THE BULLETIN OF

Volume 9, Number 1 Fall 2004

THE BURDEN OF HISTORY—OR A CHANCE WORTH TAKING?

Siegi Witzany-Durda

Lost traces

Gusen lies close to the river Danube, about 15 km east of the provincial capital Linz. At first sight nothing distinguishes this small village from other such villages in Austria; it has a village store, two inns, a garage, a sports field. In the original settlement, not far from the Danube, cozy farmhouses nestle among old orchards, surrounded by fields and meadows. There is a pleasant postwar development, with the typical rows of neat family houses, well-kept gardens, children playing on quiet streets, riding tricycles, bikes, and skateboards. To the north of this development, the terrain rises steeply.

At second sight, however the attentive observer notices some topographical features that do not quite fit into the overall architectural picture of a housing development and that disturb the original impression of harmlessness. At the northern and eastern edge of the village lie two huge granite quarries, with two more

felt they had suffered from deprivation themselves: they had lost property in air raids and their husbands and sons on the war front. The plight of those in the zone of Soviet occupation, north of the Danube, was especially difficult. Many Austrians thought they had already experienced their share of suffering during the war and had paid for their sins, if they had committed any at all. Yes, the war had been terrible, but now there was time to look ahead and rebuild what had been destroyed.

With all the hustle and bustle of the reconstruction, little time was left for an honest and profound reflection on the past. Whenever the thought arose that many Austrians had actually benefited from the Nazi regime, it was quickly dismissed. Besides, it was said, the victims were far away; they had returned to their home countries, had emigrated overseas, or were simply quiet because nobody was willing to listen to them. For some time a guilty conscience can be covered up by a great deal of activity; however, in the long run human memory cannot be denied. One day the bitter truth comes to light.

The consequences for Gusen

The area north of the Danube, where Gusen is situated, was liberated by the Americans in early May 1945. It fell under the sovereignty of the Soviets in July of that year. The Russians continued to exploit the Gusen quarries as compensation for the awful destruction the Germans had left in Russia, and they used the barracks of the liberated camp Gusen in order to accommodate their soldiers as well as the members of a penal squad. When they finally left, in 1955, the area of the former concentration camp passed into the possession of the provincial government of Upper Austria and the granite quarries were returned to their former owners. With many "Volksdeutsche," who had been driven away from their former homes, still staying in provisional homes south of Linz and seeking permanent residence, cheap plots for building were in demand. It seemed logical to split the camp area into lots, sell them, and start construction. Whatever material from the camp barracks or armament production halls that was still useful was taken for building.

Gradually the visible traces of the concentration camps disappeared and, it seemed, their memory also faded away. Why conserve the remains of Gusen? After all Mauthausen, the official memorial, was so close by; this would suffice.

Survivors who kept coming back to Gusen regularly to commemorate their time of suffering and their cruelly murdered comrades were deeply worried about the building activities. Consequently they decided to rescue the last remnants. On the initiative of French, Belgian, and Italian survivors they bought the plot surrounding the still intact crematorium and they had a memorial designed, which was then constructed and inaugurated in 1965. Today it is the center of all commemoration activities at Gusen. At that time no contact existed between survivors and the local population. Many inhabitants preferred to ignore the history of their neighborhood: "Something awful happened here, that's true, but that was ages ago. It is definitely past and it is certainly none of our business."

The Gusen Commemoration Committee—A local initiative

Not until the 1990s did this situation change. In 1995 the Gusen Commemoration Committee was founded, consisting of local people born long after the war, who approached the history of their home region with critical interest and who started asking questions about what had happened here and what people had witnessed. They started looking for visible traces in the landscape, but also traces in the hearts and minds of people, those precious memories of eye witnesses. The creation of a website, www.gusen.org, quickly helped establish the most amazing contacts with people interested in history, survivors of the camps as well as veterans of the U.S. liberation army, who are scattered all over the world.

In May 1995 the Commemoration Committee organized the first commemoration ceremony in cooperation with survivor organizations. The enormous number of visitors from all over the world exceeded all expectations. Within Austria, Gusen may be an insignificant small village unknown to most people, but in the minds of survivors it is deeply and indelibly engraved as a place of utmost humiliation, as well as unbearable physical suffering and mental anguish. We were confronted with details and names we had never heard before. We asked, listened, and were shocked about what had happened here. We felt with the survivors and cried together when words failed us. This first common commemoration has been followed by many others. It marked the beginning of a deep friendship between our group and survivors and their families, a friendship that deepens and grows more intense every year.

