

May, 2021
Vol. 50 No. 2

SHALOM

Jewish Peace Letter

Published by the Jewish Peace Fellowship

C O N T E N T S

Get Involved

PUTTING ADVOCACY INTO ACTION



The Activist

Essence of JPF

Stefan Merken, Pg. 2

It's Mother's Day Again and We Are Still at War

Murray Polner, Pg. 3

Anti-Nuclear Advocacy, Organizing, and Movement

Building *Joseph Berkson, Pg. 5*

City Council Takes Action: Ban the Bomb

Patrick Henry, Pg. 9

Living a Life Worth Remembering

Steven Schwartz, Pg. 13

Holocaust Education: Words Matter

Richard Middleton-Kaplan, Pg. 16

From Where I Sit

Stefan Merken

“The essence of the JPF is activism [and] to be a voice for peace....”

STEFAN MERKEN is Chair of the Jewish Peace Fellowship and co-editor of *Shalom*.

The Activist Essence of JPF

Jewish Peace Fellowship continues to support Jewish resistance—individual and communal—to the arms race in the United States and Israel and throughout the world. We actively oppose capital punishment, conscription, the Israeli occupation, and U.S. armed interventions.

The above is a section of the Jewish Peace Fellowship’s vision statement and is part of what drew me to the JPF when I was 18 years old. It was only later that I realized that my Judaism had already taught me the values of peace and justice, and that my grandfather had instilled a rejection of violence in his youngest daughter (my mother). At the same time, the essence of the JPF for me is activism. Find something that draws you to making a better world and get involved, get active. This is to me an inescapable Jewish value. The essence of the JPF is to be a voice for peace within the Jewish community. We have been active since 1941 and we remain so today.

In this issue of *Shalom* you will find articles on issues that the editorial board feels are important to stress, including two separate articles by Washington writers concerning abolishing nuclear weapons: one by Joseph Berkson, who for forty-one years was a medical doctor and now works with Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility in Seattle, and the second by Patrick Henry on the Walla Walla, Washington City Council’s resolution supporting the United Nations treaty regarding the prohibition of nuclear weapons. There is also an article on Mother’s Day, written by Murray Polner, which ran in the May 2019 issue of *Shalom* but is still current and relevant enough to demand rereading. Also included is Richard Middleton-Kaplan’s fascinating book review of *Advancing Holocaust Studies*; in this collection of essays, leading Holocaust scholars map the personal journeys that led them to this field and reflect on the current state of Holocaust Studies including its relevance and its future directions.

Thank you for your interest in our newsletter. If you have any questions or comments, we would love to hear from you in any form you prefer. Send an article, send a donation, send a poem. Get involved in your community on an issue that makes a better world and let us know what you are doing. ✨



Find something that draws you to making a better world and get involved, get active.

SHALOM

Published by the Jewish Peace Fellowship • Box 271 • Nyack, N.Y. 10960 • (845) 358-4601

HONORARY PRESIDENT Rabbi Philip J. Bentley • **CHAIR** Stefan Merken • **VICE PRESIDENT** Rabbi Leonard Beerman z”

EDITORS Stefan Merken, email: stefan.merken@gmail.com & Richard Middleton-Kaplan, email: rkaplan001@ameritech.net
EDITOR EMERITUS Murray Polner z”

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Patrick Henry, Susannah Heschel, E. James Lieberman, Adam Simms, Lawrence S. Wittner

Established in 1941

E-mail: jpf@forusa.org • World Wide Web: <http://www.jewishpeacefellowship.org>

Signed articles are the opinions of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the JPF.

Forever Wars

Murray Polner

*Mother's Day
"should be
devoted to the
advocacy of
peace doctrines."
—Julia Ward Howe*

It's Mother's Day Again and We're Still at War

After the carnage of the Second World War, the members of the now defunct Victory Chapter of the American Gold Star Mothers in St. Petersburg, Florida, knew better than most what it was to lose their sons, daughters, husbands, and other near relatives in war. "We'd rather not talk about it," one mother, whose son was killed in WWII, told the *St. Petersburg Times* fifteen years after the war ended. "It's a terrible scar that never heals. We hope there will never be another war so no other mothers will have to go through this ordeal." But thanks to our wars in Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, the Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan—not to mention our proxy wars around the globe—too many moms (and dads too) now have to mourn family members badly scarred or lost to wars dreamed up by the demagogic, ideological, and myopic.

But every year brings our wonderful Mother's Day. Few Americans know that Mother's Day was initially suggested by two peace-minded mothers, Julia Ward Howe, a nineteenth century anti-slavery activist and suffragette who wrote the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and Anna Reeves Jarvis, mother of eleven, who influenced Howe and once asked her fellow Appalachian townspeople, badly polarized by the carnage of the American Civil War, to remain neutral and help nurse the wounded on both sides.

Howe had lived through the Civil War, which led her to ask a question that's as relevant today as it was in her time: "Why do not the mothers of mankind interfere in these matters, to prevent the waste of that human life of which they alone bear and know the costs?" Mother's Day, she insisted, "should be devoted to the advocacy of peace doctrines." Howe soon moved beyond her unquestioned support for the Union armies and became a pacifist, opposed to all wars. "The sword of murder is not the balance of justice," she memorably wrote. "Blood does not wipe out dishonor, nor violence indicate possession."

Though not a mother, my favorite female opponent of war and imperialism was the undeservedly forgotten poet and feminist Katherine Lee Bates, who wrote "America the Beautiful" as a poem in 1895, which is now virtually our second national



Julia Ward Howe, who wrote "Battle Hymn of the Republic," was one of two peace-activist women who suggested the Mother's Day observance.

Continued on next page

Forever Wars

anthem for all Americans, left, right and center. The poem I love best is her “Glory,” in which an officer heading for the front says goodbye to his tearful mother.

Again he raged in that lurid hell
Where the country he loved
had thrown him.

“You are promoted!” shrieked
a shell.

His mother would not have
known him.

More recently there was Lenore Breslauer, a mother of two, who helped found Another Mother for Peace during the Vietnam War and also helped coin their memorable slogan: “War is not healthy for children and other living beings.” Years later I came to know three mothers named Carol (Adams, Miller and Cohen, plus my wife Louise) who formed Mothers and Others Against War to protest President

Jimmy Carter’s absurd resurrection of draft registration. They stayed on to battle Ronald Reagan’s toxic proxy wars in Central America.

