

Séminaire de Budapest, 15-17 avril 2004

Actes

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Proceedings

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Table des matières/Contents

Welcome speech by Walter Schwimmer 5 Secretary General of the Council of Europe	5
Welcome speech by Peter Medgyes 8 Deputy State Secretary, Hungarian Ministry of Education	8
“Kamocha, just like you” by Alfred Schöner 10 Rector of Jewish Theological seminary, University of Jewish Studies	10
Les victimes de l’Holocauste par Jean-Michel Lecomte 14 Expert, membre du groupe de projet « Enseigner la mémoire »	14
Persecution and Resistance of Jehovah’s Witnesses 22 In Nazi-Europe-What We Should Know and Remember by Hans-Hermann Dirksen, Historian	22
Austrian Roma and Sinti and the Holocaust 40 by Gerhard Baumgartner, Historian	40
Le Samudaripen (l’Holocauste des Roms) 54 par Vasile Ionescu, Président de « Aven Amentza », Centre rom pour les politiques publiques	54
Résister là où on se trouve par Michèle Fleury 58 Historienne, « Haute école de Travail social de Genève »	58
The caravan of Memory 69 by Pawe Barabasz, Museum OKR GOWE	69
Teaching Holocaust Remembrance Here and now 74 par Hava Baruch, Yad Vashem	74
Conclusions par Claude-Alain Clerc 78 Directeur du projet « Enseigner la mémoire »	78
Conclusions by Claude-Alain Clerc 85 Project manager „Teaching Remembrance”	85

Walter Schwimmer

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Century that has just ended has been, halas, “the century of genocides”.

NEVER, in the history of Humanity, they have been as numerous, and caused as many victims.

As we are reminded by the first Recommendation devoted to “history teaching in the twenty first Century Europe” of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers, the 20th century has been marked by devastating events: the Holocaust, genocides and other crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and massive violations of human rights and of the fundamental values to which the Council of Europe is particularly committed.

- Bearing in mind that humanity had previously experienced in its history and even prehistory, right up to the 20th century, collective massacres that we can now characterise as genocides ;
- taking also into account other genocides that were perpetrated in the second half of the last century, in Asia and Africa, but also on the very soil of Europe, even recently ;
- considering the fundamental values which are those of the Council of Europe: human rights, tolerance, diversity and intercultural dialogue,

it has always been of great importance that the Shoah and its uniqueness but also the other genocides and negativ events of the twentieth century are brought to the knowledge first of the teachers and through them of the pupils.

It is also the strong will of the Council of Europe, as stated in Recommendation (2001) 15 that all categories of victims of these events are mentioned and that their destiny is related to the younger generations.

In this specific context of the “Day of remembrance of the Holocaust”, it is of utmost importance, as eyewitnesses become more and more scarce, to give them the floor and listen to them as it will be done here during this seminar.

We have to listen to what happened to the Jews, the Gipsies, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, homosexuals and disabled, not forgetting the Polish elite and Russian prisoners .

We have to listen to the survivors themselves, when still possible or to historians ; their accounts must be relayed by other intermediaries. As

Elie Wiesel uses to say “the one who hears the all evidence supplied by a survivor becomes himself a witness.

This is now the duty of the teachers and seminars like the one we have the opportunity to hold here today, thanks to the Hungarian authorities.

During this Seminar, we will devote a panel discussion to the different victims of the Holocaust; the Jews, of course, having the greatest number of victims, but also the Roms (Zigeuner as they were called by the Nazis), the homosexuals, the handicapped, the Jehovah witnesses, and others. It is of fundamental importance to accomplish this duty of remembrance.

The sacrifice of all these victims must lead to a better world. It is of as great importance that children are made aware of what can be done by human beings not only in the negative way, but what comes out of the positive will of some others.

“Those who resisted” theme that will also be tackled during the seminar, has to be brought to the knowledge of children : we are not asking them to become heroes, but we can make them aware of acts par excellence of “democratic citizenship” and convince them of adopting in their every day life some rules which are the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe.

But it is as important, even crucial to insist on the duty of vigilance and of prevention of crimes against humanity. In the last part of the seminar, we will be made more familiar with the pedagogy taught by the Yad Vashem organisation and which, once again, as we will see through the second part called “linking death to life”, will try to explain to the children that those who perished during genocides, ethnic cleansing, or the Holocaust, were people and children as they are, living a very usual, even banal life.

The presentation of what is done in Hungary at pedagogical level will give us examples of good practice for the other member states.

Why should the children of the 21st century be interested by the duty of remembrance? Why should they devote, with their teachers, at least one hour if not a full day or even a whole interdisciplinary project in the framework of that Day of remembrance in schools if we are not capable of making them aware that the past explains the present and prepares the future.

The fact that the ministers have decided to leave the free choice of the date of the day to each country is an other positive aspect to interest more the children to this commemoration.

As the date chosen is very often in close relation with the history to which the pupil belongs: Hungary has chosen this date of 16 April, date of creation in 1944 of the first Jewish ghetto in the country, but Luxembourg on 10 of October remembers the act of resistance of its inhabitants who said "no", "3 Mal nein" to the German referendum, or Bosnia-Herzegovina which will from next year on commemorates the Srebrenica massacres related to its immediate history on 11 July.

Looking back to the history of the last century, having in mind that many people knew, that only some through their acts of courage resisted or tried to resist, it is the role of each of us but of course it is the role of the Council of Europe and its 48 states party to the Cultural convention to contribute as much as possible to avoid that such events ever come back. We have been incapable of taking into account the message of the Shoah: but we can take it as our duty to make our children and the generations to come hear and understand this message. We have to remember the victims, we have to establish the historical facts and truth, we have to remember with as an unique objective to assure that: "never again".

The Declaration by the Stockholm International Forum 2004 reaffirms the commitment "to doing the utmost for the prevention of repeated occurrence of genocide, mass murder and ethnic cleansing in recent historyin order to build a more secure future for us all".

It is our duty towards our children but it is also the duty of our generation towards those who disappeared in the ghettos, in the concentration camps and are only bound in the bundle of life as long as their names continue to be spoken.
Die Erinnerung darf nicht enden.

Welcome speech by Péter Medgyes

Secretary General Walter Schwimmer,
Dear Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honour to welcome you in Budapest, on the occasion of the seminar entitled "Teaching the Remembrance of the Holocaust: Education for the prevention of crimes against humanity".

As usual at such opening ceremonies, my colleagues had given me some ideas in advance about the possible content of my speech, highlighting a few points, which might be worth sharing with you. However, the experience I had yesterday was so strong that I am still under its spell, and this experience forces me to discard the pre-written text and say a few words from the heart instead.

Last night I returned from Auschwitz-Birkenau where I participated in a study tour, with the delegation of the Minister of Education Bálint Magyar. The reasons for this tour was two-fold: (1) to pay our tribute to our compatriots who fell victim to the Holocaust, and (2) to inaugurate the permanent exhibition which commemorates the extinction of the Hungarian Jewry, thousands of Roma people and other Hungarians in this awful concentration camp. In addition to official dignitaries and media people, the delegation comprised 25 Hungarian secondary school pupils and accompanying teachers of history and 10 Israeli pupils.

This was the first time I had been there and I thought I had been prepared for the shock I was going to encounter. We were guided all over the concentration camp in Birkenau by a young Hungarian Holocaust researcher, who explained that:

1. about 430 thousand Hungarian Jews were killed in a matter of less than 2 months (May-June 1944);
2. If it had not been for the eager cooperative spirit and active assistance of about 200,000 Hungarians, this tragedy could not have taken place with such rapidity;
3. In all the wars that Hungary had waged over the centuries, put together, we had not had as many victims as those who perished during the Holocaust.

Frankly, I had not been faced with these data before.

Indeed, what did I learn about the Holocaust at school? I learnt very little in fact, because this was a taboo topic. What I was led to believe was that it was all the German Nazis' fault, and with the exception of a few collaborators, Hungarians valiantly resisted the extinction of the Jews.

All I learnt at school is in sharp contrast with what our guide, this young Hungarian researcher pointed out.

I know that against these accusations Anti-semites would counter: „But they weren't Hungarians, they were Jews!” And my answer to them would be: „But they were Hungarians by law and, more importantly, by allegiance.” In other words, they had a Hungarian passport and, more importantly, they claimed to be Hungarians and their ancestors had been prepared even to die for the motherland – and indeed many of them had.

But does the average Hungarian youth know today, think and feel about the Holocaust, I wondered? So, before the memorial ceremony, I had decided to watch the faces of the Hungarian school-kids in order to read their thoughts and feelings. However, I was unable to: I was so shocked and stunned by what I learnt and saw there that I was occupied with containing my own emotions.

But again, how does the average Hungarian youth know, think and feel about the Holocaust? The picture I get on the basis of statistics is anything but reassuring: anti-semitism seems to be deeply rooted in the psyche of many Hungarian citizens and is in fact on the rise.

Are Hungarian teachers exceptions? Sadly enough, based on statistical evidence, teachers are no exceptions although they should be the main agents to root out anti-semitism with the tool of education.

Yet, I am convinced that the only way to meet the evil upfront and defeat it is through education. How? I believe this seminar has been convened with the purpose of seeking answers to this painful question. And let me express my conviction that the Council of Europe plays a key role in helping education find a way to grapple with this issue of utmost importance.

It is with these thoughts and feelings in mind and heart that I wish you a lot of success for the seminar and a very pleasant stay in Budapest.

**„KAMOCHA” –... JUST LIKE YOU...
- The Chances of Tolerance -**

Key-note speech by Dr. Alfréd Schöner

First of all, I would like to express my gratefulness for this special invitation. It is a great privilege and joy for me that I can talk to you at this crucial period, which is a significant historical time for Hungary. I came here as a rabbi, who would like to share his thoughts and questions with you and who would like to voice his hope in the future. I thank all of you for your kind participation and I wish all the best for you at this conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Honourable Conference,

Since 1985, I had been chief rabbi here, in Budapest for five years. Here, where one of the largest Jewish communities of Central-East Europe survived the Holocaust, here I received the special assignment: to be the rabbi of the greatest synagogue of Europe, the Dohány Street Synagogue, which was inaugurated in 1859. There are two memorials in the square in front of the Dohány Street Synagogue, which attract pilgrims even today; pilgrims, who want to remember. The first one is the work of art, created by one of the excellent sculptors of the 20th century's fine art, who is well known all over the world. Imre Varga, the artist dreamed and created a metal "memory tree", which has more than ten thousand names on it as a perpetual reminder of those 600 000 Hungarian Jews, who suffered martyrdom during the tragic time of the Second World War. Not long time ago, about a year or two later, another commemorative plaque was placed on this, Biblically speaking, "Holy Ground", *admat kodesh*, with the names on it, whom the modern History of Jewish Theology calls *chasidei umoth haolam*, that is "The Righteous Gentiles". These people were our Christian friends, who risked the most precious ones, their lives for others, in this case for saving the lives of many Jewish people and doing this according to their faith, firm conviction and their humanity.

These two means the "*admat kodesh*", the "Holy Ground", there in the shadow of the Dohány Street Synagogue, as a memorial of the martyrs and of those, who were able to remain humans in the most terrible times of mankind, in the time of brutality.

Before I came here, I had read the last edition of the periodical of the Historical Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which bore the following subtitle:
The Annihilation of the Jews in the Provinces

I started to think about the fact: How many Jews lived in the Provinces altogether, about six-seven decades ago? And how many Jews live today? A couple of hundreds or maybe a thousand. It is very painful to remember. It is even more painful, when we are touched personally. I, myself also come from a family of survivors. I was born three years after the Shoah. Almost all of my family was annihilated: 39 people, among them my four siblings.

Few days ago I received the copies of the birth and death certificates of my martyr relatives from the little town of Eastern-Hungary, from Csenger, where my father and his family had lived. I share with you some facts and data from these certificates:

Imre Schöner: born at a certain time and at a certain place, lived 17 years. The cause of death: Auschwitz.

Éva Schöner: born at a certain time and at a certain place, lived 15 years. The cause of death: Auschwitz.

Jenő Schöner: born at a certain time and at a certain place, lived 7 years. The cause of death: Auschwitz.

Edit Schöner: born at a certain time and at a certain place, lived 3 years. The cause of death: Auschwitz.

I belong to a generation, whose members could not be acquainted – due to lack of opportunity - with the concept of grandparents. My generation did not have grandparents. In a biological sense we had grandparents, except we could not relate to them emotionally because they were sent to the gas chambers, they were burnt and their ashes were blown in the wind.

I apologize for mentioning such emotional things.

At the same time, I also would like to share some other thoughts, inner feelings with you, which I am certain that you dear guests at present and in general, my friends would understand.

Few days ago, the world famous Hungarian philosopher, Professor Ferenc Fejtő, who lives in France now, spoke about the etymology of the word “tolerance”.

I was thinking about this approach and about what I can add to it here, at this conference. So, I put down few sentences a couple of hours ago, which are as follows:

I wrote, that tolerance exists exclusively if we know and recognize the other person. This process is a result of a true knowledge of ourselves and of our pure sources and resources. Thus we are able to tolerate the other person. I gave the title “The Chances of Tolerance” to my opening lecture.

Is there any chance for tolerance today?

Honourable Conference,

I studied at the Rabbinical Seminary in Budapest and I also graduated here. This institute was the only Jewish Theological Seminary of Central-Eastern Europe.

The second thought, which I would like to discuss with you, comes from my dear and beloved Professor, from Imre Benoschofsky, blessed is his memory. Rabbi Benoschofsky explained the Laws of Holiness, written in the Book of Leviticus, in chapter 19, in a very unique way. Here we can find the famous classical sentence:

"VeAhavta leraacha kamocho." - "Love your neighbour as you love yourself."

The third word of the sentence is kamocho – as yourself.

'Do not translate this word "as yourself" ', said Professor Benoschofsky. Although this translation became acceptable and in this way was introduced also into the Hungarian History of Religion and Culture. However, the word "kamocho" – both from the etymological and from the grammatical point of view – means, "because he is like you". If we accept this approach, the sentence sounds like this:

"Love your neighbour, because he is just like you."