The heritage of the young

As young Austrians, we cannot but feel deep shame at the darkest chapter of Austrian history. The widespread approval that the Hitler regime received from the Austrian population right from the beginning, the relatively small resistance that was shown, and the great number of Austrians taking an active part in the extermination apparatus cannot be denied. If one gets deeper into the

and act. I am deeply convinced that the values of democracy, freedom, tolerance, and human dignity need to be fostered more and that their defence must be promoted.

"Mauthausen is for the flag, Gusen is for the heart"

The annual commemoration at Gusen attracts great numbers of people from all over the world; this is apparently due to the warm welcome they receive and the atmosphere of togetherness they experience, which once made a Polish survivor spontaneously exclaim: "Mauthausen is for the flag, Gusen is for the heart!" In contrast to the traditional commemoration at Mauthausen, which is scheduled on the Sunday closest to the date of liberation, May 5, and which usually receives media attention, in Gusen there is a parade of separate national groups headed by their flags. There is no monolingual program, br t54multilingual presentation of speeches, and translations are provided in a program folder to guarantee a high degree of mutual understanding.

Even in the first years of the Gusen Commemoration Committee's existence it has become evident that there is not only a need for a language bridge br t5also for a bridge connecting different generations. On the one hand there are the survivors, all of them of an advanced age, who are the special guests of honor and whose message is of central importance: "Never forget what happened here. Do not fall for political agitators again. Focus on what you have in common and not on what separates you. Live in peace." On the other hand, there are so many young people from Austria as well as from abroad who show an enormous interest in the event and make a significant contribrtion to commemoration. Considering the age of the survivors, we have to face the fact that the next generation will soon have to carry on the memory into the future. Involving young people and giving them a chance to express themselves seems advisable.

I teach high school and for years I have invited one of my classes to participate actively in the commemoration ceremony at Gusen. The invitation has always been met with great enthusiasm and an explicit readiness to cooperate. Presenting speeches that have been written by students in German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, and Polish to such a big international audience and distribrting roses to survivors is considered a great honor by these young Austrians.

The following message was prepared for the 2004 commemoration:

> Weaving webs
>
> My name is Anna, I am 18, and this is the third time I have taken part in the commemoration at Gusen. I am fascinated by the atmosphere of this event.
>
> I feel that despite our national differences we are connected by our common recollection of a sad chapter of European history. It seems as if together we have woven an invisible web of friendship at this place.
>
> Our web is made of our determination to do everything in order to prevent a repetition of the past.
>
> Our web is made of our promise not to forget.
>
> Our web is made of the memory of righteous people who acted humanely in that hell of hells and even helped others to survive, like the Austrian priest Johann Gruber. They show clearly that man always has a choice, either to take the path of good or of evil.
>
> In all those years we have met survivors personally. We had the chance to hear their stories. I wonder what it means for you to come back to Gusen? I imagine how, back then, your mothers were deeply worried about Dusan, Max, Josef … , not knowing if you were alive at all.
>
> I admire your courage to come back to Gusen and meet us withor t5hatred and in friendship. I am deeply grateful for this experience.
>
> I know your are troubled by the idea that we might one day forget what happened to you and your comrades, and that man can fall into the same fatal trap again. You are right, there is always the danger.
>
> And still, here and now I would like to assure you that we will not forget. The memory of you will accompany us through our lives and we will tell our children and grandchildren abor t5you. I promise.

It would be naïve to believe our efforts could undo the past and heal the wounds. The scars are deep, the family members of Jewish survivors are forever gone, and we are powerless against their recurrent nightmares. However, in the final stage of their lives, survivors tell us they find comfort and peace of mind, realizing that their memory is not lost brt will be carried on. This is more than we ever could expect to achieve with our dedicated work.

And how do my students feel about their annual contribution to the commemoration at Gusen?

