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UVM Honors Professor Raul Hilberg

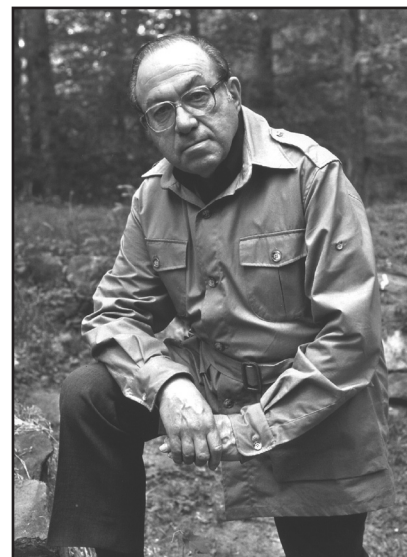
By Frank Nicosia

On 22 October, in a moving public tribute in the Ira Allen chapel, the University of Vermont honored the life and legacy of Professor Raul Hilberg. Attended by Raul's dear wife Gwen, as well as friends, colleagues, and admirers from the local area and from around the country, speakers honored Professor Hilberg's unparalleled achievements and contributions to the field of Holocaust Studies and to the University of Vermont over the past half century.

Professors Christopher R. Browning of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Peter F. Hayes of Northwestern University described the unique impact of Raul Hilberg's scholarship, in particular the publication in 1961 of his seminal history of the Holocaust, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, on their own scholarly careers and on the field of Holocaust Studies in general. Emeritus Professor of History Robert V. Daniels, Emeritus Professor of Political Science Douglas Kinnard, and Professor of Political Science Garrison Nelson each spoke fondly about Professor Hilberg as their faculty colleague of many years at UVM. Emeritus Professor of History Mark Stoler read Professor Kinnard's tribute. Dr. Wolfgang Vorwerk, the Federal Republic of Germany's Consul-General in Boston, offered a moving commentary on the debt owed by the German people to Professor Hilberg for the central role that Hilberg's scholarship played in Germany's post-World War II confrontation with its recent history. UVM president Daniel Mark Fogel spoke about the invaluable combination of Raul Hilberg's

scholarly and teaching achievements at UVM and the important part they played over the years in the lives of countless UVM students. Finally, at a dinner that evening at Englesby House, Paul Shapiro, Director of the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., paid tribute to Raul Hilberg's critically important role in the establishment of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and in the ongoing work of its Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies as one of the world's preeminent institutions for research on the Shoah.

In conjunction with a planned 13 April 2008 "Retrospective" on Professor Hilberg's scholarship, the editors will reprint all of these moving tributes in the Spring 2008 issue of the Bulletin.



Peter Fritzsche Visits UVM

by Elizabeth Pruitt and Amanda "Art" Tanney

Professor Peter Fritzsche of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign visited the University of Vermont on 1 and 2 October to meet with students and faculty and to present his lecture entitled "Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany." Fritzsche is known for his pioneering research in the history of National Socialism and in modern European history. A recipient of prestigious grants from agencies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, he has published dozens of articles and authored several books addressing themes in German and European history. Among these are *Rehearsals for Fascism: Populism and Political Mobilization in Weimar Germany* (Oxford, 1990), *A Nation of Flyers: German Aviation and the Popular Imagination* (Harvard, 1996), *Germans into Nazis* (Harvard, 1998), and *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Harvard, 2004). His newest history, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, will be released by Harvard University Press next February.

Fritzsche presented his lecture on the larger theme of the extent to which the German public identified with Nazi ideology. He began by introducing the audience to Theodore Abel's project, discussed in Abel's book, *Why Hitler Came to Power* (1938). Through collecting personal testimonies, Abel examined why an individual living in 1920s Germany might become a Nazi Party member. He concluded that the importance of social and economic factors, along with war memories, did not outweigh the significant influence of ideology. Fritzsche based his lecture on Abel's model, starting with an introduction of Victor Klemperer and his observations of daily life, and then focusing on public opinion and support of the Nazis.

Fritzsche then discussed Erich Ebermayer, a 32 year old Catholic when Hitler came to power. Ebermayer, who opposed the Nazis, felt that those who were not Nazi party members "became evermore lonely as more people confess loyalty to Hitler." However, upon returning to the countryside of his childhood, Ebermayer realized that he was not alone. Instead, he was at home, for the Nazis had

restored the Germany of his childhood. He therefore supported the Third Reich, but not the Nazis. For instance, he was enthusiastic about the *Anschlu_* and felt as though Germany "had come home to itself." In this way, Ebermayer supported the Germany the Nazis created, but not Nazi ideology.