When I was referring to the pure source, to our pure source, I meant the inner view, how we view tolerance from inside our circles. I believe, the task concerning tolerance has two sides, it must be mutual. It is important to know for us Jews, and also for the Christians and for everyone, what the meanings of these universal teachings were in the past and what their meanings are in our present age.

If we accept this, then we will be able to sense and feel the real meaning of the expression "kamocho" – "just like you" and hope that it will be realized in the near future, in the coming years or decades.

Two more brief thoughts as a summary:

The first one comes from the Bible, from Prophet Malachi, which is one of the most beautiful sentences of the Holy Scripture:

"Halo Av echad lechulanu, halo El Echad beraanu" - "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one G-d created us?" (2,10)

[The Holy Scriptures, The Jewish Bible according to the masoretic text , „Sinai” Publishing Co., Tel Aviv, Israel]

That is to say, that the Bible does not recognize inferiority and superiority.

The second thought comes from the Talmud, the Shabbath Tractate,

page 21. It is a well-known teaching of Rabbi Hillel.
Once a gentile approached him and asked him:

"Teach me the essence of Judaism...."

"Ma shesanu alecha lo taase lachaverecha".

"Which you do not want for yourself, do not do it to others.", thus said Rabbi Hillel. "This is the essence of Judaism, all the rest is just explanation."

Here I gave you a historical cross-section, and now I would like to quote a modern halachic source. About two decades ago The "Halacha LeAm", the four-volume work of the excellent halachic author, Rabbi Yaakov Berman, was published in Israel. I quote the following thought from here: [Volume 3, chapter 24, and the subtitle: "HaAdam yechidi nivra"]

"To what can the relationship between peoples, nations and religions be compared? Maybe to a symphonic orchestra, where there are softer and where there are deeper and more powerful sounds. Be very careful" – says the author – "and do not let one of them to swallow the other ones but each of the instruments must sound so that one should make the other one more colourful, that one should complement the other one. Only in this way would that concept be created and prevail, which is one of the holiest of our religion, and which is called, Harmony."

A Hungarian poet of the 20th century, Mihály Babits's lines are coming to my mind now. He wrote the following:

"There dwells a song in each soul,
And each soul listens to its own tune.
For only those will the beauty of it be revealed,
Who are ready to hear the beauty in the other soul, too"

I truly believe and hope that this conference came to light in the name of the tolerance and we are and will be able to hear the beauty in the other's song, as well.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Here I take the opportunity to thank you for your attention. I wish you a fruitful gathering, from which the common European dream will emerge and be heard, the VOX HUMANA, the HUMAN VOICE!

Les Victimes de l'Holocauste par Jean-Michel Lecomte

Innombrables furent les victimes du nazisme ! Peuples, catégories, groupes et individus de toutes sortes ont eu à subir les crimes du système totalitaire et de ses complices.

Les plus odieux ont donné lieu à la création puis à l'usage du mot « génocide ». Mais commémorant les génocides, il ne s'agit pas d'ignorer ou de nier les souffrances des autres victimes. Il faut au contraire les connaître toutes, et le dire comme un préalable :

Il n'est pas de gradation dans le fait d'être une victime : la mort ne fait pas de tri, elle est à chaque fois un déchirement pour une famille, des proches. Elle est, à chaque fois qu'elle est provoquée, une perte pour l'humanité.

En cas de conflit armé, la distinction entre victimes militaires et civiles est un moyen descriptif – qui dans certains cas peut entraîner une reconnaissance de qualités plus ou moins grandes –, une qualification quasiment technique des individus concernés.

L'enfermement, la torture, les viols et violences, les mauvais traitements, les privations infligées sont des souffrances qui elles non plus ne sont pas plus ou moins graves selon l'identité et les caractéristiques des victimes comme des bourreaux : on peut bien sûr mesurer des niveaux de cruauté, mais on ne persuadera aucune victime que ce qu'elle a subi est moins grave, moins inacceptable...

L'histoire, le droit et la justice internationaux, les sociétés humaines identifient des catégories de crimes qui permettent de reconnaître les victimes, de confondre, qualifier et condamner les criminels : ainsi sont connus et distincts (encore que des recouvrements soient possibles) crimes de guerre, crimes contre l'humanité, génocides...

L'application de ces catégories est difficile, abstraite, délicate. Aussi peut-on utiliser des critères plus parlants, plus directs pour les reconnaître. C'est ce que je vais tenter de vous proposer.

Les combattants font généralement l'objet d'une reconnaissance nationale plus ou moins importante, sous forme de monuments aux morts, médailles et pension, et qui inclut le dommage d'éventuels crimes de guerre. Cette reconnaissance fut le plus souvent immédiate dans le camp des vainqueurs de la seconde guerre mondiale, pour les combattants comme pour les résistants : elle conduisit même certains à dénier à ceux qui ne s'étaient pas battus (par exemple, les victimes raciales) un mérite qui leur serait réservé – ou qui serait plus grand chez

eux (et de ce comportement, de ce déni le négationnisme est toujours plus ou moins proche, pour le moins prêt à croître sur ce terreau).

Victime : « coupable » de quoi ?

Les victimes qui ont subi des actions criminelles peuvent être réparties en diverses catégories, en fonction de ce qu'elles ont « fait » pour s'attirer des représailles plus ou moins graves : ainsi les choses diffèrent-elles pour celles et ceux qui ont *combattu*, *agi*, *parlé*, *pensé*, *cru*, ou simplement *été*.

Combattre

Combattant est le statut commun du temps de guerre. La blessure ou la mort reçue au combat est légitimement reconnue comme telle (des problèmes peuvent cependant surgir de l'usage, par l'une ou l'autre des parties, d'armes interdites par les conventions internationales).

Le sort des prisonniers de guerre est théoriquement régi par un « droit de la guerre », qui regroupe des conventions internationales (la convention de Genève) et un certain nombre de coutumes. Sont ainsi déterminées des conditions de détention (logement, nourriture, intégrité physique, identité, organisation, relations avec la famille, visites de la Croix rouge, etc.) : y contrevenir peut, selon la gravité, être assimilé à un crime de guerre, voire à un crime contre l'humanité.

Après le conflit, la reconnaissance apportée aux anciens combattants est le plus souvent variée, inégalitaire. En général, il vaut mieux appartenir au camp des vainqueurs. Mais il arriva que d'anciens enrôlés (polonais, ukrainiens...) de la Wehrmacht touchent une pension supérieure à celle d'anciens soldats réguliers du même pays. En France, les anciens combattants originaires des colonies eurent droit à la moitié de la pension des « Français de France » !

Agir

Il s'agit ici des personnes qui, sans avoir le statut de combattant (appartenance à un corps régulier, affectation, grade, etc.), agissent contre la puissance adverse :

comme membres de groupes paramilitaires, menant des escarmouches ou de véritables combats (groupes même sommairement armés, maquis, groupes de partisans, etc.),

comme groupes clandestins menant des opérations ponctuelles (sabotages, etc.),

comme groupes menant des opérations de renseignement, d'organisation, de déplacements, de réseaux d'infiltration, d'exfiltration, d'évasion, etc.

Au total, il s'agit de résistants. L'importance en nombre, l'organisation, la place dans les combats et l'issue générale du conflit peuvent leur valoir tout aussi bien d'être traités comme combattants que comme « terroristes ». Dans le premier cas, ils peuvent bénéficier des mêmes garanties relatives. Dans le second, plus fréquent en cours de conflit, ils sont souvent maltraités en dehors de toutes limites, ne bénéficiant ni des règles relatives aux prisonniers de guerre ni des limites fixées dans le traitement des civils.

Après le conflit, ils sont ou non reconnus pour leurs actes. Les supplices qu'ils ont éventuellement subis peuvent également relever des crimes de guerre ou des crimes contre l'humanité.

Parler

Il s'agit ici de ceux qui ont exprimé une opposition (plus ou moins générale), un désaccord, une différence de point de vue – oralement ou par écrit.

Leur situation peut être différente selon qu'ils (elles) sont citoyens de la puissance conquérante ou en situation de guerre, ou d'un pays militairement ou politiquement occupé ou dominé.

Parler est souvent assimilé par le « pouvoir » à agir, c'est-à-dire à un acte de résistance active ; mais la qualité de « résistant » peut être déniée, notamment *a posteriori* par d'autres catégories, qui entendent réserver ce qualificatif à ceux qui ont accompli une résistance armée et organisée.

Combattre, agir, parler impliquent une activité de l'individu, dont on peut trouver trace : elle est manifeste, visible, ou peut être connue par des signes évidents. Cela ne signifie pas pour autant, bien sûr, une équivalence entre ces catégories.

Pendant le temps du conflit

Combattre, c'est être exposé aux opérations militaires elles-mêmes, et notamment à toutes les opérations du front – même si, après la première guerre mondiale, les grands conflits se sont caractérisés par des opérations les plus meurtrières menées contre des populations civiles. En cas d'arrestation, le combattant « régulier » dispose des garanties internationales.

La résistance armée expose aux mêmes dangers que les opérations militaires, mais en cas d'arrestation, aucune garantie n'est certaine – sauf celle théoriquement prévue par les droits de l'homme.

La « résistance verbale » peut être interprétée par la puissance adverse comme une quasi-opposition armée. La qualité de civil non armé peut alors, ou non, être une garantie.

Après le conflit

Dans le camp vainqueur, sont célébrés comme héros (et reçoivent honneurs et indemnités de l'État) tous ceux qui ont combattu, agi, parlé, militaires, résistants ou civils non armés.

Dans le camp vaincu, ceux qui ont agi ou parlé sont au mieux oubliés (au moins dans un premier temps : avant que l'histoire ne les réhabilite), au pire considérés comme criminels, terroristes ou complices.

Dans le camp dit neutre, comme Michelle Fleury l'a opportunément indiqué lors de ce séminaire, avoir pris le parti de défendre des populations menacées (en les cachant, leur fournissant de faux papiers...) peut avoir valu des sanctions de type administratif (carrière de Carl Lutz compromise), voire judiciaire (en Suisse, certains ne sont toujours pas réhabilités, malgré des démarches longues et insistantes).

Penser

Être connu pour avoir des opinions non conformes à celles imposées par le pouvoir ou l'occupant est source de grands dangers dans un régime autoritaire ou totalitaire, et dans une situation de guerre ou d'occupation du territoire. Cette non-conformité est considérée comme une opposition active, réelle ou potentielle.

C'est bien sûr d'abord le cas pour les habitants du pays même. Il faut rappeler que les camps de concentration furent créés quelques semaines à peine après la prise de pouvoir par Hitler, et emplis d'opposants réels ou supposés. Après une période de multiplication anarchique (certains potentats locaux avaient même leurs camps « privés » où ils réinventaient l'esclavage), les SS récupérèrent vite l'ensemble, pour construire ce qu'on peut très vite qualifier de « système concentrationnaire » ; mais jusqu'à la guerre (c'est-à-dire jusqu'à la solution finale d'une part et l'opération *Nacht und Nebel* d'autre part, l'internement en camp était théoriquement provisoire (et de fait, certains opposants furent relâchés).

La preuve de l'opposition au régime peut être apportée par des écrits actuels (alors, on se retrouve dans la catégorie « parler »), anciens, ou

par le refus d'action ou la non-action (refus de prêter serment, non engagement militaire), voire dans l'inaction (ne pas manifester son assentiment au pouvoir en place).

Pendant le conflit : cette attitude peut avoir les mêmes désagréments que parler, voire agir. Les victimes peuvent alors être considérées comme ayant subi des crimes de guerre ou des crimes contre l'humanité (selon les circonstances).

Après le conflit : cette situation n'entraîne souvent pas de reconnaissance particulière, qu'on appartienne à la population des vainqueurs ou des vaincus ; elle peut cependant garantir de l'accusation d'avoir « collaboré ». Si l'on a été poursuivi pour sa pensée, il peut bien sûr y avoir assimilation avec « parler » ou « agir ».

Croire

Dans les conflits de type religieux, croire est assimilable à penser, voire parler, car cela signifie clairement être d'un parti contre l'autre. Les conséquences seront donc les mêmes (même si partager une croyance n'équivaut pas à l'adhésion à un conflit pour cette croyance).

Dans les autres conflits, croire peut être assimilé par le pouvoir comme partiellement assimilable à penser (exemple : les témoins de Jéhovah refusent le serment à Hitler et le service militaire par conviction religieuse, et non forcément par choix idéologique anti-nazi ; ils manifestaient au contraire une attitude de neutralité et de non-révolte, qui les fit souvent choisir, dans les camps, pour servir de domestiques aux familles des officiers, avec des libertés de mouvement dont jamais aucun ne profita pour s'enfuir).

Il n'est possible d'échapper à l'enfermement en camp de concentration et à toutes ses conséquences que par le renoncement ou l'abjuration : mais cette possibilité, à laquelle purent croire des juifs convertis ou apostats parfois depuis deux générations, ne fut réellement proposée qu'aux témoins de Jéhovah.

Être

Ce que l'on est détermine chez le pouvoir ou la force occupante la volonté punitive, exclusive, voire destructrice. Dans la mesure où l'entreprise est consciente, organisée, intentionnelle, on peut affirmer la qualification génocidaire.

On parle d'ethnocide lorsque sont visés (dans le but de leur destruction) les caractères culturels d'un groupe humain (qui contribuent à en faire ce qu'on appelle un groupe ethnique) : langue, histoire et œuvres

culturelles, organisation sociale... jusqu'à la mémoire même de leur existence...

On ne peut alors échapper que par la fuite, ou l'abandon d'une particularité culturelle essentielle.

Le nazisme a appliqué cette politique génocidaire aux Juifs et aux Roms-Tsiganes.

Une caractéristique du génocide est que les bourreaux définissent eux-mêmes qui appartient au groupe des victimes : il n'existe aucune échappatoire, aucune objectivité de situation, aucun droit des individus concernés à se revendiquer ou à se reconnaître ou non dans cette définition ; le groupe des victimes est ainsi « sorti de l'humanité ».

Le génocide des Juifs a pris une forme jusqu'alors sans précédent dans la mesure où il a été annoncé, organisé, et s'est donné pour objectif non d'en éliminer une zone donnée de territoire, mais l'ensemble des membres de ce groupe humain de la planète.

