of its hospital there. When the hospital could no longer accommodate all the children, some of them were placed in the nearby seniors' home, to be moved to the hospital floor, where the actual killings occurred later. The home's director resisted the "euthanasia" program and tried to hold children back. Her efforts were only partially successful, but she kept track of the children's names, and two children who resided there were not sent to the hospital along with the others but to Hadamar instead. At Hadamar, a misleadingly termed "Educational Home" for children was established in May 1943, which in fact was an assembly center for Jewish *Mischlinge*. Among those who were sent there, it has not been documented that any of them had a disability or mental disorder; rather, they were under public guardianship. 45 children and youths were admitted, of whom 40 died.

Among the forty dead were the two children sent from the Kalmenhof facility. Born in 1931, Heinz H. was an out-of-wedlock child of a Catholic mother and Jewish father. After both parents had died in 1937, he was first raised by foster parents and then placed in a home. His patient record at the Kalmenhof facility contains negative remarks about his Jewishness and alleged psychopathology. Willi N. was born in the same year as Heinz H. After being placed under temporary public guardianship, he also ended up at the Kalmenhof facility. Their fate appears to reflect a division of labor between Hadamar and the Kalmenhof facility: whereas the non-Jewish children were sent to die in the Kalmenhof's "special children's ward," the two Jewish *Mischlinge* were sent to Hadamar for the same purpose. Neither child survived there for more than 3 months.

A further case of a Jewish *Mischling* at the Kalmenhof facility was that of Ruth Pappenheimer, who was reported to the Reich Committee in spite of displaying no evidence of a disability. Her father, Julius Pappenheimer, died in the Shoah, probably at Sobibor, while her mother died in 1933. Ruth Pappenheimer was alleged to be morally deviant and ended up at the Kalmenhof facility, where she was murdered in 1944 at age 19. Her brother Alfred, raised by their father's brother, died at Treblinka.³²

Further Developments

For children like Erwin Sängler, death at Hamburg-Langenhorn was not the final act. Dr. Knigge, as head of the "special children's ward," carried out a dissection of Erwin's brain, as he did with the brains of other "child euthanasia" victims there. In Nazi medicine, the justification for such procedures was simple: by having their bodies and organs put to use for scientific investigation, "worthless" individuals with disabilities could provide at least some benefit to society postmortem. The brains of victims like Erwin were sent to the Neuroanatomical Institute of the University Hospital at Hamburg-Eppendorf. Their remains lingered there until tissue samples were identified as those of five "children's

“ethanasia” victims around 2010. These remains were buried in a local cemetery in September 2012, about 70 years after their deaths.³³

In the post-WWII period, Dr. Knigge at first tried to hide the existence of Erwin as a victim from prosecutors. When he and Dr. Walter Bayer, the head of the other “special children’s ward” in Hamburg housed in the pediatric clinic Rothenburgsort, jointly came under investigation, both openly admitted to have killed—current research puts the number of murdered children in the two “special children’s wards” at 82, which is likely far below the actual number, given the fact that most records from Dr. Bayer’s clinic had been destroyed. Unlike Dr. Knigge, Dr. Bayer relied on a small group of young female resident physicians to whom he delegated the execution of the killings in his “special children’s ward.” In his testimony during investigation, Dr. Knigge indicated that he thought he had done no wrong; he stated that after the children had been selected “in accordance with the most stringent medical criteria,” his actions did not violate any laws of humanity. In fact, relating directly to Binding and Hoche, he considered these actions toward individuals who were already “mentally dead” as those of deliverance—from the burden of their disability. Dr. Bayer, the other physician under investigation, also openly alluded to Binding and Hoche in noting that the “removal...of these empty shells” was an act, as he put it, “of help, of deliverance, based on the highest standard of responsibility and the strongest compassion [for them].” He argued that he could not have committed crimes against humanity because what he termed the “living things” he killed weren’t human at all.

When the court solicited a legal opinion, the opinion’s author expressly mentioned the condition experienced by Erwin Sanger and some of the other children, Down syndrome, but noted that such “idiots” merely constituted human “material,” cases for which the author “had himself wished a termination of life for many years.” After that, in 1947 the state attorney general at the time suggested to the court that the cases be discharged from prosecution, while another state attorney noted that the physicians had merely assisted the children in dying a painless death, and therefore could not be proven guilty in a criminal sense. Another state attorney opined in 1949 that these killings did not constitute crimes against humanity because the presence of base motives could not be proven. The court set aside the prosecution in that year. In the meantime, Dr. Knigge had died of polio. Dr. Bayer, on the other hand, continued to work as a pediatrician in private practice a few years later, and in 1961 Hamburg’s Chamber of Physicians declined to revoke his medical license, for it found “no presence of serious moral misconduct.” That year, the surviving member of the Sanger family, Erwin’s brother, contacted Hamburg’s authorities about the possibility for restitution. In response, and effectively shutting down the inquiry, the authorities noted that Erwin had died of pneumonia, had not been made to wear the Jewish star, and had not been otherwise designated as Jewish. Dr. Bayer died in 1972. Of the small group of young female resident physicians who had worked in his “special children’s ward” and were the actual killers, all appear to have continued their careers in pediatrics and related specialties.