Lore Walb was an individual who supported both Germany and the Nazis. At a fairly young age, she was involved in the League of German Girls which indoctrinated her into the Nazis' belief system and racial ideology. Her diary offers a view of Germans as the "underdog on its way up" with right and virtue, under the burden of the Treaty of Versailles. Despite her devotion to the Reich, she recognized many of its mistakes, which one can assume is a reference to the Jewish Holocaust and the treatment of conquered peoples. She reconciled herself to this reality with the thought that others had made mistakes, but "we are really experiencing great history," and that the German nation cannot go under because of it. Collective responsibility allowed her to embrace the nation and its guilt, but also to recognize that it was a struggle for the survival of the nation. It took a great effort to be a Nazi and recast one's morality in light of events. Walb remained a loyal Nazi despite her rejection of Hitler for failing the German people during World War II.

Heinrich Böll was a young soldier during WWII who was not a Nazi, but who strongly identified with Germany. Specifically, Böll disagreed with the Nazi euthanasia and sterilization program, which he saw as signs of the Nazis' "godlessness." He supported the "freedoms" the Nazis won as the "present" had vanquished the defeats of the past, specifically, World War I and the Treaty of Versailles. Böll accepted the Nazi premise that the previous twenty years were a struggle against disintegration and disunity. Thus, Böll accepted portions of the Nazi world view and identified with the Nazis' Germany.

Following his lecture, Fritzsche entertained a variety of questions that addressed the issues of the treatment of Jews and their daily life during Nazi Germany, the reaction of German citizens to Nazi social policies, and how one's upbringing affected one's political views. A particularly intriguing question was focused on how Fritzsche defined who was a "Nazi" and to what degree, as well as who was not a "Nazi." He responded that it was the

individual's self-definition, and was not always to be determined by an outsider's view. Another question focused on the extent to which Nazi authorities were aware of the people's wavering support. Fritzsche responded that the Nazis were often unconcerned because party membership was still rising and, most importantly, most citizens still supported the Nazi notion of Germany.

During Fritzsche's visit to UVM he also led a seminar for faculty and graduate students and on Tuesday 2 October he attended Dr. Huener's History/Holocaust Studies 139 class on Modern German history. There he engaged the students in a stimulating discussion of issues concerning World War I, the Nazis, World War II, and oppressed political parties.

In both his discussion with this class and in his public lecture, Fritzsche concluded that the majority of Germans supported the accomplishments of Nazi Germany, even if they did not subscribe to Nazi ideology. His three case studies illustrate this seemingly conflicting idea of Germans loving the Third Reich while hating the Nazis, and clearly demonstrates the ways in which this attitude was possible. According to Fritzsche, the lines of consent and opposition are blurred because people altered their morality and views to align with those of National Socialism.

The University of Vermont was very fortunate to have as a guest such a distinguished scholar who "pushes boundaries" with his research. Through his work, Fritzsche has enriched our understanding of the complexities of modern German history.

Her Story vs. History **Michael Kater on Lotte Lehmann**

By Katherine Quimby Johnson

The Carolyn & Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies marked the first Hilberg Lecture since the passing of Raul Hilberg with an extended program on the evening of 12 November 2007. Interim Director Frank Nicosia welcomed an audience that included Hilberg's widow, Gwen, and introduced a fifteen-minute video selection from Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*. The selection, in which Professor Hilberg discusses Western precedents for the persecution of the Jews and the point at which it was necessary for the Nazis to become inventors,

and in which he analyzes the evidence provided by the train schedule for a line whose destination was Treblinka. It proved especially pertinent to Michael Kater's lecture, entitled "Feigning Resistance to Nazism: The Case of Singer Lotte Lehmann. In Memory of Raul Hilberg"

Before the lecture began, however, Jerold D. Jacobson, (UVM '62) shared some personal thoughts on Professor Hilberg's legacy. Jacobson, a long-time supporter of the Hilberg Lecture and a member of the Center's advisory board, provided a student's perspective on a teacher who set the highest of expectations. "To succeed in a Hilberg course was a banner of honor and accomplishment," Jacobson said, before recounting his discomfiture at receiving a 62 on a test, only to discover that it was the highest grade awarded. Jacobson described four characteristics that made Professor Hilberg his life-long role model and mentor: courage, integrity, serious attention to his teaching responsibilities, and a disciplined determination.

Michael Kater's lecture would not have been possible without some of that same disciplined determination. As he explained in answer to a post-lecture question, key correspondence was missing from the Lehmann archive at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He had to make the rounds of possible archives in Vienna, contacting almost a dozen before discovering that the Theatermuseum held them. "Without those documents, my biography would not have been possible," said the Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus of History from the Canadian Centre for German and European Studies at York University, Toronto. His biography of Lehmann, *Never Sang for Hitler: The Life and Times of Lotte Lehmann, 1888-1976* (Cambridge University Press), is scheduled to appear in February 2008.