On this Mother’s Day we could use more anger and dissenting voices of many more women of all political stripes to protest the needless and cruel sacrifice of their sons, daughters, wives, and husbands as cannon fodder, as Russian mothers did in protesting

Moscow’s invasions of Afghanistan and Chechnya. In Argentina and Chile, mothers and grandmothers marched against U.S.-supported torturers and murderers during the late seventies and early eighties. And in this country, the anti-war movement has often been led by women who no longer believe “War is a glorious golden thing...invoking honor and Praise and Valor and Love of Country”—as a bitter, disillusioned, and cynical Roland Leighton, a WWI British combat soldier, wrote to his fiancée, Vera Brittain, the great British anti-war writer.

Sadly, on Mother’s Day yesterday, today, and in the years ahead, peace and justice seem further away than ever. How many more war widows and grieving families do we need? Do we need yet another war memorial to the dead in Washington? More bodies to fill our military cemeteries? More crippled and murdered soldiers and civilians so our weapons manufacturers’ stock prices can rise? Do we really need to continue disseminating the myth—and lie—that an idealistic America always fights for freedom and democracy?

Vietnam, Korea, the Middle East, etc., more than one hundred thousand American men and women have been killed or grievously harmed in our endless wars, not to mention several million Asians and Middle Easterners, including Israelis and Palestinians. Do enough Americans care? They all had mothers. ☆



How many more war widows, grieving mothers, and grieving families do we need?

MURRAY POLNER z”
was co-editor of
Shalom newsletter.

Anti-Nuclear Options

Joseph Berkson

Advocacy, Organizing, and Movement Building

Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility

At Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (WPSR) we organize physicians and other health care workers to prevent what we cannot cure. We know that health is negatively affected by poverty, racism, and our environment, so we advocate for our government to adopt and put into effect policies which stop governmental actions harming our population's health. Our Task Forces (committees) address the climate crisis, economic inequity, and nuclear weapons.

Founded in 1979 to address the existential threat of nuclear war, we have worked to abolish nuclear weapons by using our health advocate voice to educate the public and elected officials about the overwhelming health catastrophe that would result from a nuclear exchange.

We advocate to the administration and members of Congress that we should decrease our reliance on our nuclear arsenal, and stress that the eventual goal is an international agreement to eliminate nuclear weapons.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the signing of Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), there was a decrease in nuclear weapons deployed between the Russian Federation and the US. Total warheads went from 70,300 (mid 1980s) to 13,410 (2020). There was a marked decrease in organizations working on nuclear disarmament after 1991 and a false sense of security developed in public opinion about the risk of

nuclear war, the risk of accidental discharge of nuclear weapons by the public.

In the past two decades however, President George W. Bush made explicit the doctrine that the US has the right to use nuclear weapons if a conventional armed conflict is getting out of our control, as well as for retaliation for a nuclear attack. President Barack Obama started the new nuclear arms race in a deal with Republicans to ensure ratification of the Joint Conference Plan of Action (Iran Nuclear Deal). President Donald Trump withdrew from all nuclear weapons controlling treaties. He accelerated funding for "modernizing" the nuclear arsenal and developing more advanced nuclear weapons. These developments have now increased the risk of nuclear war.

With President Trump's defeat, President Biden renewed the New START treaty just after assuming office in February, shortly before the treaty expired. But the replacement and "modernization" of the arsenal



Founded in 1979 to address the existential threat of nuclear war, we have worked to abolish nuclear weapons by using our health advocate voice to educate the public and elected officials.

Continued on next page

Anti-Nuclear Options

continues at great cost (estimated at \$1.7 trillion over 30 years).

In addition to lobbying all our members of Congress in the Washington state delegation, WPSR is building and re-invigorating the movement to abolish nuclear weapons via the Washington Against Nuclear Weapons Coalition (WANW) www.wanwcoalition.org.

WPSR was the founding organization of the coalition which now has 54 member organizations, including health, labor, faith, peace, social justice, and veterans groups in Washington state. WPSR provides staff support and a representative to the Coalition. The volunteer members of the coalition develop their own strategic plan, and make their decisions by vote. The organizations of the WANW Coalition share their own events and initiatives with each other, expanding the influence of each organization. The member organizations are all focused on the goal of abolishing nuclear weapons.

Both WPSR and WANW participated in celebrating and publicizing the ratification (October 2020) and then entering into force of the (UN) **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, this past January. (See details below.)

Our focus this year is to influence Congress to decrease funding for nuclear weapons, support congressional calls for a policy of never using nuclear weapons unless an enemy has used them first. We hope to influence the Biden administration to significantly change the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review this year. We want to see our U.S. posture shift away from the Ground Based Strategic Defense (ICBMs). We advocate having a no-first-use policy, changing the sole authority of the President to launch nuclear weapons, and negotiating with other nuclear weapons possessing states on nuclear disarmament.

Another significant part of the work of WPSR is partnering with communities adversely affected by nuclear weapons. There are thousands of immigrants from the Marshall Islands living in Washington State. A negotiated "Compact of Free Association," after the U.S. used their islands and people to test nuclear weapons in the 1940s and 1950s, guarantees the Marshallese people U.S. visas. Sixty-seven atomic and hydrogen bombs were

detonated in the islands, and the cleanup of the radioactive waste remains incomplete, driving people to leave their homeland. The Spokane and Yakama Indian tribes in Washington state have been affected by the mining of uranium on their land, also incompletely cleaned up. The plutonium processing plant in Hanford, WA, was built on their land. That Hanford plutonium processing plant produced the bomb used on Nagasaki, Japan, and followed to produce most of the nuclear arsenal we have today. After stopping production in 1987, Hanford became the largest radioactive waste and toxic chemical cleanup project in the U.S. and has not been completed, it is decades behind schedule, billions over budget, and proposes billions more and 10 more years to clean up. We advocate with these indigenous communities for justice after nuclear weapons programs have severely harmed their land.

Washington state is also home to the Kitsap Bangor

Our focus this year is to influence Congress to decrease funding for nuclear weapons and support congressional calls for a policy of never using nuclear weapons first.



The Hanford plutonium processing plant that produced the bomb used on Nagasaki, Japan.

Continued on next page



The USS Ohio sailing in the Strait of Juan de Fuca

Anti-Nuclear Options

The 2017 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to ICAN, for their work in getting the international treaty to ban nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are now internationally outlawed!

Naval Base, home to the West Coast Trident submarine base. The submarines based there carry perhaps one-third of all the deployed nuclear weapons of the U.S., making Washington state a target (20 miles from Seattle).

We are a chapter of the national Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), but operate independently. PSR was founded in 1961 by a group of physicians concerned about the public health dangers of nuclear weapons testing, stockpiling and use. Dr. Bernard Lown received the Nobel Peace prize for his efforts in 1985 along with Russian physician Dr. Yevgeny Chazov, with whom he collaborated to give a unified message to their governments that there would be catastrophic health consequences of atomic warfare. They stressed that a nuclear war must not be fought and cannot be won. They also asked their governments to stop testing nuclear weapons.