Les principales victimes des crimes nazis

Les victimes des nazis peuvent être rattachées à l'une ou l'autre de ces catégories, avec des recouvrements et des ambivalences, mais aussi des variations (selon l'époque, le lieu, la nationalité, les circonstances...).

Génocides

Les Juifs (selon une définition différente dans l'espace ou le temps, mais allant toujours dans un sens de plus en plus large) furent l'objet d'un génocide à caractère unique, que j'appelle « Shoah », de préférence à « Holocauste », mot à connotation religieuse et impliquant la notion d'un sacrifice : ce génocide sans précédent visait à la destruction totale d'un peuple défini comme « race » et de tout vestige de sa culture.

Les Roms-Tsiganes ont subi un génocide. Il fut plus difficile de les définir par des critères « raciaux » (d'autant que leurs origines lointaines en faisaient des « Aryens », aussi les nazis les qualifièrent-ils, en plus, d'a-sociaux (nomadismes, métiers non usuels...). Leur extermination fut bien décidée, et mise en œuvre. Leur génocide fut d'abord « oublié » car les Roms-Tsiganes ne s'inscrivent pas dans les mêmes rites de reconnaissance formelle et de mémoire des victimes, mais aussi parce que dans toute l'Europe ils continuent de faire l'objet d'un racisme plus ou moins violent, de rejet ou d'ostracisme.

Crimes à caractère génocidaire

Certaines catégories ont subi des crimes contre l'humanité dont on doit bien reconnaître le caractère génocidaire – à savoir, elles ont été massacrées, voire éliminées, en fonction de ce qu'elles *étaient*, et non de ce qu'elles croyaient, pensaient, disaient ou faisaient :

Les handicapés, aliénés, malades chroniques invalides allemands ou « aryens », considérés comme non dignes ou non purs (l'expression « des vies ne valant pas la peine d'être vécues » date des années vingt, et des actions d'eugénisme ont eu lieu au-delà du nazisme : c'est pourquoi on répugne encore à inclure les victimes dans une qualification génocidaire, qui pourrait alors s'étendre à d'autres pays, d'autres régimes, d'autres époques).

Les actions et « instituts » d'euthanasie mis en place durent être ralentis du fait de réactions de la population allemande elle-même ; la guerre permit d'en généraliser la pratique plus discrètement, sous le nom de l'opération du nom de code 14f13.

Les homosexuels, pour les mêmes raisons : accusés de « souiller la race » aryenne selon Himmler (discours, 18 février 1937), il fallait les éliminer pour empêcher la dégénérescence à terme de la race. Systématiquement déportés, ils furent marqués d'un triangle rose, et subirent souvent, en plus des conditions les plus dégradantes réservées par les SS et les auxiliaires de divers statuts et nationalités, les brimades de nombre des autres déportés.

Mais l'homophobie était alors et est en grande partie demeurée une caractéristique européenne (l'homosexualité est restée criminalisée dans de nombreux pays, dont la France et l'Allemagne, pendant des dizaines d'années après-guerre), et les victimes sont restées méconnues, oubliées, voire niées.

À cette haine persistante venait s'ajouter le ressentiment d'anciens déportés à l'égard de Kapos ou de petits chefs qui se choisissaient des « favoris » parmi le plus jeunes détenus : phénomène connu en milieu carcéral, qui ne signifie pas d'ailleurs une réelle homosexualité du maître ni du giton.

Les prisonniers de guerre soviétiques : comme d'autres prisonniers de guerre, ils furent victimes de crimes de guerre : mais, comme soviétiques, objets de crimes contre l'humanité à cause de ce qu'ils étaient (de nationalité soviétique). Nombre d'entre eux servirent de cobayes dans les premiers essais de gazage de masse.

Les élites polonaises, éliminées en tant que telles pour que le reste de la population polonaise (dont les enfants désormais interdits d'instruction) paraisse ce que voulait le nazisme, une « race inférieure ».

Autres crimes contre l'humanité

La liste des catégories ou groupes ayant été victimes de crimes contre l'humanité et de crimes de guerre est par ailleurs fort longue, elle peut être établie au niveau de chaque pays, et mérite évidemment autant de respect et d'attention : la mémoire et la nécessité historique ne se partagent pas plus qu'elles ne se concurrencent. Français, l'auteur peut évidemment évoquer les habitants du village d'Oradour-sur-Glane, massacrés le 10 juin 1944, pour remarquer que ce crime, comme les génocides, comme la Shoah, fait l'objet de tentatives de négation : les héritiers du nazisme, eux, savent bien s'acharner sur toutes les catégories de victimes...

Impossible conclusion

Un État, un régime criminels sont capables, le nazisme l'a montré, d'une multitude de crimes : la vigilance et la prévention consistent à relever comme prémisses les premiers dérapages hors des droits de l'homme et des peuples. Depuis 1945, l'histoire nous a déjà rappelé en plusieurs occasions que le pire survenait vite.

Il arrive aujourd'hui que nous ayons connaissance de certains meurtres de masse au moment de leur perpétration, ou, du moins, que nous assistions, quasiment en direct à la télévision, à des événements pour le moins troublants (« embarquement » de Bosniaques dans des cars partant pour une destination inconnue, mouvements de populations excitées par la radio des mille collines au Rwanda, traces de massacre au Timor, en Tchétchénie... : il est difficile de les qualifier sans délai (vision partielle – peut-être partielle ou trompeuse, comme à Timisoara...) : mais faut-il attendre qu'un génocide soit avéré pour protester, pour s'insurger, pour intervenir ?

Et il est des régions du monde où les médias n'ont pas accès : que se passe-t-il au Soudan depuis quinze ans ?

Persecution and Resistance of Jehovah's Witnesses in Nazi-Europe – What We Should Know and Remember by Hans-Hermann Dirksen

Introduction

The main focus of "Teaching the Holocaust" is mostly directed toward general subjects and history as a whole. This is correct, because we need to know the general outline of history, we need to know the "hows" and "whens" of the matter, otherwise we cannot understand properly what happened and can make no valid conclusions. But we also need to become familiar with persons and stories so as to fill our imagination with pictures that make history find a more permanent place in our memory. Good examples are necessary to teach us a lesson in morals and ethics. Men and women who stand firm for their convictions and prove that even in the worst and most wicked of times in human history there are persons who have no affiliation with evil but display love, mercy, and humanity towards others. Is the religious group of 25,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in Nazi Germany, representing a small group of so-called other victims of the Holocaust, capable of being such an example? Historical research in this field has revealed that the Witnesses, although one of the first religions to be banned, were the only religious group to have taken a consistent, organized stand against the Nazi regime. Most Witnesses did not compromise with the Nazi System's demands to participate in the *Führerkult*, which was tantamount to worship of the Fuehrer. Apart from very few members of other religions, the Witnesses were the only religion in the Third Reich to propagate the refusal of military service and to practice conscientious objection. These few facts are impressive and worthy of being remembered. Steffen Reiche, Minister of Science, Research, and Culture of the German State of Brandenburg, emphasized particularly the value of remembering Jehovah's Witnesses for further generations, when he spoke in 1998 at the main commemoration for the victims of National Socialism at the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp Memorial,

"Today's event involves more than just reminiscing about and acknowledging the victims. It directly effects the present. Jehovah's Witnesses in the camps and prisons displayed virtues, which, today as in the past, are indispensable to the continued existence of a democratic constitutional state, namely steadfastness against the SS and humanity toward fellow prisoners. In the face of increasing brutality in our society toward foreigners and toward persons of different political or ideological opinion, these virtues have become imperative for the citizens of our country."

The European project "Teaching Remembrance" also aims in this

educational direction, and so it seems to be appropriate that the history of Jehovah's Witnesses be mentioned in this connection. All the more so, since the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses was not only a phenomenon of Hitler-Germany, but was indeed a European occurrence. The Witnesses were also persecuted in those countries that were allied with Germany and later in those regions occupied by the German *Wehrmacht* (armed forces). History has so far revealed that more than 10,700 Jehovah's Witnesses suffered under the Nazi terror in Europe. About 1,500 died as a result of persecution. Therefore this essay will provide a brief overview about that subject.

Belief

First of all some basic beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses should be considered, to understand their conduct in Nazi time. The Witnesses view themselves as the modern-day counterpart of early Christianity. Their origin dates back to the 1870's when the merchant C. T. Russell searched for true Bible interpretation.¹ He and his fellow believers studied the Bible and came to the conclusion that many church doctrines, such as hellfire or the immortality of the soul, are a falsification of Bible truths. Russell and the Bible students believed that God has a name, Jehovah, and that he gave his son Christ Jesus as a ransom sacrifice for the transgression of Adam and Eve, which transgression led to the imperfection of mankind and to a world of disaster. The Bible Students came to the conclusion that today is the era that the Bible calls the last days, when Jesus Christ will return and establish a heavenly Kingdom over all the earth. In time all wickedness on earth shall be exterminated in a major heavenly battle called Armageddon. God's intervention here is followed by a time in which earth will be restored to a paradise and man will be led back to perfection and everlasting life on earth. To tell humankind about God's plan, the Bible Students started to print Biblical literature such as *The Watchtower* and began a worldwide evangelizing work. They view themselves as subjects of the heavenly King Jesus Christ, and due to their deep brotherly love, they remain neutral in political matters and do not perform military service. They obey governmental power, as required by the Bible, as long as the state's authority does not require a violation of God's law.

¹ Eileen Barker, "New religious movements: their incidence and significance," in Bryan Wilson and Jamie Cresswell (eds), *New Religious Movements: Challenge and Response* (London 1999), and Greg Stafford, *Jehovah's Witnesses Defended: An Answer to Scholars and Critics* (2nd ed.) (Anaheim, CA, 2000). For a detailed consideration of the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses, see Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York (eds), *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life* (New York 1995).

Jehovah's Witnesses banned in 1933

When Hitler assumed power on January 30, 1933, he proceeded to establish an absolute dictatorship. The Reichstag fire, on the night of February 27, 1933, provided an excuse for the Emergency Decree for the Protection of People and State that was enacted on February 28, 1933.² Although this decree was aimed chiefly at the repulsion of Communists, it also authorized the reestablishment of "public law and order." Real or alleged political or ideological groups could be banned and the basis was created to detain opponents and dissenters in so-called *Schutzhaft* (protective custody). With the Witnesses, the Nazi state was confronted with the refusal of a small minority.³ They did not take part in the elections on May 5, 1933, or in any other political proceedings, because of their Christian neutrality. They did not salute the swastika flag nor did they sing the national anthem. And they did not say "Heil Hitler." If one considers that everyone in the German Reich was expected to say "Heil Hitler" as proof of conviction and allegiance, you can imagine that every Witness had to endure hostility and repression on a daily basis. This remarkable act of resistance was based on the Witness belief that *Heil*, or salvation, can only come from God and not from man, not even from a *Führer*. Saying "Heil Hitler" was for the Witnesses an act of blasphemy; something they could not conscientiously do. They also refrained from membership in any Nazi organization. So, within a short time, on April 10, 1933, the first ban against the Witnesses was declared in the German state of Mecklenburg. This was followed by a ban in Bavaria on April 13, 1933, in Saxony on April 18, 1933, and so on. The bans revealed National Socialist hatred against religious minorities, the majority of which were not considered as belonging to the German national community.⁴ On top of that, the Nazis viewed the Witnesses as supporters of an alleged Jewish Bolshevism. Media propaganda publicly propagated false accusations. At first, the Witnesses hoped to come to an agreement with the new government. A big convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Berlin in June 1933 adopted a "Declaration of Facts" with which the Witnesses tried to invalidate false accusations and to show that they had no intentions of overturning the government. This effort failed, however, as did additional negotiations. The claims of National Socialism were too different, and they were mostly unacceptable for the Witnesses. The

² *Notverordnung zum Schutz von Volk und Staat, "Reichstagsbrandverordnung,"* February 28, 1933, RGBl. 1933 I, p. 83.

³ Christine Elizabeth King, "The Nazi State and the New Religions: Five Case Studies in Non-Conformity." *Studies in Religion and Society*, Vol. 4 (New York and Toronto 1982), pp. 147-179.

⁴ Bans against other minorities followed, such as the Seventh-Day-Adventist Reformation Movement and the Anthroposophist Society. By 1938 in the German Reich, 39 religious groups had been banned.

Berlin convention was at the same time as the ban of the Witnesses in Prussia came on June 24, 1933, by far the biggest state of the German Reich. The decree, similar to the other, stated:

“Under the cover of supposed scholarly Bible studies, the International Bible Students Association is carrying on, in word and in its publications, an unmistakable hate campaign against institutions of the state and the churches.”⁵

Their religious activities were described as a “cultural-bolshevist disintegration campaign” and it was maintained that the organization was a gathering place for Communists and Marxists. Historical research also reveals the extent of the churches’ involvement in trying to wipe out smaller religious movements in Germany. Church representatives in Prussia took part in governmental meetings discussing the ban of the Witnesses.⁶ Consequently, the ban explicitly referred to complaints the churches had made against the Witnesses.⁷ Different church officials, such as Cardinal Faulhaber, welcomed the ban against the Witnesses.⁸ The Nazis seized the branch office at Magdeburg. They broke up Witness meetings and made arrests. Soon Witnesses began to be dismissed from their jobs. They suffered raids on their homes, beatings, and arrests. By early 1934, the Nazis had seized from the Witnesses 65 tons of Bible literature and had burned it outside Magdeburg.⁹ Jehovah’s Witnesses were the first religious group to be persecuted in Hitler Germany. Additionally—and this is also historically important—besides the majority of Communists and social democrats, Jehovah’s Witnesses were taken into protective custody as early as 1933, and were inmates of some of the first Nazi concentration camps such as Hohenstein, Sachsenburg, Moringen, Esterwegen and in Lichtenburg.¹⁰

The Witnesses had to go underground and organize their religious

⁵ Detlef Garbe, *Zwischen Widerstand und Martyrium: Die Zeugen Jehovas im 'Dritten Reich'* (4th ed.) (Munich 1999), p 100.

⁶ Detlef Garbe, “*Widerstehen aus religiösen Gemeinschaften*,” in Peter Steinbach/Johannes Tuchel (eds), *Widerstand gegen die nationalsozialistische Diktatur 1933-1945* (Bonn 2004), pp. 149f.