Lehmann, born in Berlin in 1888, became one of the leading operatic sopranos of her day. By the end of World War I she was performing regularly at the Vienna State Opera. In the 1930s she began to perform in the United States, where she became a resident in March 1938. In Kater's words, "That move represented one of two alternatives for Lehmann at the time."

The soprano herself described the other alternative in an article that appeared in 1966. "Goering, the Lioness, and I" told of a meeting with Goering in

1933 in Berlin where, Lehmann said, Goering offered to make her a permanent member of the *Preussische Staatsoper*. Conditions were attached, chiefly that she was not to sing outside of Germany. Lehmann set a few conditions of her own: an appointment as *Preussische Kammersängerin*, an apartment in Berlin, and a position for her brother (a vocal coach). Lehmann's description of the encounter concluded with her gazing out the window with Goering and one of his pet lions.

However, Lehmann's account continued, when she received the contract, it made no mention of her requests. She wrote a letter in protest that was shown to both Goering and Hitler. The upshot was, she refused to sing only in Germany; therefore she was forbidden to sing in Germany. "My eyes had been opened to their crimes and I never went back," Lehmann wrote.

As Kater discovered, this account was highly contrived. It was, if anything, the final version of Lehmann's carefully crafted image of herself as "a resistance fighter," a perception that, if accepted by the public, would help her establish a career in America. Moreover, her public relations efforts were not solo undertakings. Erika Mann and several other influential friends corroborated her actions, crediting her with political acumen. In 1948, Friedelind Wagner, Richard Wagner's granddaughter, helped Lehmann by writing that Goering had given the diva a choice.

The correspondence Kater found in the *Theatermuseum* provide evidence for a different story, although a post-war letter to Heinz Tietjen, the director of the Prussian State Opera who was also present during Lehmann's meeting with Goering, indicates that the lion, was likely not a fabrication. As for the rest, the conditions of the contract offered Lehmann were the real stumbling block. It made no mention of her conditions, including her appointment as *Preussische Kammersängerin*, a position that carried financial benefits as well as status. When Lehmann protested, Tietjen reported that Goering was furious that she would not consider this a service to the German people" and that the position was no longer available. Lehmann's telegraphed response included the protest that her international career was not business, but her vocation.

Additional letters and other documents reveal that Lehmann was far from averse to the Nazis. She

recommended a German friend and member of the Nazi party for a job. One of the few reviews pasted into her scrapbook is from the Nazi newspaper the *Völkische Beobachter*. Additionally, at a time when Arturo Toscaninni was refusing to conduct in Bayreuth, Lehmann attended a party at the German ambassador's residence in New York, one to which Bruno Walter, her accompanist and a Jew, had not been invited. In addition, in 1934, even though she was advised not to perform in Germany, she gave two concerts in Munich. In 1938, writing from New York, she requested and received her pension from the Vienna State Opera, paid into an escrow account because she said her inability to return was out of her control. She received that pension until 1941.

In the end, Kater concluded, Lehmann decided to stay in the United States in 1938 because she knew she wasn't welcome in the Third Reich or in that part of the Reich that had been Austria. In June 1945, she became a U.S. citizen. Although she had a long career in the United States, it did not reach the level she had hoped. That was, Kater said, "The price of reaching for the stars by making a pact with the devil." Kater's discovery of the documents in Vienna does not affect Lehmann's artistic merit, but it does, as he said, "put into question her character as a member of the human race." The diva had a tin ear when it came to what was morally right.

Kater closed his lecture by contrasting Lehmann's opportunistic use of the image of the resistance fighter and victim of an evil empire with Hilberg's own use of evidence, which those at the lecture had seen at work in the clip from *Shoah*. As Kater said, "Hilberg showed us a new and constructive way of remembering."

Joseph Hahn on his 90th Birthday, 20 July 2007

By Thomas B. Schumann
(Translated by David Scrase)

Franz Kafka was not the only representative of what is now known as "Prague-German literature," that is to say the literature written in German by residents of what became Czechoslovakia in 1919. There are other significant authors, like Franz Werfel, Max Brod, Egon Erwin Kisch, Leopold

Perutz, and Johannes Urzidil. The last living representative of this splendid German-Jewish culture, which was totally destroyed by the Nazis, is Joseph Hahn, who is ninety years old today.

He was born in 1917 in Bergreichenstein in southern Bohemia and began to study art in 1935, first in Brünn (Brno) and then in Prague, where Peter Weiss and Peter Kien were his fellow students. After the Munich agreement Hahn, a Jew, was obliged to emigrate. In England he somehow managed to exist as a farm laborer and a factory worker until he able to take up his studies again at the Slade School of Fine Art in Oxford. Here he enjoyed the friendship of Franz Baermann-Steiner. Just before the end of the war in 1945 Hahn went to the USA, where he spent many years in "the glass monstrosity of New York." In 1989 he moved with his second wife, an artist, to the "green mountains of Vermont."