National PSR continued to advocate for disarmament, but was frustrated by the lack of progress. Coming out of the disappointing Nuclear Proliferation Treaty review conference in 2010, many countries in the United Nations, and an international group, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, thought that more pressure was needed on the nine nuclear weapon possessing countries. They formed the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

The process began which culminated with the signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017. 122 countries were in favor of crafting the treaty, 86 have signed it and 54 now have ratified the Treaty. We believe the treaty creates a norm that nuclear weapons, like chemical weapons, land mines, biological weapons, cluster bombs — all weapons targeting primarily affecting civilians — should be banned. The 2017 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to ICAN, for their work in getting the international treaty to ban nuclear weapons. **Nuclear weapons are now internationally outlawed!**

The states who have signed the treaty have agreed to prohibition from participating in any nuclear weapons activities. This includes pursuits to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. The Treaty also prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on national territory of the signer nations, or assisting other countries in prohibited activities. The treaty also commits members signing to provide assistance to individuals affected by use or testing of nuclear weapons, and help with environmental remediation in areas under the state's jurisdiction, resulting from testing. As the list of countries grows, nuclear weapon states may find it more difficult to support their weapon programs due to lack of cooperation from states which are party to the treaty.

We at WPSR have worked with the national PSR on the Back from the Brink platform. (See the website www.preventnuclearwar.org.)

We are fortunate to have U.S. Reps. Marilyn Strickland and Adam Smith of this state serve on the House Armed Services committee, with Rep. Smith being the chairman. Sen.

Continued on next page



An unarmed Trident II D5 missile launches from the ballistic missile submarine USS Nebraska off the coast of California.

Maria Cantwell is now chair of the Energy and Natural Resources committee in the Senate with oversight of nuclear fuel cycle policy, and nuclear fuel research and development. Sen. Patty Murray is on the Appropriations Committee. We target our grassroots organizing to inform their constituents about the activities of these key committees' work, as it relates to nuclear weapons issues. The constituents in the WANW Coalition often go with Physicians from WPSR when lobbying one of their Washington State members of congress.

This year we plan to focus on limiting funding for the Ground Based Strategic Defense (ICBMs). In addition we support the rest of the Back from the Brink initiative: passing legislation to remove the sole authority of the president to launch nuclear weapons, legislation to call on the executive to declare that the U.S. will not use nuclear weapons first, stopping funding for the replacement of the current nuclear arsenal, limiting funding for "advanced" nuclear weapons, and insisting that the administration sit down with other nuclear possessing nations to negotiate disarmament.

Coming up this August will be the every five years review conference (originally scheduled for 2020, but postponed due the pandemic) of the nations signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT - signed by all countries except India, Pakistan, Israel and South Sudan). The treaty obliges the signatories to meet every five years to work toward disarmament. This forum will be an opportunity to call out the poor performance of nuclear weapons possessing countries on their promise to disarm, as the international community representing nearly all countries on earth have signed the treaty. The hope is now that the Treaty on the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons is in effect, pressuring the nuclear armed states to negotiate, disarming their nuclear weapons will proceed. That is the necessary next step.

Indeed, we can't make real progress or protect our security or that of other nations without negotiations. President Biden said in his transition document that his first point in foreign policy plan was to **negotiate**. Let's hold him to that. ✧

We support passing legislation to remove the sole authority of the president to launch nuclear weapons.

JOSEPH BERKSON is a retired Family Practice Physician, now on the Board of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (WPSR) and Co-chair of WPSR's Task Force on Abolition of Nuclear Weapons. He can be reached at joseph@wpsr.org. To sign up for periodic updates, visit www.wpsr.org.



Mail this slip and your contribution to:
Jewish Peace Fellowship ✧ Box 271 ✧ Nyack, NY 10960-0271

Yes! Here is my tax-deductible contribution to the Jewish Peace Fellowship!

\$25 / \$50 / \$100 / \$250 / \$500 / \$1000 / Other \$ _____

Enclosed is my check, payable to "Jewish Peace Fellowship"

(Please provide your name and address below so that we may properly credit your contribution.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Below, please clearly print the names and addresses, including e-mail, of friends you think might be interested in supporting the aims of the Jewish Peace Fellowship.

Anti-Nuclear Options

Patrick Henry

Walla Walla: First City in Washington State to Urge U.S. Government to Ban the Bomb

On March 24, 2021, Walla Walla, Washington became the 41st city in the United States and the first city in the state of Washington to endorse the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear (ICAN) Weapons' Cities Appeal, urging the United States to sign and ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Internationally, well over 200 cities have already endorsed the Cities Appeal and called upon their nations to sign the TPNW.

In 1970, the five nuclear nations at that time—England, France, the United States, Russia, and China—drew up the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which was not only committed to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, but “to pursue in good faith ...the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date” and to seek “nuclear disarmament.”

51 years later, there are four new nuclear states: North Korea, Israel, India, and Pakistan, and we find ourselves, rather than at the disarmament table, in the midst of a new nuclear arms race.

The TPNW bans the development, testing, production, acquisition, possession, stockpiling, transferring, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons which now, like landmines, cluster munitions, and biological and chemical weapons, are illegal under international law. The treaty is a reminder from the non-nuclear nations that it is time for all nations to commit to disarmament.

Two days after the U. S. dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, Albert Camus wrote in his newspaper, *Combat*: “Our technological civilization has just reached its greatest level of savagery.” As of 1950, an estimated 340,000 people had died as a result of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Our standard nuclear weapons today, roughly 14,000 in number, are multiple times more powerful than those used in 1945. Like those unleashed earlier, however, they too are designed to destroy cities and those who inhabit them.

Everyone knows about the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. Detonating a nuclear weapon by accident, miscalculation, or deliberate use would pose grave implications for human survival, the environment, socio-economic development, the global economy, food security, and the health of



The Welcome sign at the outskirts of Walla Walla, Washington.

Internationally, well over 200 cities have already endorsed the Cities Appeal and called upon their nations to sign the TPNW.

Continued on next page

Anti-Nuclear Options

current and future generations.

It is essential to get rid of nuclear weapons before they get rid of us. It is important to act now because none of the nuclear nations is interested in disarmament. The U.S.A., China, Russia, North Korea, and England are in the expensive process of modernizing and upgrading their nuclear weapons.

It is also important to act now because we are at a mobilizing moment, a moment of momentum with a new president bringing us back into treaties we have abandoned or had not renewed. It is the right time for American cities to demand that their government work toward disarmament. Getting your city to take ICAN's Cities Appeal is an excellent way to do so.