A small “stumbling block” commemorates Erwin Sanger in Hamburg today. It is placed together with stumbling blocks for other members of his family on public pavement and reads: “Here resided Erwin Sanger, born 17 February 1935, admitted to special children’s ward, ‘care facility’ Langenhorn, murdered 10 April 1943.” Other Jewish victims of “children’s euthanasia” have been recognized through symbolic grave markers, and five graves (and a joint “grave of honor” in which they are included) exist at Vienna’s Central Cemetery.

And Drs. Eberl, Gross, and Overhamm? Dr. Eberl, who gassed Jews in the “special action” at Brandenburg, became the director of the “T4” facility Bernburg and the first commandant of Treblinka. He committed suicide in 1948 awaiting trial.



“Stumbling blocks” for Erwin Sanger’s family in Hamburg.
Picture taken by Sven-Olaf Peeck.

The Spiegelgrund’s Dr. Gross was sentenced in 1950 to two years of prison for a single case of manslaughter, but the verdict was set aside on a technicality. Why only manslaughter? Because according to Austrian criminal law, until 1997 murder in the sense of a malicious killing could not have been committed against those with serious mental illnesses or intellectual disabilities (including children), because malice required the exploitation of a victim’s unsuspecting state, and those victims in particular were assumed to lack the capacity to be unsuspecting! Hence, only convictions for manslaughter were feasible, even for cases of mass murder of intellectually disabled children.³⁴ After his release, Dr. Gross became one of Austria’s most prominent forensic experts, and he utilized tissue samples from his child victims, which he had obtained and then stored in the basement of a laboratory, in a series of scientific publications over the next decades. After the existence of the basement and its specimens became public in the late 1980s, investigations found that remains of four of the five Jewish Spiegelgrund children were among them. In 1997 these remains were given to the Jewish Community of Vienna for burial. Dr. Gross died a free man in 2005.

Finally, Dr. Overhamm, whose note “unworthy of life!” in a Jewish patient’s medical record provided an early manifestation of the penetration of such discourse into medical practice in Nazi Germany, became the chief medical director of one of the largest facilities of psychiatric care in Southwest Germany, Emmendingen, in 1949 and remained there until his retirement. One of Overhamm’s predecessors at Emmendingen reportedly had a conversation in 1940 with Alfred Hoche, who had his professorship at Freiburg, just to the south of the city, a conversation in which Hoche expressed sincere reservations toward the Nazi “euthanasia” program. Meanwhile, Hoche’s co-author Karl Binding remained an honorary citizen of Leipzig, his home town, until the city council revoked the honor in 2010. Perhaps their ghosts have been exorcised at last.



Exhibit at the Spiegelgrund/Vienna on Nazi medical crimes.
Picture taken by the author.

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(Endnotes)

- 1 I wish to thank the Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies and the librarians at the Bailey-Howe library for supporting my research for this article.
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- 3 Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Rael Strous, "Extermination of the Jewish Mentally-Ill during the Nazi Era," *The Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences* 45 (2008): 247-56; Georg Lilienthal, "Jüdische Patienten als Opfer der NS-'Euthanasie'-Verbrechen," *Medaon* 5 (2009): 1-16; Annette Hinz-Wessels, "Antisemitismus und Krankenmord," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 61 (2013): 65-92.
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- 9 Strous, "Extermination of the Jewish Mentally-Ill," 249-50; Hinz-Wessels, "Antisemitismus und Krankenmord," 68; Friedlander, *Origins of Nazi Genocide*, 246-47; Michael Schwartz, "Rassenhygiene, Nationalsozialismus, Euthanasie?," *Westfälische Forschungen* 46 (1996), 604-622; Astrid Ley and Annette Hinz-Wessels, eds., *The 'Euthanasia-Institution' of Brandenburg an der Havel* (Berlin: Metropol, 2012), 26.
- 10 I am grateful to Dr. Franz Janzowski for information. See also Hohendorf, "Empirische Untersuchungen," 50-51, for a third patient.
- 11 Hinz-Wessels, "Antisemitismus und Krankenmord," 70-73.
- 12 Hinz-Wessels, "Antisemitismus und Krankenmord," 67.
- 13 These were Drs. Paul Nitsche, Theodor Steinmeyer, Friedrich Mennecke, and Werner Heyde, respectively.
- 14 Annette Hinz Wessels, Petra Fuchs, Gerrit Hohendorf, and Maïke Rotzoll, "Zur bürokratischen Abwicklung eines Massenmords," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 53 (2005): 79-107, especially 94-95.
- 15 Hinz-Wessels, "Antisemitismus und Krankenmord," 75.
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19 Annette Hinz-Wessels, "Jüdische Opfer der 'Aktion T4' im Spiegel der überlieferten 'Euthanasie'-Krankenakten im Bundesarchiv," in Rotzoll et al., *Die nationalsozialistische 'Euthanasie'-Aktion 'T4'*, 144.