Joseph Hahn, a graphic artist and a writer, is doubly gifted. His was a difficult life, complicated by having to care for many years for his sick first wife, during which time he worked as a retoucher of photographs. This situation, together with the fact that Hahn is a perfectionist, has meant that his work is small in quantity though high in quality. Hahn's expressive drawings (e.g. *The Agony of the Atomic Age*) show ravaged human beings in a threatened environment, and are housed in renowned museums such as the Whitney in New York City, and the Albertina in Vienna. Only relatively recently, since the 1980s, has he been able to publish his few books. They include *Eklipse und Strahl* (1997), *Holocaust Poems* (1998), and *Die Doppelgebärde der Welt* (2004).

The extermination of the European Jews in the *Shoah*, during which his parents perished in Auschwitz, is the experience that dominates his life and his creative work. Even in those sparse moments of blissful enjoyment the traumatic memories of the Holocaust can intrude, as in the striking poem "Bach Concert": "Incantation / surging waves of fire and gold / welling up from the fountain, / an unearthly power dominates, the domain of angels. // But only for a moment of transfiguration / can you save yourself / from the urns of the wind / and the tears from the abyss / at the barbed wire."

Further themes in Hahn's poetry, intense and often hermetic imagery, are the threat of the atom, the destruction of the environment, and the

alienation of mankind, all of which he conjures up in apocalyptic visions and with existential desperation. Face to face with the catastrophes and endangerment in the twentieth century, he is consumed by the question of "God's indifference" in the manner of Job. Yet pessimism and grief do not take over entirely in Hahn's poetry. On the contrary, and in spite of everything, his poems often express a message of hope that human beings can be saved, that creation and a feeling for nature can be preserved. In "To a Wildflower," he writes: "O tiny stars / of the springtime galaxy, / nobody saw your solitary transfiguration / in the raven-disabled realm, / no one took notice / as the icy storms / whipped you / and resisting, you withstood the force. // O softly delineated wonder, / o simple splendor, / be for us a protective shield from the horror."

Art, for Joseph Hahn, should not be an aesthetic game but rather the expression of "a respect for life that is free from all dogma," as he states in the forward to the volume *Die Doppelgebärde der Welt*.

All in all, he has made a significant but as yet not totally recognized contribution to the German-Jewish *Shoah* poetry and exile literature in the twentieth century. His almost "magical mastery of language" (Dieter Sudhoff) is astonishing in light of the more than sixty years spent estranged from his mother tongue. But unfortunately, even well-known advocates of his work, like Erich Kleinschmidt, Karl Markus Gauß, Wolfgang Mieder, David Scrase or Jürgen Serke, who in 1987 devoted a full chapter to a comprehensive study of Hahn in his book *Böhmische Dörfer. Wanderungen durch eine verlassene literarische Landschaft*, have so far been unable to make Joseph Hahn better known in the German-speaking countries. May this finally--and this is my wish for his ninetieth birthday--be changed, for he is indeed one of the last in the sense of Hans Sahl's famous poem "Die Letzten"....

Thomas B. Schumann

Thomas B. Schumann's birthday tribute for Joseph Hahn was written for publication in the German press on 20 July 2007, Hahn's birthday. Hahn, alas, did not live to see this English translation, by David Scrase which is intended for readers of the Bulletin.

Joseph Hahn (1917-2007)

by David Scrase

Just three months after his ninetieth birthday on 20 July 2007 Joseph Hahn died on 31 October, 2007.

Joseph Hahn was a German-speaking Jew who was born in the Bohemian town of Bergreichenstein in 1917. His father was an art teacher, his mother taught German. Hahn himself stated simply on numerous occasions that he owed his own talent as an artist to his father, while his poetic gift and masterful control of the German language stemmed from his mother. Certainly Hahn's creative duality as artist/poet set him in the top rank of "Doppeltalente" alongside such as Ernst Barlach, Oskar Kokoschka, Günter Grass, and Christoph Meckel.

Hahn's whole life was spent essentially in exile. Even in the land of his birth, Czechoslovakia, he, as a German-speaking Jew, was an outsider. Fleeing from the Nazi invaders in 1939 he first lived for six years in England, enduring internment, work on the land and in a factory, which was only a little short of slave labor, and for a while the isolation that came from his lack of the English language. In the final year of his exile in England he was able to take up his art studies once again at the illustrious Slade School of Fine Art (removed because of the war from London to Oxford) and to enjoy the company of exiled artists and writers such as Franz Baermann-Steiner. From 1945 he lived in the USA, first in New York City, where he worked as a photo touch-up artist for a prominent studio, and then, after his retirement in 1989, in Middlebury, Vermont.