⁷ Gerald Hacke, “*Zwei Diktaturen-Ein Feind. Die Verfolgung der Zeugen Jehovas im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland und in der DDR*,” in Günther Heydemann/Heinrich Oberreuter (eds), *Diktaturen in Deutschland-Vergleichsaspekte, Strukturen, Institutionen und Verhaltensweisen* (Bonn 2003), p. 287.

⁸ Garbe, *Widerstehen aus religiösen Gemeinschaften*, loc. cit., p. 149.

⁹ Franz Zürcher, *Kreuzzug gegen das Christentum. Moderne Christenverfolgung* (Zürich 1938), p. 35.

¹⁰ Johannes Wrobel, “*Die nationalsozialistische Verfolgung der Zeugen Jehovas in Frankfurt am Main*,” in *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte (KZG)/Contemporary Church History (CCH)*, Vol. 2/2003, pp. 402, 373.

activities in secret. This meant the illegal printing of their religious periodicals—*The Watchtower*, for example—and their delivery to the other believers. Astonishingly, a further remarkable circumstance is the fact that they tried to publicly counterattack the Hitler regime. At a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses held in September 1934 in Basel, Switzerland, a resolution entitled "Protest" was adopted condemning the mass confiscation of Witness literature and the arrest of the adherents. On October 7, 1934, all congregations of Witnesses in Germany sent the protest-declaration simultaneously to the Hitler government. On the same day, Witnesses all over the world sent the following telegram directly to the Hitler government:

"Your ill-treatment of Jehovah's witnesses shocks all good people of the earth and dishonors God's name. Refrain from further persecuting Jehovah's Witnesses; otherwise God will destroy you and your national party."¹¹

Sources confirm that a wave of thousands of telegrams arrived at the Chancellery. Adolf Hitler's reaction was rage. A confirmed eyewitness report of the moment when he was informed of the wave of telegrams states: "Hitler jumped to his feet and with clenched fists hysterically screamed: '*This brood will be exterminated in Germany!*'"¹² When the persecution still kept up, strongly worded declarations of protest against Hitler and his government, which openly described Nazi atrocities, were distributed in blitz campaigns in 1936 and 1937 by thousands of adherents. Also, their periodicals published numerous articles and letters about the incarceration of their fellow believers in concentration camps as well as the fate of the Jews and other victims. So Jehovah's Witnesses endeavored to make their case known worldwide.

¹¹ Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses 1974* (Brooklyn, USA), pp. 137.

¹² *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses 1974*, loc. cit., pp. 132-139.



At least 600 Jehovah's Witnesses from different European countries are known by name to have suffered in the Buchenwald Concentration Camp (Source: History Archives of JWs, Germany)

Jehovah's Witnesses in the concentration camps

In June 1936 the Gestapo formed a special unit for the surveillance of Jehovah's Witnesses and in August/September 1936 the first mass arrests took place.¹³ Estimations show that nearly 3,000 Witnesses were arrested. A second wave of mass arrests in March/April 1937 was made and a third one in August/September 1937. Furthermore on April 22, 1937, a special Gestapo decree was issued ordering that every Witness, upon being released after serving a prison term, was to be taken into protective custody for a certain time.¹⁴ To the extreme annoyance of the Gestapo, most Witnesses upon being released started once again to preach and to assemble with fellow believers. So, in 1938 *Reichsführer* SS Heinrich Himmler developed a concept to prevent faithful Witnesses from being released. The Gestapo began to use a unified so-called Declaration, that is a written statement, in which the Witnesses had to declare their religion as a heresy and renounce their beliefs.¹⁵ Since this was unthinkable for the vast majority, they had no chance of being

¹³ Hacke, op. cit., pp. 283-308.

¹⁴ Bundesminister der Justiz (ed), *Im Namen des Deutschen Volkes, Justiz und Nationalsozialismus*. Katalog zur Ausstellung (Cologne 1989), p. 254.

¹⁵ Hans Hesse/ Jürgen Harder (eds): *Und wenn ich lebenslang in einem KZ bleiben müßte. Die Zeuginnen Jehovas in den Frauenkonzentrationslagern Moringen, Lichtenburg und Ravensbrück* (Essen 2001), pp. 66ff.

released anymore. So, by 1938, about 6,000 Witnesses were incarcerated in concentration camps (400 of which were in the Buchenwald camp at this time). Here they were the object of special hatred by the SS. Witnesses were assigned to the special punishment battalion performing the hardest and most exhausting labor in the camp. During the first years in the camps, they had to stay in an isolation barrack, separated by barbed wire from the rest of the camp. The SS aimed to break their faith. Penalties were imposed on them for any reason at all. Witness biographies describe cruel “sports,” hanging from a pole with arms turned backward, or receiving 25 strokes with a whip, or being placed in custody without food, and so on.¹⁶ Now and then, each Witness was called to the camp administration and asked whether he was still one of Jehovah’s Witnesses or if he would like to sign the declaration. Nearly all of the Witnesses refused. Historians who have researched this subject have come to the conclusion that the Witnesses were in the concentration camps by choice. This sounds perverse, but their conclusion reflects the reality of the situation. If the Witnesses had renounced their faith, they would have been released immediately. In those years, the Witnesses made up a rather high percentage of concentration-camp inmates. Until 1939, the Witnesses generally made up 5 to 10 percent of camp inmates.¹⁷ In the women’s concentration camps at Lichtenburg and Ravensbrück, however, they made up the largest prisoner group. This brought about a special decision. When standardized color symbols were introduced for concentration-camp inmates, Jehovah’s Witnesses received a purple triangle.¹⁸ In contrast, Roman Catholic priests, clergyman, or other ministers all received the red triangle for political prisoners. It was only when the war started that the percentage of Witness inmates declined rapidly. This was due to the arrival of the thousands of captives and the so-called final solution of the Jewish question.

More persecution developed when Hitler announced the introduction of conscription in March 1935. Every German male had to complete

¹⁶ Sylvie Graffard/Leo Tristan, *Die Bibelforscher und der Nationalsozialismus 1933-1945. Die Vergessenen der Geschichte* (Paris 1998), pp. 94ff.

¹⁷ Wrobel, op. cit., p. 372f.

¹⁸ Henry Friedlander, "Categories of Concentration Camp Prisoners," in Hans Hesse (ed.): *Persecution and Resistance of Jehovah's Witnesses During the Nazi Regime 1933-1945* (Chicago 2001) pp. 17-22. Jolene Chu, "Purple Triangles: Witnesses to the Holocaust," in *Judaism Today*, Vol. 14 (London 1999-2000), pp. 16-23.



SS guards meted out sadistic and inhumane punishments as will. Prisoners were, for example, hung on a three-meter high pole with their arms chained behind them. The sign over the pole reads: "Typical Nazi punishment: the so-called hanging on a tree. Duration: 1/2h. – 3 h"
(Source: History Archives of JWs, Germany)

military service. There was no recognition of conscientious objection and the Witnesses had to face the fact that from this point in time onward, they could also be condemned for refusing military service. In addition, others could be charged for undermining military strength. Especially once the war began 1939, both offences lead to the death penalty. Up to now history knows of over 360 male and female Witnesses who were executed because of these offences by court order, in execution places such as Berlin-Plötzensee or Brandenburg-Görden.¹⁹

Start of Nazi-Persecution in other regions 1935-1939

So far, the situation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany was discussed. But Hitler's goal was to conquer Europe and to establish "*Lebensraum*"

¹⁹ Wrobel, op. cit., p. 372.

(living space) in the East. Occupying and conquering other European countries meant not only taking over the territory but also “remodeling” the inhabitants. Cleansing the countries also meant eliminating alleged political enemies. So, the Gestapo found ways to persecute and incarcerate the Witnesses in all of the occupied countries as well. Considering the European perspective of the persecution of Jehovah’s Witnesses, we have to differentiate between, on the one hand, those countries occupied by the Germans, where persecution of the Witnesses was directly through the Nazis themselves and, on the other hand, those countries we can describe as autonomous dictatorships, such as in fascist Italy, Romania or Hungary, where persecution of the Witnesses was carried out for alleged communistic ideology or for refusing military service.²⁰ This essay will focus on aspects of the Nazi-persecution.

In January 1935, for instance, a plebiscite in the territory of Saarland—which came under the administration of the League of Nations at the end of World War I—returned that state to Germany. Until then, the Witnesses were free to evangelize and assemble. Afterwards surveillance of the Witnesses started. On September 3, 1935, the Reich commissioner for the reintegration of Saarland, Josef Bürckel, issued a ban and dissolved the Witness organization.²¹ In a first massive wave of arrests in autumn 1936, altogether 72 Witnesses were arrested. In the opening trial at the special court of Saarbrücken, 24 were accused of having gathered with their fellow Witnesses and were sentenced to prison terms of up to 12 months for Erich Kunz, and 8 months for Ferdinand Weinen. The reasons were for maintaining a banned organization and collectively refusing to go to the elections.²² Twenty-eight-year-old Erich Kunz, who was given a one-year prison term, was taken afterward into protective custody and transferred to the Dachau concentration camp, where he had to endure in a punishment battalion before he was transferred to the camp in Mauthausen. He survived. His friend, Ferdinand Weinen, who had just recently become one of Jehovah’s Witnesses along with his family, was afterward transferred to one of the first concentration camps, at Börgermoor. His wife suffered terribly in the camp at Auschwitz. But their 18-year-old son, Rolf, suffered the most terrible destiny of all in the family. He was called up for conscription in October 1942. On January 7, 1943, when he refused to serve in the military, he was sentenced to death by the Reich’s court

²⁰ Hans-Hermann Dirksen, *„Eine doppelte europäische Diktaturerfahrung. Die Verfolgung der Zeugen Jehovas in Rumänien und Ungarn“* in Gerhard Besier/Clemens Vollnhals (eds), *Repression und Selbstbehauptung: Die Zeugen Jehovas unter der NS- und der SED-Diktatur* (Berlin 2003), pp. 327-358.

²¹ *Saarbrücker Zeitung* (Saarbrücken newspaper) November 27, 1936: *„Das Urteil im Bibelforscher-Prozeß.“*

²² Recording of reminiscences of Erich Kunz, Germany, ca. 1971 (in possession of the author).

martial in Berlin. In a deeply moving farewell letter he wrote:

“My beloved ones, do not be sad, and do not worry if within a few weeks I may not be able to write to you anymore. Oh, how much I would like to live. But I know that the one for whose name I am here is right here at my side. He is the Almighty. And now I am being ordered to disobey Him and follow the opinions of men!” Yours, Rolf²³

In Danzig, now Gdansk in Poland, which was also under supervision of the League of Nations, the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) won the May 1933 elections. This majority in parliament gave the Nazis the power to fight their enemies. Two years later, in March 1935, the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses was seized and on July 6, 1935, the Witnesses were banned by police decree. The Watch Tower Society in Switzerland submitted a petition to the High Commissioner at the League of Nations insisting on the still-existing free status. But in Geneva, nobody was interested in interfering with this persecution.²⁴

In spring 1938, Hitler ordered the occupation of Austria by German troops. For the 600 Witnesses who had already been banned since July 1935 severe persecution commenced.²⁵ The courts there sentenced the Witnesses for undermining military strength. Hitler proceeded with Czechoslovakia. Following the 1938 Munich agreement, he received the Sudetenland areas too. By fostering discontent on March 16, 1939, Hitler perfected the dissolution. Slovakia became an independent state and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was proclaimed. Concerning the Witnesses, a ban was issued on July 7, 1939, concerning the Sudetenland, where at the time about 300 Witnesses were living, and in September 1939, a ban came for the area of the protectorate, where about 350 Witnesses resided.²⁶

Intensifying of Nazi-persecution 1939-1944

When finally on September 1, 1939, World War II began, persecution

²³ History Archive of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany, Selters/Ts.: Letter of Rolf Weinen, December 2, 1942.

²⁴ Information from the History Archive of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany, Selters/Ts.

²⁵ Franz Aigner, "Die Verfolgung der Zeugen Jehovas in Österreich 1938-1945," in Rolf Steininger (ed), *Vergessene Opfer des Nationalsozialismus* (Innsbruck 2000). Rammerstorfer, Bernhard, *Unbroken Will. The Extraordinary Courage of an Ordinary Man. The Story of Leopold Engleitner* (New Orleans, 2004).

²⁶ Herbert Adamy, *Fialove Trojuhelniky. Zapomenuta kapitola holocaustu* (Prague 2000). Lubomir Müller/Wolfram Slupina, "Verfolgung und Unterdrückung der Zeugen Jehovas in der Tschechoslowakei," in *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte (KZG)/Contemporary Church History (CCH)*, Vol.17, 1/2004, pp. 171ff.

and court sentences increased in severity. Soon the inmates of the concentration camps were ordered to work for the war economy, producing essential products for the war effort. When the Witnesses refused to do so, they were severely punished. Heinrich Himmler himself visited the camp at Ravensbrück to break the resistance of female Witnesses who refrained from sewing uniform garments.²⁷

After the invasion of Poland, the Witnesses there were banned on July 4, 1940, and as far as we know, of the approximately 1,000 Witnesses, more than 700 were incarcerated by the Nazis.²⁸ Afterward on May 10, 1940, the German army struck in the West against the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. After occupying the Netherlands on May 29, 1940, Arthur Seyss-Inquart became the Reich commissioner of Germany. As from that date, he was given the legal authority to exercise government powers there. Jehovah's Witnesses had been on the scene in the Netherlands since 1908, and by 1933 there were about 100 active with a branch office in Heemstede. Based on the Reich commissioner's authority, on January 25, 1941, the commander of the German security police for the occupied Netherlands territory released an order dissolving the Jehovah's Witness organization, confiscating its money, and banning all religious activities.²⁹ The text of the decree was exactly the same wording as in the German bans. Additionally the text states: "The continued existence of this association would be a serious danger to public security and order." From February until April 1941, 99 persons were arrested. In spite of all the stricter measures taken by the security police against the activities of the Witnesses, the activity continued to increase. So, the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD, German security services) ordered the Dutch police to cooperate:

"Should adherents of the said society of Jehovah's Witnesses be caught in the act of distributing brochures or posting stickers, they must be apprehended and detained, which action must immediately be reported to the security police of the region. Should the Netherlands police have knowledge of names and addresses of adherents of the said society of Jehovah's Witnesses inside their jurisdiction, they are under obligation to report the same to the relevant security police authority."³⁰

Altogether in the Netherlands 456 Witnesses were arrested. Of these,

²⁷ Hesse/Harder, op. cit., pp. 146ff.