> I strongly disagree if people dismiss our involvement in Gusen as a mere digging in the past. I am convinced that nations that refuse to face their pasts are condemned to repeat the awful blunders of their forefathers. I'd rather avoid them. (Thomas, 18)
>
> An event like the annual commemoration at Gusen strengthens the people of good will and helps us make a net of solidarity and friendship among different nations. (Florian, 18)
>
> When I was standing in front of the microphone and reading my text I saw many people had tears in their eyes. Afterwards my mum, who was also present, told me she was enormously proud of me. (Anna, 18)
>
> The best thing abort Gusen is that survivors come up to us, give us a big hug and tell us how much it means to them to hear our statements. (Verena, 17)
>
> I just cannot believe this was our last contribution to a commemoration ceremony as a class. I feel, this year we were at our best and we got such a positive feedback. I was simply overwhelmed. Next year I will

be a freshman at university, but I will certainly come back for the commemoration because Gusen has a special place in my heart. And I really appreciate my

THE 3RD MILLER SYMPOSIUM

Jenny L. Bruell
Theodore J. Patton

UVM hosted its third Miller Symposium in April 2004, bringing together six distinguished scholars in German history to share their expertise about the arts in Nazi Germany. The event was organized by UVM's Center for Holocaust Studies, directed by Professor David Scrase, and is named for generous donors Leonard (UVM '51) and Carolyn Miller. In 2001 the Millers established an endowment that provides annual financial resources that help to sustain the programming of the Center for Holocaust Studies.

Moderated by Michael Kater, a distinguished German historian at York University in Toronto, the symposium offered UVM faculty, students, and friends the opportunity to listen to lectures about the relationship between the arts and Nazi ideology in twentieth-century Europe and to engage in provocative, complex discussions during the question-and-answer sessions that followed each lecture.

An introduction and overview to the 2004 Miller Symposium, "Anti-Semitism and the Arts in Nazi Ideology and Policy," was given by Alan Steinweis, Professor of History at the University of Nebraska. From the beginning of the National Socialist movement in the 1920s the Nazis introduced a "twenty-five point plan" that called on the party to remove all Jewish cultural influence. The National Socialists advocated the regulation of cultural production. This began at a time when conservatives outraged at Weimar culture were becoming increasingly vocal. The Nazis desired "cultural purification"; this, argued Hitler, would be a large component in producing the desired German *Volk*. During the late 1920s the majority of German artists traditional in outlook, and this only aided the Nazis in targeting Jews as the "corruptors" of German culture. Regardless of how large a rôle Jewish artists played in Weimar society, argued Steinweis, the Jews' fate was sealed, no matter what.

Once in power the National Socialists approached the cleansing of Aryan culture through "positive and negative eugenics." From 1933 on, the party went on two parallel tracks in order to reach cultural purification: the first was censorship of the arts, and second was determining who could participate in the arts. Two key stages emerged: the first came in the form of the Reichstag Fire Decree of February 1933, which gave the government wide-reaching emergency police powers. At this stage only a small percentage of the 8,000 Jewish cultural personnel was removed. The larger purge came with the April 1933 Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service, which along with the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 enabled the Nazis to remove an additional 7,000 Jewish people from positions of cultural influence. The Jewish Cultural League, initially supported by the National Socialists, was created in 1934-35 in order to allow for the segregation of Jewish culture from the whole of Germany. By 1938 it had become clear that the Nazis had decided that the initial purges of 1933 and 1935 had not produced the desired "purification" of German culture, and within a few years the final cultural purge came in the form of the "Final Solution."

The second lecture was given by Eric Rentschler, who is the Chair of Germanic Studies at Harvard University. Rentschler's talk focused on Nazi film, using

1930s became less and less successful. By the end of the Third Reich the production of German literature had been crippled by the Nazis.

Jonathan Petropolous, Professor of European History at Clairmont-McKenna College, concluded this year's Miller Symposium with his presentation on "The Art World in Nazi Germany: Choices, Justice and Rationalizations." He focused on three important, yet relatively unassuming, figures in German art circles of the period: Arno Breker, a successful sculptor and beneficiary of Joseph Goebbels's propaganda. His work, according to Goebbels, was "representative of the regime." The second figure was Karl Haberstock, who represented Nazi leaders in the art world and was responsible for the sale of plundered art. Petropolous's third figure, Ernst Büchner, was also an art dealer and the director of various museums in Bavaria. Focusing on the choices, rationalizations, and complicity of the three men and their professional activity during the Nazi period, Petropolous exposed the complexity and broad scope of methods of art exploitation in Nazi Germany.