As an art student in Czechoslovakia, first in Brünn (Brno) and then in Prague, Hahn came to know the prominent artist and writer Peter Kien (who was murdered in Auschwitz) as well as the playwright Peter Weiss. Here he also met his future Wife, Olga Kleinmünz, who was also studying art. It was through his father's Zionist connections that Hahn received the necessary permit that enabled him to travel to England for training in agriculture before he was to emigrate to Palestine. The outbreak of war changed everything: hence his internment and labor on a farm and then in a factory near Oxford. Eventually Olga, who had emigrated in 1938, was able to provide the necessary affidavit and visa that enabled him to join her in the USA in April 1945. Here he continued his art studies at the Art Students' League, where he came to know

George Grosz, the well-known caricaturist and painter. Hahn married Olga Kleinmünz in 1945. In 1949, Olga was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis; by 1960 she was confined to her bed; with further complications from cancer she died in 1978. In 1987 Hahn married the artist Henriette Lerner, who survives him.

During the long period of Olga Kleinmünz' illness, Hahn was her chief care-giver. He had little time for his art, and used whatever time he could find for drawings rather than paintings. He also spent almost two hours travelling to and from work. The time spent in the subway he used for poetry. In his Vermont retirement years he was able to return to painting (both water-colors and oils) and wrote less poetry. His themes for all his creative work included threat of the atomic age, the environment in general terms, the Holocaust, and the welfare of animals. His art is striking in its boldness and the degree to which he stretches his realism. His poetry is expressionistic and reveals a masterful control of German together with an incredible breadth of vocabulary—especially considering the seven decades during which he was exposed to English and cut off entirely from German.

Despite the sombre tone of his subject matter, Hahn insisted that he was an affirmative artist. However one views his work, I have no doubt that we have lost an extraordinary artist and poet. Holocaust Studies has benefited from his generosity and possesses more than a score of his drawings. We are great indebted to him and very much saddened by his passing.

Emil Landau, 1925-2007

by David Scrase

Emil Landau, born in the small Westphalia town of Witten in 1925, died of colon cancer on 27 August 2007. Landau was a survivor of Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, Czechowice, and Buchenwald.

He came from a relatively assimilated German Jewish family that had lived in Westphalia for over 300 years. As the persecution of Germany's Jews intensified throughout the 1930s, the Landaus initially felt somewhat more secure than most other Jews, but they were forced to relocate to the nearby city of Dortmund in 1939. Because of his father's status as a decorated veteran of World War I, the family was deported in 1942 not to the Baltic area, nor to Poland, but to Theresienstadt, the "model"

camp intended for such Jews. Put to work in the so-called “Burial Detail” and only sixteen years old, young Emil’s prospects for survival were not good. With luck and through connections he was, however, able to move to a better environment, to lighter work, and the possibility of extra food with an assignment in the kitchen. Here it was, furthermore, warmer during the winter months. His father died in Theresienstadt early in 1943, and the rest of the family was deported to Auschwitz in 1944. Here, with considerable resourcefulness and strength of character, Emil Landau survived many selections and bombardments. Eventually he was, however, selected and sent to the death barracks. As they were undressing, he and some young friends noticed a door, ascertained that it was open, and simply walked out. They used sand from the ground to erase the red mark on their foreheads and somehow managed to return to their quarters, where they merged in with the others. Fearing the next selection, he volunteered for a work detail in nearby Czechowice. Soon after, with the Red Army approaching from the east, he was evacuated westwards. The first part of the evacuation was by forced march. From Gleiwitz on the Polish/German border he was taken, barely alive, to Buchenwald by rail. After the liberation of this crowded camp on 11 April 1945, Landau was brought back to life and treated by American medics until he was well enough to go to Switzerland for recuperation. Miraculously, his mother and sister had also survived, and after they were re-united in 1946, the three emigrated to the United States. Here Landau began his professional career in printing, working for a subsidiary of Time-Life. He later formed his own company in Madison, Connecticut and built it into a successful enterprise, which he ultimately sold. He and his wife then retired to Damariscotta in Maine, where they played an active role in cultural matters—music, art, the local library, and theater. He was an avid sailor until ill-health curtailed such strenuous activity.

In the post-war years, Landau did not at first speak out about his experiences, but after his son asked him to come to his school and tell the students about his life during the *Shoah*, he began to visit schools and other institutions and describe these events. It was thus that we in the Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies came to know him. He

spoke during our Summer Seminar, in classes, and to high school students, and he attended the Miller Symposium on Medicine and Medical Ethics in Nazi Germany. Just before his father died in Theresienstadt, Emil’s father admonished his teenaged son to stand firm against the harsh treatment of the Nazis and to resist any categorization as “inferior” or “sub-human.” “You are better than they are,” he said. The adolescent took these words to heart. Furthermore, Emil Landau did not think of himself as a victim: “If I would be a victim, then I would be dead, or the Nazis would still be controlling my life.”