20 <http://www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/>; Heidemarie Kugler-Weiemann, "Fünfhausen 5 - Familie Daicz," available at <http://www.stolpersteine-luebeck.de/n/de/main/adressen/fuenfhausen-5.html>; see also Harald Jenner, "Das Kinder- und Pflegeheim Vorwerk in Lübeck in der NS-Zeit," in Theodor Strohm and Jörg Thierfelder, eds., *Diakonie im "Dritten Reich"* (Heidelberg: Heidelberger Verlagsanstalt, 1990), 169-204.

21 Lilienthal, "Jüdische Patienten als Opfer," 9-10.

22 Hans-Walter Schmuhl, *Rassenhygiene, Nationalsozialismus, Euthanasie* (2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 245; Fritz Bauer, Karl Bracher, and Christian Rüter, eds., *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, Vol. XXXVII (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1972-73), no. 777; Volker Rieß, *Die Anfänge der Vernichtung "lebensunwerten Lebens" in den Reichsgauen Danzig-Westpreußen und Wartheland 1939/40* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1995), 362; Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939-1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 335-336; Strous, "Extermination of the Jewish Mentally-Ill," 252-53.

23 See Lutz Kaelber, "Child Murder in Nazi Germany," *Societies* 2 (2012), 157-194.

24 Michael Burleigh, *Death and Deliverance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 21-23.

25 I am indebted to Dr. Beverley Wemple, Dept. of Geography, for assistance.

26 Lutz Kaelber, "[Special Children's Ward] Leipzig-Dösen," available at [http://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/children/leipzigdoesen.html](http://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/children/leipzigdoesen/leipzigdoesen.html); Jürgen Nitsche, "Unter einem doppelten Fluch: Jüdische Opfer der nationalsozialistischen Krankenmordaktion in Sachsen," *Sonnenstein Hefte* 8 (2010): 47-78. I wish to thank Dr. Jürgen Nitsche for additional information.

27 Beatrice Falk and Friedrich Hauer, *Brandenburg-Görden* (Berlin-Brandenburg: be.bra, 2007), 69-132; Thomas Beddies, "Die Einbeziehung von Minderjährigen in die nationalsozialistischen Medizinverbrechen," *Praxis der Kinderpsychologie und Kinderpsychiatrie* 58 (2009): 518-29. My research on these children is still preliminary. I wish to thank Dr. Thomas Beddies and Dr. Friedrich Hauer for sharing information with me. The names of Berto Goldstrom and two other "children's euthanasia" victims have been identified in newspaper reports (see *Märkische Allgemeine, Brandenburger Kurier*, 5 January 2010).

28 See, for example, Florian Thomas, Alana Beres, and Michael I. Shevell, "A Cold Wind Coming: Heinrich Gross and Child Euthanasia in Vienna," *Journal of Child Neurology* 21 (2006): 342-48.

29 According to his Lithuanian passport, his correct name was Jakovas Nemečinskis. I wish to thank Dr. Berg of the Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv for additional information. The book of the dead at the Spiegelgrund memorial and the honorary grave of Spiegelgrund victims in Vienna's Central Cemetery list his last name as Nemencindkis. Häupl (see below) gives his name as Nemečinskis.

30 Waltraud Häupl, *Die ermordeten Kinder vom Spiegelgrund* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2006), 250, 364, 406, 439-40, 637; Wolfgang Neugebauer, "Juden als Opfer der NS-Euthanasie in Wien 1940-1945," in Eberhard Gabriel and Wolfgang Neugebauer, eds., *Von der Zwangssterilisation zur Ermordung*, Vol. II (Vienna: Böhlau, 2002), 99-111. Additional information can be found at <http://www.lettertothestars.at/>.

31 Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, M.Abt. 209 - Wiener Städtische Nervenklinik für Kinder; A2: Wilhelm Kaposi bzw. Jakob Nemečinskis.

32 Andrea Berger and Thomas Oelschläger, "Ich habe sie eines natürlichen Todes sterben lassen: Das Krankenhaus im Kalmehof und die Praxis der nationalsozialistischen Bildungsprogramme," in Christian Schrappner and Dieter Sengling, eds., *Die Idee der Bildbarkeit* (Weinheim: Juventa, 1988), 330-35; Peter Sandner, *Verwaltung des Krankenmordes* (Giessen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2003), 658-63; Martina Hartmann-Menz, "Ruth Pappenheimer" and "Julius Pappenheimer," available at http://www.alemannia-judaica.de/images/Images%20342/Dornheim%20GG%20Ruth_Pappenheimer.pdf and http://www.alemannia-judaica.de/images/Images%20342/Dornheim%20Julius_Pappenheimer.pdf. I wish to thank the Hadamar Memorial and Martina Hartmann-Menz for additional information.

33 For this and the following, see Burlon, "Die 'Euthanasie' an Kindern."

34 Wolfgang Neubauer and Peter Schwarz, *Der Wille zum aufrechten Gang* (Vienna: Czernin, 2005), 273.



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