The Resolution below gives a detailed account of why the City Council of Walla Walla passed this motion and called on the federal government to sign and ratify the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

For more information about the Walla Walla City Council's deliberation, read the news story at https://www.union-bulletin.com/news/local_governments/walla_walla/walla-walla-city-council-votes-to-support-un-treaty-prohibiting-nuclear-weapons/article_a16e69co-8d32-11eb-8fed-4726db211634.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

The text of the Walla Walla resolution follows.

It is essential to get rid of nuclear weapons before they get rid of us.

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-46

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE UNITED NATIONS TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

WHEREAS, the City of Walla Walla passed Municipal Ordinance A-2405 on May 13, 1970 which classified the City of Walla Walla as a nonchartered code city under Title 35A of the Revised Code Washington (RCW); and

WHEREAS, RCW 35A.11.020 provides in pertinent part that "[t]he legislative body of each code city shall have all powers possible for a city or town to have under the Constitution of this state, and not specifically denied to code cities by law;" and

WHEREAS, nuclear weapons, the most devastating weapons ever created by human beings, are an existential threat to all higher life on earth with their immense destructive capacity and trans-generational radiation effects; and

WHEREAS, the nine nuclear nations possess an arsenal of approximately 13,800 nuclear weapons, more than 90% of which are held by Russia and the United States and more than 9,000 are operationally deployed; and

WHEREAS, nuclear weapons are designed to destroy cities and the detonation of even a single modern nuclear weapon on one of our cities would profoundly change the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, detonating a nuclear weapon either by accident, miscalculation, or deliberate use would pose grave implications for human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development, the global economy, food security, and the health of current and future generations; and



One of the landmarks of Downtown Walla Walla.

Continued on next page

Anti-Nuclear Options



Main street of Downtown Walla Walla.

WHEREAS, atmospheric physicists maintain that detonation of even 100 Hiroshima sized nuclear bombs on cities far from Washington State would send millions of tons of smoke into the stratosphere, blocking sunlight and creating a “nuclear winter” in the entire northern hemisphere, with the result that no harvests would be possible for up to ten years, causing famine and grave social disruption for billions of humans, including those in Walla Walla; and

WHEREAS, no health care system anywhere in the world would be able to cope with the humanitarian impact of a nuclear war, even a limited one; and

WHEREAS, our testing, production, and use of nuclear weapons makes clear the racial injustice and harm to human health caused from uranium mining on indigenous land, from 67 nuclear weapon tests in the Marshall Islands, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the contamination of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation; and

WHEREAS, \$73 billion was spent on nuclear weapons in 2020; and

WHEREAS, Several nuclear-armed nations are modernizing their nuclear programs and the United States is planning to spend at least \$1.7 trillion to enhance its nuclear arsenal, money that could be used for necessary programs such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and the environment but will serve only to exacerbate the problems listed above and fuel a global nuclear arms race, already well underway; and

WHEREAS, Walla Walla lies 171 miles from Wellpinit, Washington, where, in 1955, Midnite Mine, a uranium mine, was built on the Spokane Tribe of Indians Reservation. It operated from 1955-1965 and from 1968-1981, providing uranium for the production of nuclear bombs; and

WHEREAS, Walla Walla is situated 66 miles from Hanford, Washington, where, at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, the plutonium was produced that was used in the bomb that destroyed the city of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945; and

WHEREAS, the nuclear activity in the Hanford area, which remains one of the most toxic regions in the Western Hemisphere, displaced local residents, affected the health of Downwinders in Washington and Oregon, and caused sacred sites, villages, and fishing areas of Native American tribes to be lost; and

WHEREAS, if Washington State were a country, it would be the third leading nuclear power in the world after Russia and the United States; and

WHEREAS, the 1,300 nuclear warheads sitting at the Kitsap Bangor Naval Base

No health care system anywhere in the world would be able to cope with the humanitarian impact of a nuclear war, even a limited one.

Continued on next page

The time has come to end decades of deadlock in disarmament and to move the world towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

just 18 miles from Seattle make the area a major strategic target in any war, nuclear or otherwise; and

WHEREAS, cities, being the main targets of nuclear weapons, have a special responsibility to their constituents to speak out against any role for nuclear weapons in national security doctrines; and

WHEREAS, the city of Walla Walla is committed to the protection and health of human life and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which entered into force in 1970, requires the United States, Russia, China, France, and England to negotiate "in good faith" the end of the nuclear arms race "at an early date" and get rid of their nuclear arsenals; and

WHEREAS, the time has come to end decades of deadlock in disarmament and to move the world towards the elimination of nuclear weapons; and

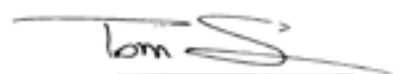
WHEREAS, in July 2017, 122 nations called for the elimination of all nuclear weapons by adopting the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which has been in force since January 22, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Walla Walla City Council has considered this matter during a regularly called public meeting of said Council, has given said matter careful review and consideration, and finds that passage of this resolution is an appropriate function for the city and that the best interests of the City of Walla Walla will be thereby served,

NOW THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Walla Walla resolves as follows:

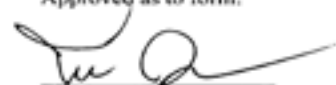
Section 1: The City Council of Walla Walla supports the United Nations' Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and urges the US federal government to fulfill its ethical obligations to its people and join the global effort to prevent nuclear war by signing and ratifying the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Section 2: The Walla Walla City Clerk is directed to transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, each United States Senator and Representative from the state of Washington, and to the Governor of Washington, asking them to support the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons..


Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

Approved as to form:

City Attorney

Remembrance

Steven Schwartz

Parshat Zachor

A Biblical command to remember and also to forget Amalek, who tried to wipe out the Jewish people, leaves us wondering how to do both. How do we apply it to our lives now?

Shabbat Zachor” translates as “Sabbath of Remembrance.” It is the Shabbat immediately preceding Purim, which fell on February 19-20 this year and will fall on March 11-12 in 2022. What makes this so special that we name it the Sabbath of Remembrance? Our religion is full of commandments to remember. We remember the Sabbath, we remember God taking us out of Egypt. We remember the slavery and Exodus from Egypt so well, in fact, that we should actually be able to see ourselves as slaves being freed. So it seems a bit strange to single this one out. It’s probably safe to say that in most instances, our need to remember is so that we can continue to be inspired to lead our lives in a proper way. Here we are commanded to remember how Amalek tried to subjugate and kill us. Perhaps it is more along the line of something we might hear from Elie Wiesel beseeching us to not forget the past, or George Santayana who famously said, “those who don’t remember history are condemned to repeat it.”