Landau is survived by his wife, Carolyn, and their son Alex.

Book Review

Kristallnacht: Prelude to Destruction

Martin Gilbert, Harper Perennial Paperback: 320 pages, Reprint edition (May 29, 2007) ISBN: 0061121355 (\$14.95)

Across the Greater German Reich during 9-10 November 1938, Nazi storm troopers, members of the Hitler Youth, and police forces unleashed a program of murder and terror against Jews, an event known as Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass. The Nazi minions deliberately targeted and destroyed more than 1,000 synagogues, vandalized and looted thousands of Jewish businesses and homes resulting in the immediate deaths of close to 100 Jews, as well as the arrest and detention in concentration camps of some 30,000 Jewish men. Martin Gilbert, the prolific author and biographer of Winston Churchill, chronicles the events of this 24-hour period and its aftermath in *Kristallnacht: Prelude to Destruction*. In this paperback edition, Gilbert provides readers with fresh insights by eyewitnesses interwoven with contemporaneous accounts of the Nazis’ acts of arson, homicide, and abject harassment in a manner that enhances our understanding of this event as it unfolded in the streets of German and Austrian cities and towns. Gilbert is less successful, however, in demonstrating how and why these events served as a ‘prelude to destruction.’

The strengths of the book are evident in the first four chapters. Gilbert provides the reader with a wide spectrum of first-person perspectives as waves

of anti-Jewish terror engulfed all areas of the Third Reich in less than 24-hours, including parts of the recently annexed Sudetenland. While this is not new ground in the corpus of literature on Kristallnacht, Gilbert weaves fifty never-before published eyewitness accounts of the events of 9-10 November 1938 with reports filed by members of the foreign press to create a stunning, yet nuanced picture of the Nazis' calculated and extensive pogrom. In one such indelible eyewitness account, Marianne Geernaert (nee David), a 15-year-old from Hamburg who attended a boarding school in Bad Kreuznach, more than three hundred miles from her home, stated that on Kristallnacht:

I was woken in the night by shouting and banging, then men in Nazi uniforms burst into my room screaming: "Raus, raus! [Out, out!]" On the table was my new alto recorder, of which I was very proud, as I had so far only owned a soprano. One of the men picked it up and broke it by hitting it on the table's edge. I got dressed and went outside where everybody was gathering in a frightened group. Matron was there trying to keep everyone calm. The Nazis were bringing items, books and other things, out of the building, piling them up to be set alight [...] as I came out of my room into the long corridor, there was an SS man going along it with a club, systematically smashing the glass on each pretty nursery picture on the wall. Frightened as I was, it still struck me as such a pointless thing to do (pp. 74-75).

Gilbert juxtaposes the rabid actions of the Nazis with occasional tales of rescue and resistance. In one such instance, a reporter for *News Chronicle* noted in the 11 November 1938 edition that he witnessed "the strange sight of two German army officers in uniform who intervened to prevent the destruction of a [Jewish] shop and who were threatened with bodily assault by a howling mob." While the officers withdrew, their hands on their daggers, the British journalist noted that the mob screamed 'you owe us your very uniforms.' He concluded the article by writing that these two officers "seemed to be the only persons left in the Reich who dared to stand up for decency and restraint" (p. 52).

Gilbert follows such accounts with the historical context of the events leading to Kristallnacht,

including a detailed biographical section on the Polish-born teenager, Herschel Grynszpan, whose assassination of a German embassy official in Paris the first week in November 1938 set in motion the alleged Nazi reprisal measures against the Jews within the German borders less than a week later. He also provides a survey of how the rest of the world responded to the harsh Nazi actions against the Jews of Germany and Austria. Without taking the focus off the individuals who help propel this history, Gilbert allows the eyewitnesses and contemporaneous reports to narrate both the indignation with which some nations and leaders across the globe greeted the news of the Nazis' actions, as well as the ambivalence and deliberate hostility and calloused indifference displayed by others. As Gilbert points out, however, most of those nations that did express contempt for the criminality of the Nazis did not translate their disgust into major policy changes to allow more German and Austrian Jews to find a place of refuge.

In the final pages of *Kristallnacht*, Gilbert takes what appears to be an incongruent tangent. His narrative for almost 9 chapters has been driven by first-person testimonies and accounts by reporters. He uses these narratives to supplement the facts and dates of destruction that make up the time line of the Nazi Holocaust with regard to Kristallnacht and its immediate aftermath. In the last chapter, however, Gilbert largely reverts to a chronological narrative, providing facts with little or no explanation, or even supplementary material from survivors. For example, he tells us that "[o]n 19 September 1941 all Jews in Germany over the age of six were ordered to wear a yellow star." (p.240). With no commentary by eyewitnesses for this important date, Gilbert does not make any connections to how the Star of David confronted Germans with the miserable plight of the Jews, a plight that had already been made graphically clear throughout the Reich some three years earlier as a result of Kristallnacht.¹²

In addition, Gilbert's effort in the last chapter to identify Kristallnacht as the 'prelude to destruction' is a stretch. He states:

Six years of legalized anti-Jewish discrimination, isolating the Jews from their fellow Germans and depriving them of rights of full citizenship, were replaced on Kristallnacht by the first manifestations of

direct, nationwide, physical violence, combined with arson, the destruction of property, the theft of property, the impoverishment of a whole community, physical assault, deportation and mass murder (p. 269).