All three men chose to stay and continue their work in Germany under Hitler's regime, despite sufficient funds and connections with foreign associates who could have helped them emigrate, as many others had done. Instead, they remained in Germany and their professional status in the art world was enhanced. Breker described his work as an international movement, helping to define Germany's aesthetic ideals. Haberstock regarded himself as doing good work for Germany: he was "preserving art for humanity." Büchner, who stressed to Hitler that money must be directed to museums, worked to protect and preserve "Aryan" art. All three men made strenuous efforts to obtain and safeguard art within the Third Reich. The striking component of Petropolous' presentation was the issue of justice. Despite the three men's clear roles in the exploitation of Jewish artwork and their promotion of Nazi artistic ideals, they suffered minor repercussions. During the de-Nazification process that followed the Third Reich's defeat, all three were tried for criminal activity. However, their punishment was the mere payment of small fines. They were able to continue in their professions and remained prominent in their fields.

The Third Miller Symposium lasted one full day and presented the audience with the results of decades of research. Lecturers and listeners alike confronted issues of Nazi ideology and the arts through concise lectures and the lengthy question periods after each presentation. Though many issues and topics in Nazi art and culture remain to be addressed and researched, experts and students alike left with a better understanding of what is known. The UVM community is grateful and better educated because of the efforts and contributions of the Center for Holocaust

Summer Seminar 2004

Katherine Ferriss

In the academic world, it is rare to have a course that can make you laugh, cry, learn, and examine the value of human life. The weeklong Holocaust seminar at the University of Vermont did all of those things and more. Expecting a week of depression, instead I found hope, perseverance, and forgiveness in the stories and lives of the Holocaust survivors.

When the week began, some students had difficulty finding parking, the building, and the classroom; however, by the end of

awareness and courage of those individuals who took great risks to save Jewish people, officially known as Righteous Among the Nations.

The second speaker of the day was one such person, Marion Pritchard, a woman recognized as Righteous by Israel for helping to hide more than one hundred Jews in her native Netherlands, though she estimates that only twenty managed to survive the war. Her story was one of courage and sacrifice, though Pritchard carefully points to the contributions of the unrecognized Jews who

A Summer at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

By
Michael Higgins

During the first week of June 2004 roughly twenty-five summer interns left for Washington, D.C. to work for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. When I applied in March I had no idea that I would be one of these interns. I arrived in Washington and was welcomed with open arms; now, as I look back, it seems to have ended just as soon as it started. I learned so much in a short amount of time and in the future would like to go back and continue to work for the museum.

I interned for the Registry of Holocaust Survivors as the Collections Management intern. My duties varied from week to week depending on coverage in the museum and any immediate needs that arose. However, my more permanent task for the summer was cataloging photographs—re-housing them in archival-quality containers and entering their information into a computerized database. This was an interesting assignment because the pictures varied from portraits to photos taken inside the camps.

Whenever I was not cataloging I staffed the reference desk in the Benjamin and Vladka Meed Registry of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, located on the museum's second floor. The registry is located in the Wexner Learning Center, where three computers provide public access to the survivors' registry. The reference desk

Book Reviews

The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp. Rochelle G. Saidel. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, xvii + 268 pp. ISBN 0-299-19860-X. Cloth. $29.95.

Transmitting untold stories of suffering and resistance into the testimonial record on a little researched camp is an essential task for historians of the Shoah. Writing a book on Jewish women's experiences that transcends an overarching narrative of victimization is an admirable feat. Essential with regard to the moral obligation that one must never forget, and admirable for its unblinking insights into the resilience of the human spirit and individual acts of love and courage before the workings of a program of dehumanization and annihilation, Rochelle Saidel's new book is a profound tribute to the "uncounted" Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

Beginning in 1980 with a trip to the German Democratic Republic and specifically a visit to the site of the Ravensbrück women's camp, Saidel investigated the largely undocumented history of the camp's Jewish inmates. Under the Soviet regime, the camp memorial had commemorated predominantly the communist prisoners (some of them Jewish, though mention of this facet of their identities was absent) and allotted a prison cell to each of the countries represented among the victims. Saidel rejected this notion of fairness once she learned of the existence of at least one Jewish barrack on her initial visit and set to work on uncovering the specific experiences of these women who had been singled out for their faith. In the end, she has written into history the memories of sixty women. Their testimony survives despite the destroyed or repressed records of Ravensbrück's Jewish inmates, who were deported from twenty-three nations and represented roughly twenty percent of the camp's 132,000 prisoners (Saidel prefers to use these figures to original estimates of 10-13.47 percent Jewish inmates among the total 123,000 registered female prisoners).