But it gets even stranger. We are told to remember what Amalek did to us as we were leaving Egypt. And at the same time, we are told to totally and permanently blot out the memory of Amalek (Deuteronomy 25:19). It really is a paradox. If we truly are successful at blotting out the memory of Amalek, how are we then logically supposed to promise to always remember him?

Even the command seems a bit strange. Coming out of Egypt, God had split the sea for us, had buried the Egyptians below the raging waters, and had provided sustenance for the Jews in the desert. After these miracles, Amalek not only attacked us, but did so in the worst of ways, by going after those in the rear of the line, the old, the infirm, those too

weak to fight back. Amalek was destroyed and Israel lived on. Would it not make more sense to encourage the world to remember what happened to the cowardly Amalek rather than be commanded to make the world forget this? To let them see what happens in the end to those who attack God’s chosen people? If I was writing the Torah, I would make sure that no one forgot what Amalek did and what their end result was.



Battle with the Amalekites, from 1860 by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1794–1872), Germany, representing Exodus 17:8-16.

“you shall obliterate the memory of Amalek from under the heavens. Do not forget” (Deuteronomy 25:19)

Continued on next page



Oil painting *Samuel Killing Agag, King of the Amalekites*, by Dutch Golden Age painter Rombout Van Troyen (c. 1605–1655).

Remembrance

As we learn in the haftorah, Saul spares King Agag and spares the best of the animals. When questioned by the prophet Samuel, the dancing begins—explanations and rationalizations about why he didn't follow God's commands to the letter. It's hard to know what King Saul was actually thinking when he disobeyed the order but in the end, it seems he would say and do anything to keep his position and to placate both God and the prophet. But Samuel's rebuke is clear: "you did not explicitly follow God's commands and the price is your kingship."

The classic commentaries tell us that we are to learn that obedience to God is much more important than intellectual understanding of the commandment.

To which I have to say, "Oh really?!" We are taught that the Torah is the written word of God but there are many things written in the Torah that we no longer adhere to. We don't stone our rebellious sons anymore. We don't solve our concerns about our wives possibly having affairs by having them drink something bitter to prove they have not committed adultery.

We are blessed to have a newer, more modern and more nuanced perspective. As we look at the Torah reading and the haftorah, we have the right to shake our heads, to make our own decisions, and to say, *lo b'shamayim*, that such things are no longer in heaven, and we have both the privilege and the duty to decide what is proper and how God would have us act today.

To me it is affirming to know that we are not stuck in the past and that an old and revered document still gives us the freedom to think, to explore and, in the end, to be true to ourselves and our people.

Look at Israel today. Although the world at large still refuses to acknowledge and honor Israel's ethics, Israel has chosen to do the exact opposite of what God commanded of King Saul. They

But maybe I was reading this too literally. Maybe it's the same concept as when we would talk about blotting out the memory of polio. We successfully fought the disease, it lost its power over us, and because of that, some people, in fact, have never even heard of polio.

That certainly made more sense to me. After all, what is the alternative? Were we supposed to kill them all? What are we? Are we terrorists, killing not only the soldiers but even the women and children, the non-combatants?

But then I read the haftorah (Samuel 15:1-34) and, unfortunately, any doubt is removed: "Now go and strike down Amalek and destroy everything he has, have no pity on him; kill man and woman alike, infant and suckling alike, ox and sheep alike, camel and donkey alike" (Samuel 15:3).

Does such a command seem possible? Doesn't seem to leave much room to consider it a metaphor, does it? The meaning is pretty clear. Kill them all!

It is affirming to know that an old, revered document still gives us the freedom to think, to explore and to be true to ourselves.

Continued on next page

We can dwell on the evils of Amalek, or we can let the Torah guide us to live good lives truly worth remembering.

take on great additional risks to their soldiers in order to minimize non-combatant casualties. They would rightfully see the mass and indiscriminate slaughter of a people to be genocide. We on the outside might look at this multi-generational persecution of Israel and say, “the heck with them. Just kill them all.” But

Israel, a country with a covenantal self-image, refuses to be lulled into such an easy and selfish path. It is committed to surviving while maintaining its ethics and values. I realize that there are some who might not agree that every

administration in Israel has been equally committed to such an outlook but I firmly believe that over the years since her founding in 1948, it accurately represents the ethos of the country.

So with today’s sensitivities, do you think that King Saul would have gotten a better break from God? I for one hope not, and not because he spared the King of the Agagites but rather because he agreed to kill the women and children.

As our own country fights two wars that could prove to be multi-generational and as Israel continues the struggles it has had since it came into existence, we will both have to deal with the issue of what we consider to be appropriate force.

When facing enemies filled with hatred and out to destroy you, I don’t pretend that there are easy answers. But I do maintain that it is more complicated than this week’s haftorah would lead us to believe. May both of our beloved countries find the strength to prevail, the courage to set limits on what is appropriate behavior, and, while aggressively protecting its people and its land, have the wisdom to assure its soul remains pure.

We can choose on Shabbat Zachor to dwell solely on the evils of Amalek, and the paradox of how to blot out his memory. We can discuss the connection between Amalek and Haman. And we can look at a more modern Amalek and the hell he and Nazism caused in this world.

Yes, freedom-loving countries must be strong. But maybe the ultimate answer to blotting out the memory of Amalek is focusing on how to create and populate a world with people whose rejection of evil is so complete and so pervasive that another Amalek would never be able to arise. Maybe the polio analogy really does hold: it’s not like we eliminated the bacteria—we inoculated people against it, we strengthened them to make them more impervious to that disease, to that evil. It’s simplistic but as we look at evil and persecution around the world, let our observations and our Torah be the guide for how we should live our lives and raise our children. Then we will truly have created something worth remembering.



The Death of Agag. “Agag” may have been the hereditary name of the Amalekite kings. The one depicted was killed by Samuel (1 Samuel 15).

STEVEN SCHWARTZ is retired from a career in dentistry and is splitting his time between New Jersey and Florida. He has been active and had leadership roles in many areas of the Jewish world, including child and adult education, the synagogue, legacy philanthropy, his local community federation, and the State of Israel. He is a former member of the Wexner Heritage Foundation.