While clearly not as calculated and focused as Kristallnacht, the Nazis did destroy synagogues in numerous communities across the Reich in the years prior to November 1938, including ones in Munich, Nuremberg, Dortmund, and Kaiserslautern. They also engaged in deliberate harassment and discrimination on a national level, including organizing a boycott of Jewish businesses in 1933, and issuing restrictive decrees regarding how and when Jews could conduct business, attend school, and use public facilities, etc. Furthermore, the Nazis constructed what they believed were racial definitions of who was Jewish, with whom Jews could have relationships, and ultimately reduced all Jews to mere subjects of the state through the Nuremberg Laws and their subsequent decrees beginning in 1935. To this reader, these are rather significant and calculated discriminatory steps, which although not accompanied by mass arrests and some 100 murders in one day, certainly severely impacted Jewish life in Germany.

Furthermore, to elevate this one event as the flashpoint in the Nazi initiation of the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question” requires a more thorough substantiation than Gilbert offers in these pages. Issues of continued Jewish emigration from the Reich through 1941, attempts to resettle Jews in Eastern Poland or on Madagascar in 1940, the impact of warfare in the Fall of 1939 through the Spring of 1945, the influence of demographics with massive increases in the population of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe, responses by the Allied forces to news of the Nazi Holocaust, and the role of the so-called Nazi Euthanasia program and other Nazi racial initiatives are among the pertinent topics Gilbert does not address.

Lastly, Gilbert concludes with a paragraph that appears not to be in keeping with the rest of the book:

As they were taking place, the events of Kristallnacht shocked sensitive, humane men and women everywhere. First when emigration was still possible, and then when the Nazi regime turned from extrusion to extermination, there

were always those who made every effort to take in refugees, and to save those who could be saved. Such generous souls were few in number, but large in spirit. Thanks to them, amid the collapse of morality, morality survived. Amid the ruins of civilisation, civilisation was reborn. But the losses are irreplaceable.

In Kristallnacht he does mention several individuals who assisted Jews in their attempts to leave Germany and Austria, or who helped mitigate the suffering during the November 1938 pogrom. The vast majority of his narrative, however, has been about the terror and suffering inflicted upon the Jews. Although he concludes that: “the losses are irreplaceable,” why even focus in the last sentences on the rebirth of morality and civilization when he has directed so much attention on loss?

Such a conclusion is not unprecedented territory for Gilbert. In his 1985 *The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe During the Second World War*, he draws on oral testimonies and eyewitness narratives to tell the story of the Nazi Holocaust. He spends over 800 pages chronicling the death and destruction of individuals and communities, and then ends the book with the following:

[...] To die with dignity was a form of resistance. To resist the dehumanizing, brutalizing force of evil, to refuse to be abased to the levels of animals, to live through the torment, to outlive the tormentors, these too were resistance. Merely to give witness to one's own testimony was, in the end, to contribute to a moral victory. Simply to survive was a victory of the human spirit (p. 828).

Left implied in this conclusion is that those who died without dignity did not resist, and that those who died are examples of the defeat of the human spirit, conclusions that simply do not correspond to the rest of the book.

Perhaps a more fitting conclusion to Kristallnacht would have been to detail what happened to the individuals he focused on, or even describe what happened to the damaged and destroyed synagogues. That every synagogue in Germany today is under 24-hour police protection, and that the newly reopened Rykestrasse Synagogue in East Berlin,

the largest synagogue in Germany, even has its own police station within the building, might raise another set of questions worth examining.

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¹ For a more nuanced discussion of the impact of the Star of David on the Jewish population of Germany, see Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 157-160.

Book Review

Between Home and Homeland: Youth Aliyah from Nazi Germany.

Brian Amkraut.

Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. 2006. Pp. xii + 232. ISBN-13: 978-0-8173-1513-9.