²⁸ Jürgen Ordowski/Jan Scheider, "Jehovas Zeugen in Polen 1936-1945," in *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte (KZG)/Contemporary Church History (CCH)*, Vol. 2/2002, pp. 263-289.

²⁹ City Archive of Deventer, Netherlands, No. 730, Doos 448, Mag. No. 24602, X-81 I; Tap. 3, *Der Befehlshaber der SiPo und des SD für die besetzten niederländischen Gebiete*, order dated January 25, 1941.

³⁰ City Archive of Emmen, Netherlands, Letter from the Ministry of Justice, April 25, 1941.

more than 131 died because of the persecution.³¹ France held out for 38 days before the French government resolved on June 18 to ask for an armistice. In France, Louis Piéchota, a Jehovah's Witness with Polish descent experienced the German invasion and the Persecution of the Witnesses in that country:



The prisoner category Bibelforscher, or Bible students, now known as Jehovah's Witnesses, were given their own identification symbol on their jackets, the purple triangle (Source: History Archives of JW's, Germany)

"Soon after the work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in October 1939, I was again arrested and sentenced to six months in prison, accused of illegally preaching God's kingdom. Initially, the time was spent in solitary confinement in Béthune jail, without anything to read. Several weeks later, when I thought that I would lose my mind, the prison guard brought me a Bible. How I thanked Jehovah! I memorized hundreds of verses and several entire chapters. These passages were a strengthening aid to me in the days ahead. In fact, even now I can quote texts that I committed to memory in Béthune jail. In February 1940, I was transferred from Béthune to the Le Vernet camp in the south of France where supposedly "dangerous" aliens were interned by the French authorities. In the spring of 1941, a German commission came to the camp and requested me. They sent me back to my hometown in the occupied zone of northern France, there to work as a coal miner. I used my newfound freedom to preach the good news of God's kingdom. But

³¹ Information from the History Archive of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Netherlands, Emmen.

when a new Witness was arrested and unwisely told the French police that I had supplied her with Bible literature, I was again arrested and sentenced to 40 days' imprisonment in Béthune jail. After my release, I resumed witnessing. While doing so in the little mining town of Calonne-Ricouart, I was arrested for the fourth time and sent back to Béthune jail. There the Germans came to arrest me because I had refused to work extra hours and Sundays in the coal mine to support the Nazi war effort. [...] The Germans finally sent me to the S'Hertogenbosch or Vught concentration camp, in the Netherlands. There I became a cipher—7045—and was given a camp uniform with the purple triangle that identified me as a *Bibelforscher*, or a witness of Jehovah. I was assigned to Block 17-A. It was indeed difficult for me to get used to marching barefoot in Dutch clogs. My feet were raw with broken blisters. At the slightest stumble, I risked being kicked in the ankles by an SS guard. Soon the skin on my feet thickened and I could march as quickly as the rest. There were 15 other Witnesses in that camp. We were offered immediate release, provided that we sign a paper abjuring our faith. None of us gave in. From that concentration camp in the Netherlands, we were eventually moved to Germany. Herded like cattle into small freight cars, 80 in each, we were forced to stand for three days and nights without food, water or any means of relieving ourselves. Finally, the train reached Oranienburg, about 30 kilometers (19 miles) north of Berlin. We then had to march on the double for 10 kilometers (6 miles) to the Heinkel aircraft factories, with SS dogs biting our heels if we slowed down. We Witnesses managed to keep together. Shortly afterward, we were all transferred to the nearby Sachsenhausen concentration camp. There, my purple triangle was accompanied by a new number: 98827. As we entered Sachsenhausen, I felt the full irony of the slogan that SS chief Himmler had ordered to be displayed in huge letters inside the camp. It read: "*Arbeit macht frei*" (Work makes free). What hypocrisy! [...] Life in Sachsenhausen can be summed up as slave labor, slow starvation, humiliation and degradation. The Nazis were out to break Jehovah's Witnesses or to kill them. They did kill many. But that was a moral defeat for the Nazis and a victory of faith and integrity for the Witnesses who died. As for the rest of us, far from being crushed spiritually, we did not allow the degrading conditions to prevent us from respecting high spiritual values."³²

Understanding this background makes the history of the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses more meaningful to us. We have to abandon the idea of an incident that was local and limited, something restricted to Nazi Germany and executed solely by Nazi Germans. Rather we see clear evidence of willing support in occupied countries and we can also uncover a common instinct in those lands allied to Germany. Indeed, the

³² Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, *The Watchtower*, August 15, 1980 (Brooklyn, USA), pp. 5ff.

Witnesses experienced a Nazi-persecution on a pan-European scale. In all occupied countries, and later in Hitler's Balkan-campaign, Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted in the course of time.

Economic Exploitation of the Witnesses at the end of the war

After the German *Reichsführung*, or government, noticed that the war would take longer than expected and resources and laborers were becoming fewer and fewer, it was decided to use concentration camps inmate for intensive slave labor. In this connection, the use of the Witnesses was also reconsidered. Heinrich Himmler and the Gestapo had experienced that the Witnesses were honest and harmless because they always followed the command of brotherly love. They did not even try to escape because they saw their fate in the hands of God. Himmler described them as being incredibly self-sacrificing and obedient but nonetheless harmful because of their neutral expressions regarding war. According to him, it would be impossible to grant them freedom without inflicting serious damage to Germany. Himmler thus ordered a special use of the Witnesses in civil affairs.³³ From 1943 on, therefore, female Witnesses from the Ravensbrück concentration camp were sent, for instance, to high-ranking SS officers' homes to serve as nannies or home helps and entire concentration camp work crews composed of Witnesses were set to hard labor on farming estates. Witnesses worked for Oswald Pohl, head of the SS central department for the administration of economics, on his Comthurey estate and on the Bohemian estate of Lina Heydrich, the widow of the slain SS leader Reinhard Heydrich. Reports indicate that even Himmler himself had a Witness nursemaid on his Brückenthin estate.³⁴ That female Witnesses served as nannies is a special irony of history, since the Gestapo had ordered on July 2, 1937, that child custody be denied to all Witness parents as soon as they were identified as active believers.³⁵ Witness parents were said to be a danger to the "mental welfare" of their children. About 650 Witness children are known to have been taken away from their parents and transferred to NS children's homes or

³³ Hesse/Harder, op. cit., p. 71. Garbe, op. cit., p. 462, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler an die obersten SS-Führer Pohl und Müller. Feldkommandostelle, 6. Januar 1943.

³⁴ Garbe, *Zwischen Widerstand und Martyrium*, loc. cit., p. 453-456. Hesse/Harder, op. cit., p. 186.

³⁵ Annegret Dirksen/Hans-Hermann Dirksen: "Die Kinder der Zeugen Jehovas – Staatliche Ausgrenzung und soziale Repression," in: Vollnhals, Clemens/Weber, Jürgen (eds): *Der Schein der Normalität: Alltag und Herrschaft in der SED-Diktatur* (Munich 2002) pp. 218-286. Simone Arnold Liebster, *Facing the Lion. Memoirs of a young girl in Nazi Europe* (Esch/Alzette 2000).

“politically correct” foster families.³⁶

Death marches 1945

When the Red Army drew nearer to the concentration camps, most imprisoned Witnesses were forced out of the camps and onto death marches until the final liberation.³⁷ The above mentioned Louis Piéchota reported about the evacuation of Sachsenhausen:

“By April 1945, the western Allies were pressing in on the Berlin area from the west, and the Russians were advancing from the east. The Nazi leaders studied various means of liquidating the inmates of the concentration camps. But killing off hundreds of thousands of people and disposing of their bodies within a few days without leaving behind any trace of their heinous crimes proved to be too difficult for these fiendish men. So they decided to kill off the sick and march the rest to the nearest seaport, where they would be loaded onto ships that would be taken out to sea and sunk, sending the prisoners to a watery grave. From Sachsenhausen, we were due to march some 250 kilometers (155 miles) to Lübeck. [...] There were 230 of us, from six different countries. [...] The various nationalities left in groups of 600 prisoners—first the Czechs, then the Poles, and so forth—some 26,000 in all. The group of Jehovah’s Witnesses was the last to leave. The SS had given us a cart to haul. I learned later that it contained some of the loot the SS had plundered from among the prisoners. They knew Jehovah’s Witnesses would take none of it. That cart turned out to be a blessing, because sick and elderly ones were able to sit on top and rest for a while during the march. When one got his strength back, he would get down and walk and another Witness, too weak to follow, would take his place, and so on throughout the two weeks that the “death march” lasted.”³⁸

Most imprisoned Witnesses had to endure the fate of performing the death marches until the total defeat of the Nazi-oppression and the liberation of all incarcerated Witnesses. Nevertheless, the freedom of religion regained after the end of the terror of the Hitler regime did not last. Jehovah’s Witnesses were persecuted again in Eastern Germany and under all Communist regimes in Europe. Now as “double victims,” they had to endure another 40 years of persecution and martyrdom.³⁹

³⁶ Information from the History Archive of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Germany, Selters/Ts.

³⁷ Graffard/Tristan, op. cit., pp. 231ff.

³⁸ Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, *The Watchtower*, August 15, 1980 (Brooklyn, USA), pp. 7ff.

³⁹ Hans-Hermann Dirksen, *Keine Gnade den Feinden unserer Republik. Die Verfolgung der Zeugen Jehovas in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1990* (2nd ed.) (Berlin 2003). Hans-Hermann Dirksen: “Jehovah’s Witnesses Under Communist

Remembrance versus Oblivion

The history of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Third Reich can be summarized as the endeavors of the adherents of a small religious group to stand firm for their Christian beliefs. Historians believe that no other religious group—apart from adherents of the Jewish religion—was persecuted more severely and brutally than Jehovah's Witnesses.⁴⁰ The reason for the severe persecution of the Witnesses can be seen in the fact that their belief was contrary to the totalitarian ideology of National Socialism.⁴¹ The Witnesses were not willing to compromise their faith to meet Nazi demands or to take part in Nazi activities, but to maintain their Christian neutrality with regard to all worldly or political questions. The fact that they could have been released from Gestapo prisons or concentration camps if they had been ready to renounce their faith shows that the Nazis' main goal was to break the faith of the Witnesses.

Until recently, Jehovah's Witnesses were not only victims of the Holocaust, but also victims of oblivion. Their persecution was marginalized and their fate was often neglected or simply forgotten in remembrance and on most Holocaust memorial sites. One of the reasons can be seen in the fact that their martyrdom was based on religious refusal and resistance; they were persecuted neither for biological or ethnical reasons, nor as resistance fighters. Because of this, some claim that Jehovah's Witnesses do not fit into the general commemorative culture. Others consider the main reason for oblivion to be intolerance or prejudice against the Witnesses.⁴² Michel Lecomte's observation is undoubtedly correct, that when teachers discuss the nature and scope of Nazi persecution, they frequently overlook the plight and the courage of the Witnesses.⁴³ But this situation can and should be revised, especially as the neglect in remembrance is not justified. The story of Jehovah's Witnesses raises important moral and ethical issues

Regimes," in Keston College (ed), *Religion, State & Society*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Oxford 2002), pp. 229-238.

⁴⁰ Detlef Garbe, "Verfolgung und Widerstand der Zeugen Jehovas im Nationalsozialismus," in Gerhard Besier/Clemens Vollnhals (eds), *Repression und Selbstbehauptung: Die Zeugen Jehovas unter der NS- und der SED-Diktatur* (Berlin 2003), pp. 15ff.

⁴¹ Jean-Michel Lecomte, *Enseigner l'Holocauste au 21e siecle* (Conseil de l'Europe, Strasbourg 2001), pp. 39f.

⁴² Sybil Milton, "Jehovah's Witnesses as forgotten victims," in Hans Hesse (ed.): *Persecution and Resistance of Jehovah's Witnesses During the Nazi Regime 1933-1945* (Chicago 2001) pp. 17-22

⁴³ Jean-Michel-Lecomte, *Expert contribution, in Teaching about the Holocaust and the history of genocide in the 21st century* (Council of Europe, Strasbourg, September 2003), p. 8.

about intolerance, peer pressure, personal responsibility, respect for human life, and the law of conscience. The Witnesses' response to tyranny demonstrates how the spirit can triumph in the face of prejudice, propaganda, and persecution. The history of the persecution and resistance of Jehovah's Witnesses is worthy of being researched and remembered, as it teaches proper values and illustrates the meaning of standing firm for faith and conviction. In recent years some historians and sociologists have started research projects, which have revealed more and more notable facts about the Witness' history. The Witnesses have themselves realized the necessity to teach remembrance and prevent the memory of remaining eyewitnesses from oblivion: "Remembrance prevents repetition."⁴⁴ Thus quite some material—brochures, oral history documentations, and videos to be used in schools and universities—have been prepared to give pupils, students, and scholars the opportunity to get to know more about these historical facts. To conclude this essay you will therefore find a short overview about available video-media about persecution and resistance of Jehovah's Witnesses:

- "Bei uns werdet ihr nichts zu lachen haben ..." Die Verfolgung der Zeugen Jehovas im Nationalsozialismus und in der DDR, Teil II. Film von Günter Hoffmann und Loretta Walz, 36 min., Berlin 2000.
- Faithful Under Trials. Jehovah's Witnesses in the Soviet Union. Watchtower Society, 54 min, Brooklyn, USA 2001.
- "Fear not." Persecution and Resistance of Jehovah's Witnesses under the Nazi Regime. Drei Linden Film by Stefanie Krug and Fritz Poppenberg, 92 min., Berlin 1997. [„Fürchtet euch nicht.“ Verfolgung und Widerstand der Zeugen Jehovas unter dem Nazi-Regime. Drei Linden Film von Stefanie Krug und Fritz Poppenberg, 92 min., Berlin 1997.]
- "Follow Me." Jehovah's Witnesses under the East German Regime. Drei Linden Film by Fritz Poppenberg, 58 min., Berlin 1999. [“Folget mir nach“ - Jehovas Zeugen unter dem DDR-Regime, Drei Linden Film von Fritz Poppenberg, 58 min., Berlin 1999.]
- "He just said No." Leopold Engleitner: His way was different. A Bernhard Rammerstorfer film, 92 min., Austria 1997. [“Nein statt Ja und Amen.“ Leopold Engleitner: Er ging einen anderen Weg, Eine Bernhard Rammerstorfer Filmproduktion, 61 min., Niederwaldkirchen 1999.]
- Jehovah's Witnesses Stand Firm Against Nazi Assault. Watchtower Society, 28 min., class-room edition, Brooklyn USA 1996. [Standhaft trotz Verfolgung. Jehovas Zeugen unter dem NS-

⁴⁴ Wolfram Slupina, "Das Wissen der Zeitzeugen vor dem Vergessen bewahren," in Gerhard Besier/Clemens Vollnhals (eds), *Repression und Selbstbehauptung: Die Zeugen Jehovas unter der NS- und der SED-Diktatur* (Berlin 2003), pp. 15ff.