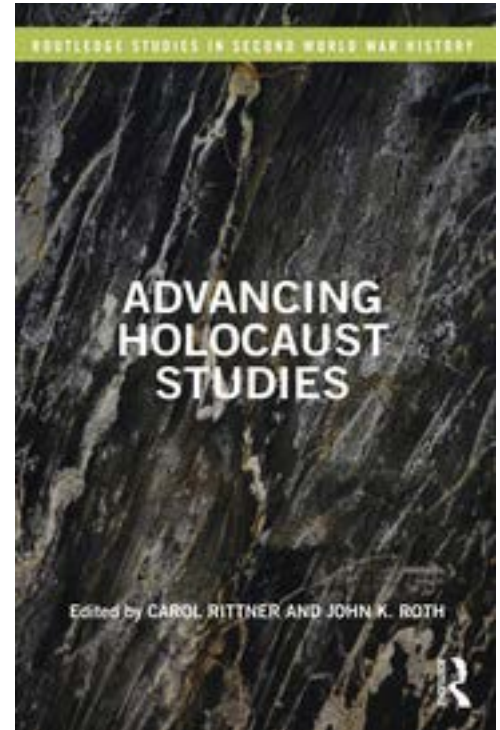
Book Review

Advancing Holocaust Studies

Review of *Advancing Holocaust Studies*, edited by Carol Rittner and John K. Roth. *Routledge Studies in Second World War History*. New York: Routledge, 2021. 198 pp. \$31.47 eBook and paperback; \$112 hardback.

Richard Middleton-Kaplan

Advancing Holocaust Studies gathers essays by thirteen prominent Holocaust scholars who reflect on what drew them to this field of study, how it has grown, what relevance it has now, and their hopes and predictions for how it will develop in the future. The essays afford an unusually intimate experience, inviting us in to share the authors' personal journeys—often through circuitous and surprising career paths—revealing how their backgrounds and ethical commitments



“The scholar bends on hands and knees over the deep hole of the history”

—quoted from Jim Quay and presented as the epigraph for this book.

gain expression through their teaching and scholarship. They confront questions such as “Why am I doing this?” “Why not quit given how painful it is?” and “Is the work to which I have dedicated my life and career making any difference in the world?” With modesty and fearless honesty, they survey the world’s current crises and reflect on the value of Holocaust Studies in the midst of rising nationalism and antisemitism, refugee and environmental crises, human rights abuses, and COVID-19. Their reflections on why they have persisted will have you reaching repeatedly for your underlining pen or highlighter.

Editors Carol Rittner and John K. Roth set forth these questions in an opening section. Urging readers to approach the essays as stories, Roth and Rittner aim for the stories’ collective impact “to show...why their authors... persist in the conviction that advancing Holocaust studies can help people to justify—honestly, compassionately, ethically—human existence in a threatened post-Holocaust world.” They ask readers, “Why not make their stories, explorations, and questions yours and see where the inquiry leads?” It leads to a journey that is profoundly moving and educational, challenging and expansive, riveting and galvanizing all at once.

Roth and Rittner include a thorough 11-page chronology of events advancing Holocaust studies from 1945 to 2020. Then we move into Part I: Journeys, featuring reflections from Roth, Sara R. Horowitz, Edward T. Linenthal, and James E. Young. Roth recounts being drawn to Holocaust studies because “no event has more power than the Holocaust to raise the right questions, the ones that we need to pursue to help make life worth living.” He faces the prospect that his and other scholars’ work might crumble, turn to dust, and vanish without mattering. He finds purpose in his annual visits to 7th grade classrooms where students’ responses confirm that “learning and teaching about the Holocaust can

Continued on next page

Book Review

change people for good.” Describing himself with a line from a poem written for him by Jim Quay as “a hopeful man willing to be sad,” he concludes with a series of lessons learned from a lifetime of Holocaust study, culminating in “Take nothing for granted.”

Horowitz’s beautifully written essay describes a career arc across which literature and gender have moved inward from the periphery when they were considered irrelevant, or marginal at best, in Holocaust studies. Ironically, she now finds herself teaching students who “recount family stories of refugee camps, prisons, genocides” but for whom the Holocaust seems peripheral to their lives. Studying Holocaust literature helps them understand better their own lives and family’s struggles, but also helps them move “across lines that sometimes divide them . . . so my students’ personal and inherited struggles link them to the lives and deaths of people in another time, another place and help them to shape an ethics for our time, our place.”

Linenthal exhibits extraordinary sensitivity to the “presence” of place, objects, memories, and the “sensory history” at locations of atrocity. Recalling his parents’ loss of many family members in the Holocaust and his mother afterward being unable to touch a fork made in Germany because it might have been defiled in manufacturing by the touch of a murderer, Linenthal meditates on what it means “to ‘touch’ the Holocaust” and whether we risk “the stain of defilement” when we attempt to touch (or study) it. His sensitivity led to others recruiting him to work on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum project and subsequently on memorial commissions for Gettysburg, the Enola Gay, Oklahoma City, and the Flight 93 crash site in Shanksville, PA. Recognizing that he is separated from those who endured these events by an “experiential membrane,” Linenthal nevertheless felt “a profound sense of real presence” in Shanksville.

The next reflection comes from another teacher/scholar immersed in memorialization: James Young, whose work on memorial commissions includes Germany’s national Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Argentina’s “disappeared,” September 11, and Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life Synagogue. Young worries about the consequences of monument-building.” Maybe we are getting it backwards. Memorials may “serve less as instigations of memory and more as substitutions for intervention against contemporary wars and

Studying Holocaust literature helps students who are refugees themselves to “shape an ethics for our time, our place.”

Continued on next page



The Tower of Voices includes a unique wind chime for each of the 40 who died in the crash of Flight 93 at Shanksville, PA.



Hamburg, Germany, Monument Against Fascism, designed by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz. Erected in 1986 at 12 meters high (39 feet 4 inches) and gradually descending until it disappears. “Residents were invited with a text, translated in seven languages, to ratify a public statement about fascism by engraving their names with the metal pencil provided directly onto the surface of the monument.”

Source: <https://www.shalev-gerz.net/portfolio/monument-against-fascism/>

genocide.” Will they “actually move us to stand up and act against national, ethnic, and racial hatred?” Young cites the disappearing Hamburg monument against Fascism as a positive example of a monument designed to “provoke action, not quietude.” He makes the bracing claim that monuments that don’t provoke action are “an extension of the crimes.” An intervention, a “memorial action,” against Turkey’s denial of the Armenian genocide and planned cleansing of Kurds “would stand as the greatest of all genocide memorials,” Young concludes.