Through personal interviews with survivors and with victims' families, published and unpublished memoirs, and historical archives in the United States, Europe, Israel, Brazil, and Canada, Saidel has compiled a cohesive record of the internal organization of the work camp and its satellites, as well as Ravensbrück's place within the network of Nazi camps and programs of slave labor, medical experimentation, sterilization, and extermination. Evidently due to the low survival rate, many of the book's testimonials relate the horrific experiences of the latest transports of Jewish women from Hungary beginning in late spring of 1944, or from other camps, most particularly Auschwitz. The latter were sent on death marches to Ravensbrück in January 1945 before the advancing Soviet army, swelling the camp's overcrowded population to between 32,000 and 43,700, although it was originally conceived for 5,000.

Especially given the insufficient camp records and ledgers from the final disorganized months of the camp, these painful narratives of victimization give way to the awesome historical value of testimony, and while reading this book, I was reminded of Shoshana Felman's written praise of Claude Lanzmann's documentary *Shoah* as "the return of the voice." Through their recorded memories, the women transmit their fears, joys, struggles, personal tragedies, and prejudices. At the same time they tell the specifics of their experience of the *Appells*, work details, soup lines, latrines, the infirmary, and all the other horrific aspects of the camp. Their voices give contour and volume to stories of incredible stamina, relative good fortune, or mental breakdown, stories also colored by their liberation—by escape, or evacuation in one of the white buses of the Swedish Red Cross, or under the somewhat dreaded guard of the Soviet army—and their lives following. Saidel sees their value to the historical record as such: "When the testimonies of the women in this book are put together, along with writings from non-Jewish survivors, reports on those who did not survive, historically accepted facts, war crime trial transcripts and Nazi documents, they serve to corroborate each other in a way that gives us an overview." Isolated accounts do speak of two previously unknown incidents: one survivor recalls entering a building where a group of young women with their tongues cut out were making sexual gesticulations to her; another remembers Christmas Day, 1944 when only the Jewish women were forced out into the cold naked for inspection. Saidel reports them as "precious information" to be preserved as evidence "until proven otherwise."

In addition to her primary goal, namely the retrieval of the memories of the Jewish women and children who passed through the camp or died there, Saidel identifies the various groups designated by the colored triangles sewn onto their clothing, representing their different "crimes." Notably, she relates the moral strength, courage, and generosity of many of the camp's political prisoners (German, Polish, French, Dutch, Soviet, and British), of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and of two French nuns. She notes the systematic sterilization of Gypsy women, and, in her conclusion, stresses the need for more research and documentation of the experiences of "asocial" lesbian prisoners, whose memories continue to be repressed or tarnished. Despite the ways in which the inmates of Ravensbrück have been described throughout the post-1945 era, Saidel avoids generalizations and, at the end of her book, brings into focus the uniqueness of the women's experience.

The camp's negation of female sensibilities, maternity, and the physical act of love, not to mention the prisoners' fears of nakedness, rape, forced prostitution or abortion, did not, it appears, preclude expressions of human warmth or protectiveness. Camp "sisters" and "mothers," many of them surrogates, assumed the task of caring for their "families."

Acts of resistance are traced through the lives of famously heroic prisoners and others whose daily demonstrations of kindness and individual or communal displays of creativity—from recipe books to foreign language lessons, pictures, plays, songs, poetry, embroidery, and carved trinkets—preserved the human spirit and feeling of community within the camp. Olga Benário Prestes, a German Communist, and Dr. Käthe Pick Leichter, an Austrian Social Democrat, both of them political prisoners and Jewish, are remembered in particular for their heroic resistance activities, including the joint creation of a clandestine newspaper, the smuggling of extra bread and margarine to women in the infirmary, and the lifting of morale through Prestes' insistence on personal hygiene or Leichter's freedom songs. Despite their own suffering, these two women's unflinching moral courage, creativity, and personal dignity made them leaders in the various efforts to sabotage the camp's normal operation or, through song and play, to mock the Nazis. These two women, commemorated

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Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust. Elizabeth R. Baer and Myrna Goldenberg. Eds. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003. 321 pages. Cloth ISBN 0-8143-3062-2 $39.95. Paper. ISBN 0-8143-3062-2. $24.95.