Regime. Wachturm-Gesellschaft, 28 min., Verkürzte Fassung für Schulen, mit Texten und Unterrichtsvorschlägen, Selters / Taunus 1998.]

- Purple Triangles. A Starlock Pictures Production by Martin Smith, 25 min., Distributed by Watchtower Society Netherlands, London 1991.
- Spurensuche mit Gertrud Pötzinger. Film von Loretta Walz, 8 min., Berlin 1993.
- "The Girl with the Purple Triangle." How 18-year old Hermi survived the concentration camp. Survivor drama documentary. Drei Linden Film by Fritz Poppenberg, 49 min., Berlin 2004. ["Das Mädchen mit dem lila Winkel." Wie die 18-jährige Hermi das Konzentrationslager Überlebte. Drei Linden Film von Fritz Poppenberg. Reihe Verfolgung und Widerstand der Zeugen Jehovas unter dem Nazi-Regime, 49 min., Berlin 2003.]
- "Unter Jehovas Schutz." Zwei Freundinnen berichten darüber, wie sie mit Hilfe ihres Glaubens das KZ Ravensbrück überlebten. Film von Fritz Poppenberg, 28 min., Berlin 1988.
- "Wir hatten uns nichts vorzuwerfen." Die Verfolgung der Zeugen Jehovas im Nationalsozialismus, Teil I. Film von Günter Hoffmann und Loretta Walz, 33 min., Berlin 2001.

Austrian Roma and Sinti and the Holocaust by Gerhard Baumgartner

The origins of Austrian Roma and Sinti

In 1674 Count Christof Batthyány issued a Letter of Protection for a group of Roma under the leadership of their voivode Martin Sarközi for his estates in the southern part of the Austrian province of Burgenland. This is the first record of permanent residence of Roma within the boundaries of present day Austria. Up until 1938 there were 130 smaller or larger Roma settlements in Burgenland. After the deportation and annihilation of the Burgenland Roma in various concentration camps, these settlements were nearly completely destroyed. Only about 20% of the Burgenland Roma survived the Holocaust. The Roma and Sinti currently living in Austria belong to different linguistic and cultural subgroups. Among them the Burgenland Roma, who have been settling in this area since the 16th century, form the oldest sedentary group of Roma in Austria.

The first Sinti groups migrated from Bavaria and Bohemia into Austria around the middle of the 19th century. Many of them lived as migrant traders and craftsman but numerous Sinti families also owned houses and small enterprises in Austrian cities. Traditionally they keep separate from the Roma and speak a dialect with many German loanwords.

The so-called Lovara groups, originating from the border regions of Slovakia, Hungary and the Carpatho-Ukraine, also immigrated into Austria in the 19th century. Originally living mainly as horse dealers, many of them turned into carpet and antiques dealers, or into market stall operators after the Second World War. Some Lovara moved from Eastern Europe to Austria after 1945 and especially 1956.

The majority Roma living in Austria today came with the influx of immigrant workers from south-eastern Europe, from Serbia, the Vojvodina, Macedonia, and Turkey during the 1960s and 1970s and have since then found a new home in Austria. From their different countries of origin, they brought new variants of Romanes to Austria. There are no exact figures as to how many Roma and Sinti are living in Austria today. Estimates by cultural organisations and representatives of the minority vary between 10,000 and 40,000 Romanes speakers in present day Austria.

Stigmatisation and persecution

Between the wars, Austrian „gypsies“ were repeatedly counted and registered. When in the wake of the world wide economic depression many Austrian Roma lost their sources of income and had to rely on social welfare from the communities, the public climate against “gypsies” became more aggressive. This financial burden for the communities was one of the reasons for the “gypsy-conference” held by municipal representatives in Oberwart in 1933. In the presence of representatives from the regional government of Burgenland municipal representatives suggested to deport the allegedly “anti-social gypsies” to an island in the Pacific Ocean or to get rid of them otherwise.

Over centuries, the police used to stigmatise persons, whom they regarded as unconventional, vagrant, poor and therefore asocial, criminal and objectionable, as “gypsies”. And if these persons also spoke a “gypsy dialect”, the verdict was final, no matter how these persons earned their living and whether they were sedentary or not. “Gypsies” were defined by the authorities as persons, to whom they ascribed a certain ethnic identity and belonged to an impoverished segment of rural society, whether travelling or not, or who belonged to a socially defined group with unwanted behaviour, which was regarded as an ethnic group or race. This concept thus became a handy instrument of the authorities for the wilful persecution of all persons, who did not or could not adapt to the norms of bourgeois society. The self-definition of the individuals was of no interest whatsoever. The concept of “the gypsy” as encountered in historical documents of the inter-war period has thus to be understood exclusively as a stigmatising term, the definition of which rested solely in the hands of the authorities. During the period of National Socialism, the definitions of „pure gypsies“, „half-breeds“ and „migrants after a gypsy fashion“ as proposed by “gypsy”-researchers were only to play a very marginal role in Austria. It was rather the “gypsy” concept developed and enforced by police authorities during the inter-war years, which became the determining concept for the persecution of “gypsies” during the period of National Socialism. One - i.e. the police, the political authorities and social workers - simply “knew”, who was a “gypsy”. An analysis of deportation decrees shows, that in some instances even in spite of contradicting orders from Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler the police authorities stuck to their own criteria in determining, who was to be sent to a labour camp, who was to be deported to an extermination camp, and who was not.

Austria' s Occupation 1938 and Forced Labour

Immediately after the occupation of Austria in 1939, the "gypsies“ were denied the right to vote. And they were forbidden to play music in public

- one of their main sources of income -, and when some "gypsies" from Burgenland wrote a letter of protest to the Government of the German Reich in Berlin; they were arrested and deported to a concentration camp. Starting in May 1938, children from "Gypsy"-families were forbidden to attend public schools. 232 "gypsies" were taken to concentration camps already in 1938. One year later the criminal police ordered 3,000 "able bodied men and women" to be deported to concentration camps. Himmler needed workers in the concentration camps in order to build up an SS-owned industry for war purposes. The authorities in Berlin were convinced, that the "gypsies" were not gainfully employed. This was certainly not the case: because of the war-induced boom in the arms industry, many "gypsies" had meanwhile found work in industrial plants, on building sites, or as agricultural labourers. Even the head of the Styrian provincial government, "Gauleiter" Uiberreither, criticised the consequences of this decision but supported it on racist grounds. "Although these are irregularly employed gypsies, who neither have a criminal record nor are unwilling to work or a burden to society in general, I will decree their placement in work camps, based on the consideration that a gypsy is always anti-social and stand outside of the 'Volksgemeinschaft' (the community of the people)."

It was through these arrests, that the dynamic process, which finally led to the murder of the majority of Austrian gypsies, was set in motion. In this way the criminal police and the social service departments created so-called "necessities", which instigated the National Socialists to take measures, each of which pointed towards mass murder.

Forced labour camps existed in Vienna, in the province of Styria in Leoben, Graz, Triebendorf, Unzmarkt, Zeltweg, St.Georgen ob Judenburg and St. Lambrecht bei Neuberg, in the province of Upper Austria in Weyer, in the province of Salzburg in Maxglan and in the province of Lower Austria in Hinterberg, Preg, Karlhof in Kammer, Fischamend and Groß-Globnitz. After the arrests of those Roma and Sinti able to work, many hundreds of children and dependants remained behind without supervision. This caused a significant rise in social welfare costs for the local communities, which again served as argument for the allegedly asocial lifestyle of the Roma and Sinti. On the 17th of October 1939 Himmler decreed, that all Roma and Sinti were forbidden to leave their place of residence. Since these restricted Roma and Sinti again had to be maintained by the local communities, the latter now began to campaign for their deportation. The Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office) finally advised to set up "Gypsy Camps" such as the one at Lackenbach.

“Gypsy Camp Lackenbach”

On The 23rd of November 1940, the so-called „Gypsy Camp Lackenbach“ was set up on the premises of a former manorial farm. The camp was administered by the headquarters of the criminal police in Vienna, the costs were divided between the district administrations of Bruck an der Leitha, Eisenstadt, Lilienfeld, Oberpullendorf, St. Pölten and Wiener Neustadt and the municipal administration of the city of Vienna in proportion to the number of prisoners coming from the respective districts. The interned Gypsies had to live under the most primitive conditions in the barns and stables of the former manorial farm and were used as forced labourers in various local enterprises. Under “normal” conditions the number of people interned at Lackenbach varied from 200 to 900 Persons, about one third of them being children. The peak number of 2,335 prisoners was reached on the 1st of November 1941. Out of the 4,000 Gypsies interned at Lackenbach about 2,000 were deported to the ghetto in Łodz/Litzmannstadt and the extermination camp at Chelmno/Kulmhof in autumn 1941. Only 300 to 400 inmates survived to see the liberation of camp Lackenbach by Soviet troops in April 1945.

In spite of the unbelievably horrible standards of living, hygiene and alimentation, the prisoners at camp Lackenbach were coerced to carry out forced labour. They were rented out to various enterprises such as forest domains, agricultural manors, farms, brickyards and a silkworm farm in Falkenau or were ordered to work on road construction projects by the camp administration. Their wages were handed over to the camp administration, the inmates themselves getting only between 5 and 10 Reichsmark per month as “pocket money”. The slightest violation of camp discipline was severely punished by severe beatings, endless roll-calls in the yard and withdrawal of food. In 1942, the catastrophic living conditions led to an epidemic outbreak of typhoid fever, which killed many of the camp's inmates. Between 1940 and 1945, altogether 237 persons died at camp Lackenbach.

Deportations to the Ghetto in Łodz/Litzmannstadt

On The 1s October 1941, Himmler decreed the deportation of 5,000 mostly Austrian Roma and Sinti to the ghetto at Łodz/Litzmannstadt. As a rule, whole families were deported together. Between the 4th and The 8th of November 1941 daily trains with 100 victims, each left Austria for Łodz/Litzmannstadt each transport was accompanied by an officer and 20 guards of the reserve police battalion 172. 2,000 Roma and Sinti were deported to Łodz/Litzmannstadt from Lackenbach. The costs of the deportations were split between the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, the Reich Security Main Office, in Berlin, and regional social welfare

administrations. Persons to be deported were selected according to whether they were fit for work or not. Those who “did not burden the social welfare” were allowed to stay.

Among the 5,007 Roma and Sinti deported to Łódź/Litzmannstadt were 1,130 males, and 1,188 females. According to an estimate by the German ghetto administration, only 1,925 persons were able to work. Apart from the 2318 adults, the five transports included also 2,689 children, comprising more than half of the total number of deportees. Out of the total of 5,007 deported, to Łódź/Litzmannstadt, 613 died during the first weeks - most of them probably during an epidemic of typhoid fever. In December 1941 and January 1942, all Roma and Sinti still alive by then were transferred to the extermination camp at Chelmno/Kulmhof and gassed.

In March 1942 the office of the criminal police in Graz ordered all inquiries of concerned relatives to be forwarded to the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office) and to discourage further requests with the argument, that in the case of all persons resettled to Łódź/Litzmannstadt visiting rights were not granted. By that time all Austrian Roma and Sinti deported to Łódź/Litzmannstadt had already died.

Deportations to Auschwitz-Birkenau

In 1942, the local administrations in the then provinces of Styria and Niederdonau urged the deportation of the remaining Roma and Sinti from Austrian camps. On the 16th of January 1943 Himmler' ordered the deportation of Austrian Roma and Sinti to Auschwitz-Birkenau. The deportations included not only “racially pure” Roma and Sinti, but also persons of mixed origin and “Gypsy-like persons”. Some soldiers of mixed origin from the region of Burgenland who were actively serving on the front, were ordered to go on home-leave, then arrested and deported. In the beginning of April 1943 altogether 2,700 Austrian Roma and Sinti were packed into boxcars and transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they had to live under horrible circumstances in a specially cordoned off section, the so-called “Gypsy camp”.

The camp book of the „Gypsy camp“ at Auschwitz-Birkenau registered 10,649 female and 10,094 male prisoners. Two thirds of the imprisoned Roma and Sinti came from Germany and Austria, over 20 percent from Bohemia and close to 6 percent from Poland. Sick and weak prisoners were dying every day and repeatedly larger numbers of sick prisoners were sent to the gas chambers, among them Austrian Roma and Sinti on the 12th May 1943. By the end of 1943, 70 percent of the prisoners of the “Gypsy camp” had either died or been killed. Towards the end of July

1944 all inmates of the "Gypsy camp" at Auschwitz-Birkenau, who were still thought to be able to work, were transferred to other concentration camps and used as forced labour in industrial plants. On The 2nd of August 1944, the SS surrounded the "Gypsy camp" and in the following night, all prisoners living in the "Gypsy camp" were murdered in the gas chambers.