Part II: Challenges consists of contributions by Debórah Dwork, Alex Alvarez, Jonathan Petropoulos, Robert A. Ventresca, and Wendy Lower. These essays reflect on the power of words and show what actions could resist “Nazi thinking and its ilk to have the last word.” For Dwork, Holocaust studies have been her moral compass, shaping not just her teaching and scholarship but also “my outlook, everyday choices, teaching philosophy, and social activism. It frames how I interpret the daily news and how I vote.” This compass has guided her choices about schooling for her children, parenting decisions, adoption controversies, and even—in a particularly memorable story—which boy her daughter would go to her prom with. Dwork resists the tendency to measure the effectiveness of Holocaust studies by burdening it with a standard not applied to any other area of historical study: the expectation that it should provide a “vaccination” against racism, human rights abuses, bullying, and antisemitism. Yet Holocaust studies does provide “a vocabulary to talk about the grave problems we face, a structure for analysis, and knowledge and insight to interpret unfolding events” which she discusses with searing clarity. It remains Dwork’s compass: “I want to leave the road marked and lighted, so that [future generations] can travel into the darkness ahead, as I do, sure of the road behind and with the compass in hand.”

Alvarez recognizes that his professional choices were guided by growing up in Germany with a German mother and with male family members who served in the German military. His studies of criminology and genocide revealed a continuum spanning interpersonal violence to collective genocidal violence. He sees us about to enter an era primed for mass human rights violations. In a world of endemic poverty, climate change and resulting conflicts over resources, genocide, terrorism, civil war, rising nationalism, and large refugee populations, Holocaust education is crucial because it is “a powerful tool for confronting the attitudes and percep-

Monuments that don’t provoke action are “an extension of the crimes.”

—James Young

tions that make genocidal violence possible.” Holocaust education must be made relevant to today’s students and must avoid overly simplistic

uplifting messages that fail to prepare students to “confront real world situations that are not clear-cut or simplistic.” Such education “can help make this world a slightly better place,” “give voice to all those who suffered,” and heighten alertness to the forces that “help create genocidal violence.”

Petropoulos agrees that Holocaust studies “are not vaccines against unethical behav-

Continued on next page

Book Review

Teaching about the Church's role illustrates "what can go wrong and what is needed to prevent that wrong from prevailing."

—Robert Ventresca

ior" but argues that they "can help to avert future disasters." Propelled by hearing The Who perform "Won't Get Fooled Again" in Nuremberg in 1979 when he was 18, he began exploring "the nexus between culture and barbarism," eventually becoming a specialist in Nazi art looting. His work had the practical application of helping victims and heirs recover possessions. Petropoulos points to factors that signaled—and still signal—dehumanization and a "descent into barbarism" from which the well-educated are not immune:

greed, cultural conditioning, state manipulation of mass media, and state takeover of cultural institutions. He ends with an innovative proposal to create a new museum, possibly in Warsaw, "to house the art displaced during World War II ... For art displaced by war to sit in storerooms—unseen, like hostages of history—is a failure. If this art is displayed properly, it has the capacity to inspire."

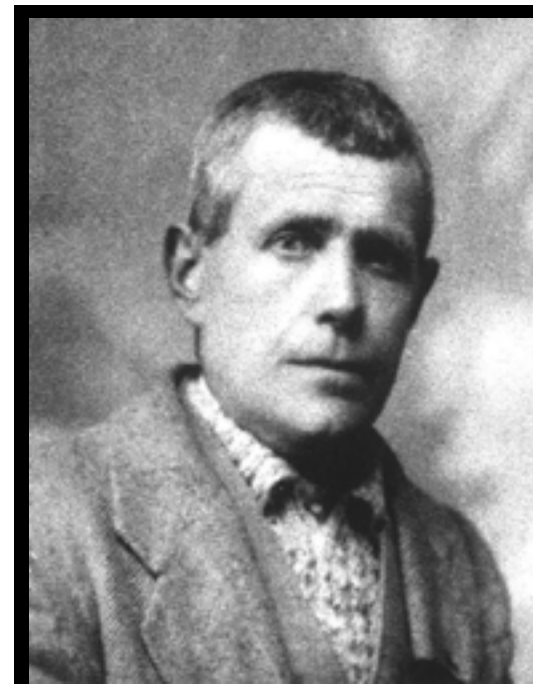
Ventresca examines unsettled, unsettling questions about Catholic–Jewish relations in the Holocaust, including Pope Pius XII's "refusal to intervene" and how to "reconcile the courage and conviction of the comparatively few individual rescuers with the apparent silence, indifference, and complicity of...the Church hierarchy." These questions "haunt me as a Catholic and motivate me as a historian," he writes. Expressing a theme that surfaces often in this volume, he writes, "I cannot shy away from my responsibility to use my understanding of the past to inform moral judgments..." Feeling

the burden of history, disturbed by "the upsurge of antisemitism...in public life" as manifested in Charlottesville and Pittsburgh, and troubled by a decline in historical knowledge, Ventresca sees an urgent priority for Holocaust education to help "combat resurgent forms of antisemitism," prejudice, and discrimination. Teaching about the Church's role exemplifies a way of teaching today's students "what can go wrong and what is needed to prevent that wrong from prevailing."

Lower describes coming of age as a scholar at a time of momentous reckonings in the early 1990s, believing that her work "could contribute to the cause of justice" while baffled at grad student peers working on doctoral dissertations about the history of the pumpkin or the dime, leaving Lower to ask "really that is your life's pursuit?" This amusing story is followed by deep probing into whether historians should have an objective distance from what they study. Finding that a subjective approach can reveal truths about self and humanity that are not apparent from "bald facts," she pursues the ramifications: "As an established historian, I am now grappling with my role, more specifically with the relationship between activism and scholarship and with identity-based scholarship. ... Whether we like it or not, our work...

can be applied to a cause and promote change. We promote knowledge that shapes the future and teach youth who will apply it." Ultimately, "Sentimentality has no place," Lower resolves, "but neither does a dispassionate objectivity that produces numbing shock."

Part III: Prospects contains essays by Robert P. Ericksen, Wolf Gruner, Lisa Moses Leff, and Carol Rittner. The editors introduce this section with the example of Italian



Lorenzo Perrone (1904–1952), the Italian civilian who helped Primo Levi in Auschwitz and whom Levi credited with his survival. Photo courtesy of Yad Vashem.

Continued on next page

Book Review



One of the three milk cans used by Warsaw ghetto historian Emanuel Ringelblum to store and preserve the secret “Oneg Shabbat” ghetto archives. Gustawa Jarecka (1908–1943) contributed an essay found in one of the cans, an essay she hoped would be “a stone under history’s wheel.”

Photo courtesy of USHMM.

civilian Lorenzo Perrone smuggling food in Auschwitz to Primo Levi, which Levi credited with keeping him alive. It was not the food alone that sustained Levi but, Levi wrote, Lorenzo’s embodiment of “something difficult to define, a remote possibility of good, but for which it was worth surviving.” Levi’s Lorenzo is a model worth emulating, and it would be “no small advance, no insignificant accomplishment” if Holocaust scholars and teachers could do as well as Lorenzo in acting out of a good heart. The essays in Part III “suggest that Holocaust studies is in the world to help and to do good.”