This anthology is dedicated to the late Sybil Milton (1941-2000). It grew out of the 1997 Annual Holocaust Scholar's Conference that featured two special panels on women and the Holocaust. The detailed title of this "superbly edited and introduced" (jacket endorsement) book suggests also its range. It is divided into four parts, I) Proposing a Theoretical Framework, II) Women's Experience: Gender, the Nazis, and the Holocaust, III) Gender and Memory: The Uses of Memoirs, IV) Women's Expressions: Postwar Reflections in Art, Fiction, and Film. The sections cover

well as the aftermath. Nowak addresses important ethical questions that arose during and after experiencing and witnessing victims' vulnerability, assault, and limited or denied agency in the face of Nazi atrocities.

Catherine A. Bernard provides a feminist analysis of Anne Frank and corrects the image of the idealized child victim by locating the voice of Frank the woman concealed behind the distortions of mainstream hagiography. Bernard gives us the history of the famous Diary's publication that had reduced Frank to "a symbol of gentle forgiveness or … a touchstone for identification with the oppressed of the world." Bernard mentions the omissions and suppressions of some of Frank's significant contemplations as a young woman in a sexist and unjust society and a brutal world.

In Part IV, Stephen C. Feinstein's chapter on "Jewish Women in Time: The Challenge of Feminist Artistic Installations about the Holocaust," provides an excellent and thorough analysis of the art of two renowned female artists: Ellen Rothenberg's "Anne Frank Project" (1990) and Nancy Spero's two installations (1993) about the fate of women during the Nazi era. They represent "Hitler's best known victim" and "lesser known women victims." Both artists base their work on existing texts, *The Diary of Anne Frank* and, in Spero's case, poems by Bertolt Brecht and Nelly Sachs. It brings to mind a contemporary performance piece by artist Ruth Liberman from New York, who fires bullets into Ger-

cant gaps and points clearly to new directions in our comprehension of gendered Holocaust experiences.

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[1]See Gary Evans, "Vision and Revision" and "Annotated Filmography," in *Afterimage/Rémanences: Evocations of the Holocaust in Contemporary Canadian Arts and Literature*, ed. Loren Lerner (Montreal: The Concordia University Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies, 2002); Filmography also available on the website *Women and the Holocaust*.

"Non-Germans" under the Third Reich: The Nazi Judicial and Administrative System in Germany and Occupied Eastern Europe, with Special Regard to Occupied Poland, 1939-1945. Diemut Majer. Transl. Peter Thomas Hill, Edward Vance Humphrey, and Brian Levin. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. 1,033 pp. Cloth $149.95. ISBN 0-8018-6493-3.

Orwell reminds us that perversion of language and perversion of institutions go hand in hand. One doesn't necessarily have logical precedence over the other. In his 1943 essay *Politics and the English Language*, he described language as "an instrument which we shape for our own purposes, adding that "if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought." The reciprocal deformation of language and thought is a regular feature of political discourse, by no means confined to a single era, nation, ideology, or party. In politics, language is often used to

ably did play a theoretical rôle in the development of the capricious, authoritarian administration of law and legal norms in the

Among registered prisoners, Langbein was in an exceptionally good position to view the chaos and rigors of camp life. As an Austrian "Aryan" (he was, in fact, a *Mischling* according to Nazi definitions, but this remained hidden from the SS), Langbein was classified as a German, which immediately placed him in a position of relative privilege. Clerk to the SS garrison physician Wirths, Langbein enjoyed adequate food, clothing, and shelter, and was not subject to hard labor. Although he worked in the infirmary of the base camp Auschwitz I, and was therefore counted among the *Prominenz* of the base camp, Langbein was not compromised, like the block elder or *Kapo*, with a position of control or authority over other prisoners. Finally, Langbein was among the leaders of the "Combat Group Auschwitz," an international resistance organization that worked to smuggle information in and out of the camp, aided prisoners in escape and, in general, worked in a variety of ways to improve the conditions of the camp in the interest of the inmates.

In crafting his analysis, Langbein relies on four types of sources. First, he makes extensive use of the testimonies of witnesses and defendants at postwar trials, including those at Nuremberg, Kraków, Lüneburg, Frankfurt, and the Warsaw trial of commandant Rudolf Höss. Second, he relies on published memoirs and the unpublished, archived testimonies of former prisoners. Third, the author incorporates information gleaned from post-liberation interviews with former prisoners. Fourth and not least, Langbein relies on his own personal recollections of the

THE BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT, VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1

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