The relationship between the Zionist movement inside and outside of Germany and Hitler's regime prior to the "final solution" has been a sensitive issue in the historiography of the Third Reich and the Holocaust. Consequently, it has also been a topic that, with some exceptions, has generally been ignored – or perhaps more to the point, avoided. Some have attributed anti-Semitic motives to any assertion that Zionist ideology and practice were particularly attractive to and useful for the Nazi regime as a mechanism for forcing Jewish emigration, and even required some degree of cooperation. From the opposite side of the spectrum have come equally facile and self-serving notions that Nazi use of the Zionist movement coupled with Zionist efforts to find some sort of accommodation with the regime prove that the Zionists were Hitler's partners, that Hitler was not all bad, and that in the end he gave the Jews their own state in 1948. That this "reluctance" seems to be waning might explain recent and impending studies that in varying degrees deal with the general question of Zionism in Nazi Germany. Brian Amkraut's

Between Home and Homeland: Youth Aliyah from Nazi Germany is one such study.

Saul Friedländer has counseled that it is essential to connect the victims' experiences to the decision-making process and policy implementation of the perpetrators when writing about the Holocaust. In keeping with this approach, the author has written a superb study of Youth Aliyah from Germany before the "final solution."

In the complex fabric of the relationship between German Jews and the Nazi state prior to the "final solution," the history of the Youth Aliyah movement after 30 January 1933 is but one of the many threads that together constitute the tragedy of German Jewry during the Nazi years. It naturally assumes a much larger role in the history of German Zionism during those years, in part because of its obvious focus on Jewish youth and the particular plight of young Jews in Germany. If Zionism was attractive to German Jews at all during the inter-war period, it was first and foremost to young people, large numbers of whom naturally rebelled against their parents' world view. More important, however, is the fact that the substance of Nazi Jewish policy beginning in 1933, with its anti-Jewish legislation, constant harassment and intimidation, and periodic violence, almost immediately deprived young people of any hope for a future in Germany. In particular, they were forced to confront the rapid disappearance of, among other things, virtually all future educational and professional opportunities in Germany.

This monograph provides the reader with the proper historical context as it seeks to convey the importance of the Youth Aliyah during those years. And it does this quite well by keeping Nazi Jewish policy as it evolved after 1933, as well as a more detailed account of the demise of German Jewish life as a result of that policy, as essential contexts in understanding the history of Youth Aliyah. The movement clearly had to tailor its message to the particular realities of a mostly assimilated, largely urban and bourgeois German Jewish community under direct assault from the Nazi state. Of particular value is the book's periodic use of individual cases of young Jews and their families who opted for the Youth Aliyah program, their particular circumstances, and the understandably mixed reactions of families

to the idea of their children joining Youth Aliyah and eventually setting out for Palestine at such an early age. In this regard in particular, the book offers valuable insights into an important aspect of the struggle of German Jewish families to cope with an ever deepening crisis.

Finally, the author also provides detailed analysis of the Palestine end of the process, especially the debates within the *yishuv* over the philosophical basis of Youth Aliyah, as well as the settlement process and programs that German Jewish youth encountered once they arrived in Palestine via the Youth Aliyah program. Of particular importance is the former, with its wrenching debates over “selectivity” versus “rescue” as the continuing rationale for Youth Aliyah under rapidly changing circumstances in Germany. Should a highly selective process that sought only those youths best suited for resettlement and life in Palestine be maintained? Or should more emphasis be placed on the rescue of as many young Jews as possible, regardless of their “suitability” for life in Eretz Israel, in the face of an increasingly threatening situation in Germany?

It is hard to find fault with this excellent study of an important but little-known facet of German Jewish history during the Nazi years. Perhaps some more detailed context of German Zionist organizations and institutions, and Youth Aliyah’s relationship to them, would have been useful. It is still unclear, for instance, exactly how Youth Aliyah fit into or coexisted with the policies of the Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland and even the small revisionist Staatszionistische Organisation, and the extensive programs that were in some way connected to these two organizations during those years. This is particularly important with regard to the necessary points of contact that existed between official Zionist institutions in Germany and the Nazi regime through 1938 and to some extent thereafter. And, while Youth Aliyah programs were meant for youths below the age of eighteen, what was the nature of their relationship to the many retraining programs for people eighteen and older that *Hechaluz* as well as German Jewish organizations operated inside and outside of Germany during those years?

Between Home and Homeland: Youth Aliyah from Nazi Germany is a welcome addition to the literature

on the history of German Jewry and German Zionism during the Nazi years. In particular, Brian Amkraut is to be commended for an extremely well-researched and well-written study that provides a valuable window into the trauma, tragedy, and hopes for the future of German Jewish youths and their families in the face of Nazi persecution.

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Publications to Look For:

Jonathan Huener and Francis R. Nicosia (eds.),
The Arts in Nazi Germany (New York:
Berghahn Books, 2006)
[NOW IN PAPERBACK]

Francis R. Nicosia, *Zionism and Anti-Semitism
in Nazi Germany* (New York: Cambridge
University Press, 2008) [APRIL 2008]

Robert Bernheim and David Scrase (eds.),
Jewish Life in Nazi Germany (New York:
Berghahn Books, 2008) [LATE 2008]

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