Robert Ericksen studied “good Germans” as well as pastors and Christians who weren’t good. His studies show that “the overwhelming story in church and university involved willing and often enthusiastic complicity”; that “good Christians as well as prominent German intellectuals found it easy to support the Nazi state”; and that people find all kinds of ways to justify brutality. This reinforces a theme prominent in other essays, that education itself does not prevent people from becoming brutal. Noting the “resurgence of authoritarian, racist, and ethno-nationalistic politics” now, Ericksen hopes “knowledge of the Holocaust will provide at least a partial antidote to those anti-democratic and inhumane tendencies.” Added to that knowledge, our unflagging commitment “in affirming the realities of the Holocaust and holding antisemitic forces at bay” may enable us to help our contemporaries resist the temptation which many in the Nazi era did not resist—the temptation to “ignore the rights and needs of others.”

Gruner presents a uniquely compelling personal history. Raised in East Germany, he recognizes that his scholarship is informed by his experience living under a dictatorship, including expulsion from school and seeing prejudice directed

at his half-Vietnamese girlfriend. Growing up in the GDR made it impossible for Gruner to “ignore the wide range of individual oppositional acts in a dictatorship.” Bringing a distinctive, biographically informed appreciation “for the complexities that determine daily life in a dictatorship,” Gruner was able to illuminate the thousands of tiny choices made by local and central authorities in Germany and Austria whom he showed had far more leeway than previously thought, the many manifestations of “moral and spiritual” and “individual Jewish acts of resistance,” and debates among ordinary Germans about Nazi treatment of Jews. Envisioning a “transformed Holocaust studies,” Gruner foresees that the field’s “main lesson for the 2020s and beyond may well be that there is no excuse: everyone has the individual possibility—indeed, responsibility—to oppose authoritarian developments. There is a choice and an alternative.”

*“There is a choice
and an alternative.”*

—Wolf Gruner

Leff values the ability of Holocaust studies to act as a “stone under history’s wheel,” a phrase she draws from Gustawa Jarecka (1908–1943) who helped to document life in the Warsaw Ghetto—documentation unearthed after the war in buried milk cans. Historical documentation can constitute resistance; take for example Jarecka’s writing or Simon Wi-

Continued on next page

Book Review

“Words matter.”

—Elie Wiesel & Carol Rittner

esenthal’s use of documentation to pursue justice against Nazi war criminals. Leff’s “passion for Holocaust studies is, at core, about its disruptive power,” including giving voice to victims, “Perhaps the most powerful way that Holocaust studies can continue to serve as a stone under the wheel of history is to use our subject matter to encourage learning about and practice in the basic skills of humanities research,” Leff writes. Among these skills are resisting the urge to simplify, insisting that claims be rooted in evidence, “support[ing] the voices of those whom history would forget by looking at the evidence they left behind, particularly when the conclusions we draw compel us to rethink our assumptions,” and most importantly cultivating “practice in questioning authority, engaging in meaningful debate, and valuing diverse points of view.”

Rittner traces her growing awareness of Christian antisemitism from forty years ago, when as a young teacher she wondered, “If Jesus, a faithful religious Jew, had lived in Nazi Germany...where would he have ended up? I could not escape the thought that he probably would have ended up in Auschwitz...” Intertwining her personal history of discovery alongside the history of Christian antisemitism from the medieval period to the twentieth century, she emphasizes Elie Wiesel’s insistence that “words matter.” But how do we maintain, or teach, that words matter in a political mire awash in disregard for truth? Reflecting on this book’s title, Rittner asks, “How does one advance Holocaust studies in a world where the internet and social media are used by individuals and groups to advance their divisive messages and racist manifestos and their ‘fake news’ and outright lies to stir up animosity and hatred against those they despise because of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, political views, or disability?” Her suggestions include “remind[ing] students that words matter... The Holocaust did not begin with guns and bullets, or with Auschwitz and the other Nazi concentration and death camps. The Holocaust began with words—hateful words aimed at people who were considered different. ... Only if Holocaust studies decisively advances that teaching can there be any responsible advancing of Holocaust studies.” Then we need to ask ourselves whether students are “learning how to think, really think about the implications of their words and actions on others?” If we can teach students to do that, we will have Holocaust education that matters.



U.S. Army Major helicopter pilot Hugh Thompson. Thompson’s flash memory of the Holocaust motivated him to intervene in the My Lai massacre in the Viet Nam War.

Co-editors Rittner and Roth coalesce the questions raised in a concluding essay titled “Why?” Unsparing in its examination of whether 40+ years of Holocaust education has made any appreciable difference in a world whose present evils they enumerate, they wonder why they continue—as all the other contributors have done. Yet, they affirm, “we refuse to give up.” Why? One example from which they derive hope is in the story of U.S. Army Major helicopter pilot Hugh Thompson’s conduct during the My Lai massacre in the

Continued on next page

Book Review

RICHARD MIDDLETON-KAPLAN is co-editor of *Shalom*.

Viet Nam War. Rittner and Roth quote Holocaust educator Hank Greenspan's description that when Hugh Thompson saw the village of My Lai's civilian women, children, and elderly people "herded into an irrigation ditch and machine gunned to bits," then "Images of Nazi mass shootings flashed through his mind. His two-man crew reported that he 'snapped.' Setting the copter down between the ditch and the shooters, he ordered the crew to turn their guns on the Americans. Miraculously, the intervention stopped at least part of the My Lai massacre." Hank Greenspan calls this the one instance he has found "in which Holocaust memory—in this case, simply an image—made a direct and immediate difference in principled moral action." Rittner and Roth lament that "we may not yet have educated enough Hugh Thompsens to counteract antisemitism, to check genocide, or to interrupt other mass atrocity crimes," but refuse to give up and they rally, committing to continuing to try. Indeed, who among us knows which of our students will grow up to be the next Hugh Thompson?

Also inspiring continued effort is the fact that they and other contributors have seen themselves and their students "deeply moved and changed for good by their Holocaust-related experiences. Sometimes the subtlety of that movement may be that it keeps us from doing destructive things." Returning to the line by poet Jim Quay, they end by recognizing that such work "can only be done by hopeful persons willing to be sad." These words mark a fitting end to an illuminating, probing, thrilling, sobering, questing, far-ranging, and ultimately reaffirming series of personal stories and surveys of the current and future state of Holocaust studies. ☆

"We refuse to give up."

—Carol Rittner and John Roth