The restitution of confiscated property

In the period between the two World Wars there were 130 Roma settlements in Burgenland, usually situated at the fringe of the villages, inhabited by 30 to 300 persons. Most of these settlements were to be found in the districts of Oberwart and Güssing in the southern part of the province. After the deportation of the Roma and Sinti population into work camps or concentration camps these settlements were, with very few exceptions, completely destroyed. The houses were pulled down or simply burned down. Houses of Roma and Sinti families erected on private plots within the villages were usually spared. The compact Roma settlements originated from the 19th century. They had usually been erected on common land, but the buildings themselves belonged to the Roma and Sinti. Most of them were not aware that such a "superaedificium" could be entered in the official property register. After 1945, the survivors of the concentration camps were thus unable to file claims for their destroyed property, since their ownership could not be proved.

In many villages the property and private belongings of the deported local Roma and Sinti families was auctioned off among the village population by the community administration. The houses were pulled down and usable materials were sold off together with the furniture and the private belongings of the deportees. Some Roma and Sinti families - like everybody else at the time - used to buy everyday necessities in local shops on credit. After these debts had been paid off, the money was transferred to the regional social welfare administration, which used the money to finance work camps or even deportations. Many Sinti and Lovara families had invested their savings in jewels, gold, and silver coins, which were confiscated on arrest. Since the survivors after 1945 could not present receipts for theses confiscated valuables, they were never compensated for any of them.

When surviving Roma and Sinti filed so-called „Opferfürsorge“ claims (claims for „victim's welfare“ payments) they often met with prejudiced mayors, who summarily disqualified the claimants as "lazy" and "asocial". In 1947, the mayor of a village in Burgenland gave the following reasons for his rejection of a welfare claim: "The claimant mentioned above does not need any support. She is single, has no

dependants, does not have to look after anybody, and is healthy and able to work. If willing, she is able to make a living without any further problems. She has free lodgings in a community building and in case she falls ill, the general welfare system and the community will have to cover fees of doctors and hospitals anyway. Any support for a young healthy person would only create unnecessary costs and is decidedly rejected." Only years later, when a new mayor had been elected, was her claim granted.

The „Opferfürsorgegesetz“, the victim’s welfare bill of 1947, created two categories of victims. Resistance fighters and persons persecuted for political reasons were issued a so-called “Amtsbescheinigung” (an “official legitimisation”), which under certain circumstances entitled its bearer to claim a pension. Persons, who “for reasons of descent, religion or nationality... had suffered substantial damages”, were only issued a so-called “Opferausweis”, a “victim’s legitimisation”, which granted the bearer privileged access to communal flats and offered some tax and trade privileges. It was only after 1949, that victims of racial, religious and national persecution were entitled to receive the “Amtsausweis” if they had been imprisoned in a concentration camp. Since the imprisonment at Lackenbach and the other work camps was not considered a concentration camp imprisonment, many Austrian Roma and Sinti received very small or no restitution payments whatsoever.

Only after the revised version of the „Opferfürsorgegesetz“, the victim’s welfare bill of 1947, had been passed by the Austrian Parliament in 1961 did the survivors of Lackenbach and other work camps received compensation payments for the “restriction of their personal freedom” amounting to 350 Austrian Shillings for each month spent in camp. Survivors of concentration camps received 860 Austrian Shillings for each month of imprisonment. The imprisonment suffered in camp Lackenbach or other work camps has never been officially recognised as concentration camp imprisonment up to now. But after 1988 survivors of these camps were finally issued a so-called “Amtsbescheinigung” (an “official legitimisation”) if they had suffered a minimum of six months' imprisonment, enabling them to claim, under certain circumstances, a so-called “Opferfürsorgerente” (a “victim's welfare pension”). The claimant had to be needy, encumbered in his ability to work, and had to have a clean criminal record. But because of the discriminatory legislation in the period between the two World Wars, and even after 1945, many Roma and Sinti did have criminal records, e.g. for “vagabondage”. In cases of deportation to the concentration camps under the pretext of “asocial behaviour”, the Roma and Sinti could not claim a pension neither. For many Roma and Sinti the required evidence for their reduced ability to work proved to be an insurmountable obstacle, since official medical examiners - many of whom had

themselves been involved with the Nazi system - were reluctant to certify physical handicaps of former camp inmates. In cases of obvious handicaps, the medical examiners often denied that these might be induced by or related to the treatment suffered in the camps.

Memorial Activities

Following an initiative by the Cultural Association of Austrian Roma, a memorial for the Roma and Sinti killed, interned in, and deported from the "Gypsy camp Lackenbach" was erected on the 6th of October 1984 near the former campsite. The memorial created by the architect Matthias Szauer was unveiled by the former Austrian president Dr. Rudolf Kirchschläger. At that time, the memorial at Lackenbach was the only large memorial in Austria to commemorate the Roma and Sinti victims of National Socialism. Survivors of the camp themselves, as well as relatives and descendants of the victims come here to honour the murdered and deported members of their families. The buildings of the former "Gypsy camp Lackenbach" no longer exist. After destroying the remains in the 1970s, the area has partially been built over with family homes.

In 1990, 50 years after the first Roma and Sinti had been imprisoned in Lackenbach members of the Cultural Association of Austrian Roma organised a memorial ceremony at the memorial. With the support of the provincial government of Burgenland and the Community of Lackenbach, these memorial services have become an annual event, usually celebrated in late autumn.

On the 27th of April 1994, 49 years after the liberation of the concentration camp at Mauthausen by troops of the Allied Forces, a plaque commemorating the fate of the Roma and Sinti inmates of Mauthausen was unveiled by the Sinti representative Johann Kugler, and the Lovara representative Mongo Stojka. This became possible through the support and good co-operation with the International Camp Committee Mauthausen and the Austrian Ministry for the Interior. Together with numerous national and international partners, the Cultural Association of Austrian Roma organises an international commemoration ceremony at the site of the former concentration camp at Mauthausen every year.

On the 9th of May 1988, at Mauthausen, a memorial for all the Roma and Sinti victims of National Socialism was handed over to the general public. The ceremony was attended by former Austrian Minister for the Interior Dr. Karl Schlögl and numerous national and international political, diplomatic and clerical dignitaries. Together with the monuments for other groups among the victims the new memorial

created by the sculptor, Josef Pillhofer is part of the official "Memorial Site Concentration Camp Mauthausen". This separate memorial for Roma and Sinti at Mauthausen was the result of a long-standing co-operation between the Cultural Association of Austrian Roma and the German Central Council of Sinti and Roma in Heidelberg.

Each year, on the 2nd and 3rd of August, the Cultural Association of Austrian Roma organises a commemorative excursion to the site of the former concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Together with many Roma and Sinti from Austria and from all over the world the participants assemble in remembrance of the largest single extermination action of the "Gypsy camp". On the 2nd of August 1944 SS-units surrounded the "Gypsy camp" and in the night to the 3rd of August the last 3,000 prisoners still living in the "Gypsy camp" Auschwitz-Birkenau" were murdered in the gas chambers. These memorial activities of the Cultural Association of Austrian Roma at Auschwitz- Birkenau, as well as those at Buchenwald, are realised in close co-operation with the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma in Heidelberg. Memorial activities such as these commemorative excursions, memorial ceremonies as well as public lectures informing about the fate of the Roma and Sinti, especially under the National Socialist regime, belong to the central tasks of the Cultural Association of Austrian Roma.

On The 24th of June 2000, a memorial was erected in St. Pantaleon-Weyer in the province of Upper Austria, on the site of a „Gypsy internment camp“ between January 1941 and November 1944. In December 1985 followed the unveiling of a memorial on Ignaz Rieder Kai in Salzburg, the site of the former work camp Maxglan. Since the unveiling of the monument no further memorial service has been held in Maxglan. At the sites of many other internment and work camp, there are no memorials or plaques to commemorate the fate of Roma and Sinti. The Cultural Association of Austrian Roma will continue to campaign for the establishment of further monuments and regular memorial services on site.

Official recognition as a national minority

At present the Austrian Roma are organised and represented by four different organisations. The first Roma organisation, the "Romaverein Oberwart" was founded in 1989 in the city of Oberwart, in the eastern province of Burgenland. Situated in the central region of Roma settlement in Austria, the organisation concentrates on projects for unemployed Roma in the region, on developing teaching materials, publishing bilingual literature and on conducting extramural education classes for Roma children. "Ketane", another regional Roma organisation represents the Roma in and around the city of Linz in the

Austrian province of Upper Austria. In 1991, two Roma organisations were founded in Vienna. The organisation "Romano Centro" represents Roma of Austrian origin as well as Roma, which have come to Austria from Central- and Eastern European countries since the 1960ies. Apart from cultural projects, the organisation concentrates on legal advice work and the language projects. The "Cultural Association of Austrian Roma" regards itself as the representative of all Austrian Roma.

On The 16th of March 1992, the Cultural Association of Austrian Roma handed over a petition supported by the Roma Association of Oberwart to the members of the Austrian government and the national assembly, concerning the recognition of Roma and Sinti in Austria. After a hearing of Roma and Sinti representatives by members of parliament from all political groups, the petition was introduced in parliament by Ernst Piller (SPÖ - Austrian Socialdemocratic Party) and Paul Kiss (ÖVP - Austrian People's Party) on the 16th of September 1992.

Motion

We ask the government

to continue its efforts for the recognition of the Roma and Sinti of Austrian citizenship as an ethnic group and to bring these efforts to an end as soon as possible

to take measures by which all kinds of discrimination against Roma and Sinti can be eliminated

to offer information possibilities for all public offices and members of the general public in order to reduce the discrimination of Roma and Sinti in everyday life.

On The 15th of October 1992, the motion concerning the recognition of Roma and Sinti as an ethnic group was unanimously passed by the representatives of all four parliamentary parties.

The federal chancellery first set up an advisory board (Volksgruppenbeirat) composed of representatives of Roma organisations, individuals from the Roma and Sinti ethnic groups, representatives of all political parties in parliament, ministries, provinces as well as researchers and historians. As acting head of the Cultural Association of Austrian Roma, Rudolf Sarközi had meetings with numerous politicians of all political parties, with scientists, and numerous administrators from all ministries involved, and the constitution desk at the federal chancellery. During the often emotionally fraught discussions the advisory board had to clarify how the existing legislation on ethnic

groups could be applied to Roma and Sinti and whether recognition was altogether desirable. After the first talks in which the Sinti representatives had decided against recognition as an ethnic group, the Association of Austrian Sinti was founded in the town of Villach in Carinthia, which agreed to recognition.

On The 16th of December 1993, the Austrian national assembly recognised the Austrian Roma and Sinti by unanimous vote as "Roma ethnic group" (Roma serving here as an inclusive term for different groups of Roma and Sinti living in Austria). On the 23rd of December 1993 the decision was officially published as governmental decree Nr. 895.

On the 5th of September 1995 the Roma "Volksgruppenbeirat", the ethnic group's advisory board met for its constituting session. For the first time in their history the Austrian Roma, thus have a legal framework that enables members of the ethnic group to campaign for their legitimate rights. The Roma advisory board consists of eight members, four of which are nominated by the Roma and Sinti organisations. The other four members do not belong to the ethnic group. Since no Member of Parliament of any political party was a member of the Roma ethnic group, representatives of the three largest political parties represented in parliament were nominated onto the board. The Roman-Catholic church nominates one member. The members of the advisory board elected Rudolf Sarközi, acting head of the Cultural Association of Austrian Roma, as their chairman. In the elections for the office in May 2000 Rudolf Sarközi was confirmed in his position for another period of four years.

The Oberwart Bomb

During the night from the 4th to The 5th of February 1995, a bomb placed on the road before their houses killed four inhabitants of the Roma settlement in Oberwart. Peter Sarközi (27), Josef Simon (40) and the brothers Erwin Horvath (18) and Karl Horvath (22) had wanted to remove a sign, which had been placed on the road to the Roma settlement. The sign carried the inscription "Roma back to India!" and was a deviously disguised bomb. The bomb attack at Oberwart was the first racially motivated assassination in Austria since 1945.

At the state funeral, the Austrian president Dr. Thomas Klestil delivered the official eulogy for the four victims. The members of the Federal Government, the National Assembly, the Provincial Government, and the Provincial Assembly attended the funeral service on the 11th of February 1995. Accompanied by thousands of mourning friends and sympathisers the four victims buried at the cemetery in Oberwart.

On The 1st of October 1997, the perpetrator Franz Fuchs was stopped by a traffic patrol for a car-control. The man set off a bomb that tore off both of his hands. During interrogations and a search of his home, it became clear, that Franz Fuchs was the long sought for bomber. He had terrorised Austria since 1993 with a series of racially motivated attacks with letter- and other bombs. On the 10th of March 1999 he was sentenced to life imprisonment and committed suicide soon after. In January 2000 a memorial, commemorating the four victims was erected at the site of the bomb attack.

The Austrian political establishment as well as the general public unanimously demonstrated its solidarity with the victims of the Oberwart bomb attack. It was for the first time, that the majority of Austrian citizens had come out in clear defense of Austria's Roma population in times of harrasement and persecution. Official recognition as a national minority in 1993 was soon followed by political recognition. As a renowned functionary of the SPÖ (Austrian Socialdemocratic Party), Rudolf Sarközi was elected as member of the district council for the 19th district of Vienna in 2001. With Rudolf Sarközi, for the first time in the history of Austria, a member of the Roma and Sinti groups has been elected into a representative body. In addition to a number of Austrian decorations Sarközi was awarded the SOLIDAR Silver Rose for outstanding achievement for civil society development and in bringing about a fairer and more just society.

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Le SAMUDARIPEN (l'Holocauste des Roms) en Roumanie par Vasile Ionescu

Motto: " On ne tue qu'au nom du Dieu et des Ses socies (Emil Cioran)

L'Holocauste est devenu une souffrance abstraite. Comme autrefois pour « la peste noire », on développe une alliance de complicités dont la préoccupation est d'écrire une histoire de déculpabilisation pour effacer les traces de la plus barbare des atrocités de l'Humanité. En Europe de l'Est et dans les Balkans, la solitude inconnue de la mémoire et de l'histoire des victimes est mise sur le compte de quelques psychopathes pour innocenter ainsi tout un système social et pour ne pas incriminer l'irresponsabilité de ceux qui y ont souscrit, par le silence et l'indifférence.

Reprenant les prérogatives de la divinité, l'impunité de l'Etat criminel conserve l'essence nocive des mentalités qui ont fait éclater la Shoah et le Samudaripen, en maintenant la culture millénaire du génocide européen.

En Roumanie, une courageuse recherche datant de l'automne 2003 réalisée par l'organisation non-gouvernementale « Centre des politiques publiques » est édifiante pour la démonstration de la perpétuation de l'aliénation éthique de la société roumaine et de la nécessité de refonder la conscience individuelle et la mémoire collective.

- seulement 26% des gens qui ont répondu sont d'accord que les autorités roumaines ont participé à l'extermination des juifs, 49% préfèrent ne pas répondre (s'abstenir) et 25% considèrent que l'Etat roumain n'a pas été impliqué. Parmi eux, 36% considèrent que la souffrance du peuple juif est un châtimeur de Dieu, 27% que les juifs exagèrent les persécutions auxquelles ils ont été soumis et 35% préfèrent ne pas répondre.
- Pareil, en ce qui concernent les Roms, seulement 7% des personnes interrogées accepteraient qu'il y ait des Roms dans leurs familles, 36% considèrent que les Roms devraient être forcés de vivre séparés du reste de la société, 31% qu'il devrait exister des magasins et des restaurants dans lesquels l'accès des Roms ne soit pas permis, 48% que l'Etat devrait prendre des mesures pour arrêter la croissance du nombre des Roms. Aussi, 25% des répondants considèrent que les autorités roumaines n'ont pas participé à l'extermination des Roms et 53% préfèrent ne pas répondre.

Le paradoxe de l'incohérence est que 95% des répondants considèrent que le crime devrait être puni en appliquant la peine capitale/de mort.
« Moraliser est facile, fonder la morale est difficile » (Schopenhauer).

Quelques distinctions et similitudes préliminaires sont nécessaires:

- l'extermination dans les camps de concentration de l'Est et des Balkans, même si elle n'a pas eu les dimensions d'Auschwitz, a été organisée sur les mêmes bases idéologiques, planifications bureaucratiques, méthodes industrielles et qualificatives raciales.
- La reconnaissance de la particularité de la Shoah en rapport avec le Samudaripen a en vue « la solution finale » et donc anti-juive et ne met pas en cause le tragique destin commun, le nombre de victimes (d'ordre des millions pour les juifs et des centaines de milles pour les Roms), le traitement différencié.
- L'Holocauste n'a pas été un accident de l'histoire, son émergence étant visible dans les politiques « génocidaires » contre les Roms dans plusieurs pays de l'Europe dans la même idée de l'exclusion économique
- Le Samudaripen doit aussi inclure, au moins dans le cas de la Roumanie, la responsabilité de celle-ci devant le fait que les Roms ont supporté la plus longue période d'esclavage de l'histoire de l'humanité.

« Que les Tsiganes nomades et semi-nomades soit internés dans les camps des travaux forcés. Là-bas on leur change les vêtements, on les rase, on leur coupe les cheveux et on les stérilise. On s'en débarrasse dès la première génération. Les sédentaires vont être stérilisés à domicile pour que dans une génération on se débarrasse d'eux aussi », déclarait en 1941 Ghe. Facaoaru, un des coordinateurs de l'école d'eugénie raciale en réfléchissant sur la famille et le statut biopolitique roumain.

Une législation anti-juive avait été adoptée en 1938 par le gouvernement Goga-Cuza, sans qu'elle soit abrogée par les gouvernements ultérieurs. En novembre 1940, le Ministère de l'Intérieur sur recommandation du Ministère de la Santé, interdisait aux Roms « nomades » le déplacement en invoquant la raison qu'ils transmettent le typhus. Les documents des archives attestent que le 24 mars 1942 en Roumanie un recensement des Roms a été fait par les organes de la police et la gendarmerie, en vue de préparer l'opération de déportation, mais je n'ai découvert aucun résultat de ce recensement ni dans les archives des institutions centrales, ni dans les institutions qui leur étaient subordonnées et qui avaient enregistré les Roms.

Un décret royal de 1942 désignait les critères de déportation et de spoliation. On a commencé par la confiscation des biens par le Centre national de « roumanisation ».

Après, les aliments ont été rationalisés pour les Juifs et les Roms, pour les Roms encore plus que pour les Juifs. La sélection des indésirables se faisait par catégories de moralité, criminalité et critères économiques etc., mais ces critères n'étaient pas suffisants pour empêcher la déportation.

Les Roms « nomades » ont été les premiers à être touchés par les persécutions par l'Ordre No 70S/1942 de la présidence du Conseil qui a ordonné leur déportation en Transnistrie, sans aucune exception. Le nombre et l'identité de ces derniers vont rester à jamais méconnus, une grande partie d'entre eux étant exterminés immédiatement. Radu Lecca, le représentant du gouvernement d'Antonescu pour les problèmes des minorités, déclara dans une Note (D.C.F.R.J., volume V, p. 541) que les 20,000 roms évacués dans la commune de Covaliovka ont eu ce sort : « 11000 soulevés et fusillés à la gare de Trihatca le 24 décembre 1942, 7000 sont morts de exantimaticus, 1500 retournés au pays ».

Le 11 août l'inspecteur général écrivait au ministre de l'Intérieur que la déportation des Roms nomades décrétée le 1 mai était presque finie par le fait que 84% d'entre eux était arrivés en Transnistrie. D'après une étude, pendant l'été 1942, 11,440 nomades ont été déportés dont 2,352 étaient des hommes, 2,365 femmes et 6,714 enfants. Suite à l'Ordre donné par Alexianu, le gouverneur de Transnistrie, le 29 juin 1942, les nomades ont été pillés, des milliers de chevaux et des charrettes ont été confisqués, y compris les biens et l'or. Les Roms « sédentaires » ont suivi : leur évacuation a commencé le 12 septembre 1942, pas avant que leur biens soient confisqués par les Commissions de « Roumanisation ». En l'espace de huit jours, 30,176 Roms sédentaires ont été déplacés en Transnistrie. Autres 18,260 Roms ont été recensés pour un prochain transport qui aurait dû arriver au printemps 1943, mais l'inattendu avancement du front a fait échouer ce plan.

Les Roms ont été envoyés au début dans les régions de Alexandrovca (Oceanov), Karanica et Covaliovka (Berezovca), Mancovca, Voitovca et Stunovca (Balta). Le décès par inanition n'était pas rare, la distribution des aliments étant insuffisante. Le typhus a tué des milliers de déportés. Certains sont morts de froid, étant peu habillés ou dénudés et d'autres transférés de l'autre côté du Nistre, où ils étaient tués par les Allemands. Un Décret datant du 22 septembre 1942 a prévu la condamnation à mort à ceux qui auraient frauduleusement retourné de Transnistrie et à des travaux forcés pour une période de 5 à 25 ans à ceux qui leur auraient facilité le retour, aux instigateurs, aux complices et à ceux qui gardaient des secrets.

En avril 1945, quand les citoyens roumains se trouvant sur le territoire U.R.S.S. ont été officiellement transférés en Roumanie à l'occasion des campements organisés par les autorités soviétiques, il a été considéré

que certains d'entre eux se sont enfuis en Roumanie, étaient décédés ou étaient restés en Union Soviétique. Le nombre de déportés reste toujours inconnu et varie entre 25,000 jusqu'à 300,000 de Roms. Des documents disparates parlent de 6,000 enfants Roms orphelins qui sont retournés au pays. La Commission roumaine pour les victimes de l'Holocauste a annoncé 36,000 de décédés mais d'autres estimations proposent des chiffres plus élevés. Dans les années '70, 36,000 survivants ont déposé des demandes de compensation sans que l'Etat Roumain reconnaisse officiellement la déportation en Transnistrie.

La peur que les horreurs du passé reviennent est encore vive dans l'esprit des survivants de l'Holocauste. Les stratégies de défense développées, depuis la négation de l'identité, la stigmatisation et jusqu'au style défensif et adaptatif, signalent une névrose qui a supposé l'éloignement de soi et le refuge dans l'oubli comme moyen de se sauver individuellement et marginaliser les souvenirs douloureux. La plus grande partie des Roms évitent encore de se recenser comme appartenant à la minorité Rom et gardent le silence sur ce qui est arrivé, en l'amenant avec eux dans la tombe.

Pour nous, la génération post-Holocauste, la réactualisation et la transmission du trauma s'est manifestée pour la plupart par le fait d'assumer et d'essayer de remédier aux expériences traumatisantes des parents. Pour les deux catégories, le caractère destructif du conflit entre estime et stigmatisation de soi, tels des projections de relation avec la société, a impliqué le refuge dans un enfer émotionnel dans lequel l'individu traverse, au fur et à mesure, la haine de soi, la fusion avec la culture stigmatisante, le racisme ethnique etc.

Après 1990, l'accession des Roms à la représentation publique et les recherches d'archives réalisées personnellement, nous ont relevé les dimensions du désastre et nous ont facilité la re-découverte de la mémoire collective. Le processus de sublimation du trauma de l'expérience historique de l'esclavage, de la déportation, du racisme contemporain si vif dans la mémoire sociale, tant pour la population majoritaire que pour la communauté ethno-culturelle Rom, est une urgence issue du besoin de témoigner et de remettre en discussion le passé. Parce que le passé non-assumé refuse de mourir et je cite Jacques Le Goff, « la mémoire essaie de sauver le passé seulement pour servir le présent et le futur ». Et...parce qu'accepter le passé assure la continuité et les références des générations futures. Ainsi, ceux qui oublient leur passé, vont être obligés de le répéter; et les victimes et les criminels.

« Résister là où on se trouve » par Michèle Fleury

Mesdames, Messieurs,

Nous avons récemment vécu en Suisse la résurgence de la mémoire de la Shoah ce qui nous a permis de fournir un considérable travail d'histoire sur les relations de la Suisse avec l'Allemagne national-socialiste, accompli par la Commission indépendante d'experts Suisse – Seconde Guerre mondiale. Il existe actuellement plusieurs projets pour intégrer toutes ces données dans les programmes d'histoire des écoles en Suisse. A Genève, une brochure a été diffusée dans les collèges traitant le thème des réfugiés en Suisse pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

Ma conférence est intitulée

Résister là où on se trouve Pourquoi ce titre ?

Je parlerai d'abord du mot résister – si on le prend dans le sens que ce mot a acquis en France, en Pologne, en Norvège et d'autres pays occupés par l'Allemagne nazie, la Suisse n'ayant pas été occupée n'a évidemment pas connu de mouvement de résistance nationale. Si on écarte ce mot, on pourrait dire qu'il y a des Suisses qui ont réagi et qui se sont opposés.

Où cela s'est-il passé – en Suisse même, mais aussi à l'étranger, là où ils se trouvaient pour des raisons professionnelles ou d'aide humanitaire, par exemple. Ces Suisses n'ont pas seulement réagi aux mesures des nazis, mais ont aussi dû s'opposer aux mesures prises par leur propre gouvernement qui a appliqué une politique extrêmement restrictive à l'accueil des réfugiés juifs et une politique de neutralité très stricte en ce qui concerne la destruction des Juifs en Europe.

La Suisse a refusé d'accorder l'asile politique aux réfugiés juifs, dès mars 1933 et jusqu'au 12 juillet 1944, ce qui a eu pour conséquence que les « émigrés » comme l'administration les appelait, n'obtenaient qu'un permis temporaire avec l'obligation de se trouver un nouveau pays d'accueil ; ils avaient l'interdiction de travailler et vivaient à la charge des associations d'entraide. C'est la petite communauté des Juifs suisses qui a dû subvenir aux besoins des émigrés juifs jusqu'en 1942 quand tous les réfugiés entrés illégalement ont été internés. La politique très restrictive de l'accueil a eu d'autres conséquences : en 1938, la négociation avec l'Allemagne pour faire marquer les passeports des Juifs allemands d'un signe distinctif, qui est devenu le tampon « J », ainsi que de nombreux refoulements à la frontière pendant la guerre. Et n'oublions pas les fermetures de la frontière suisse à plusieurs reprises dont je ne mentionnerai que deux dates significatives : 1938, après

l'annexion de l'Autriche et 1942, après le début des déportations en Europe occidentale.

Sans avoir de prétention scientifique, mais pour un exposé un peu plus clair, je distinguerai quatre cas d'opposition de la part de citoyens suisses à la politique de l'Allemagne national-socialiste :

- En Suisse même - beaucoup de personnes parmi la population se sont élevées contre les mesures que je viens d'évoquer, mais ils sont toujours restés minoritaires et n'ont pas pu influencer les décisions du gouvernement. La personne la plus connue qui ne s'est pas seulement opposée mais a également agi est Paul Grüninger, chef de la police du canton de St. Gall, canton limitrophe de l'Allemagne, qui a permis à plusieurs centaines de réfugiés juifs de passer la frontière en 1938/39 et leur a établi des permis de séjour. Découvert, il a été renvoyé, il a perdu ses droits à la retraite et a été condamné pour faux et usage de faux. Il n'a été véritablement réhabilité qu'en 1998. Pendant la guerre, des citoyens suisses ont aidé des réfugiés à atteindre la Suisse, les ont cachés et ont souvent subi les foudres de la loi pour avoir agi ainsi. Leur réhabilitation est en cours actuellement. A ce jour, seule une femme à Genève, a été innocentée. Je pense que ces réhabilitations qui sont toujours portées par des groupes de citoyens et souvent soutenues par des parlementaires sont très importantes pour la prise de conscience et l'enseignement du passé. Elles permettent de réactualiser des événements historiques, d'adopter une distance critique vis-à-vis d'une politique du passé, sans parler de la réparation du tort subi pour les personnes concernées.
- Une autre catégorie de Suisses qui s'est opposée au national-socialisme ce sont les jeunes gens qui ont rejoint la résistance française. On sait encore très peu de choses sur eux. Il faut inclure ici, les Suisses qui ont aidé la résistance française depuis le territoire suisse avec des transports d'armes, des caches en Suisse pour les résistants etc.
- Beaucoup de Suisses sont partis dans les pays occupés pendant la guerre pour des missions humanitaires, par exemple en tant que délégué du CICR, comme Frédéric Born à Budapest qui a étroitement collaboré avec Carl Lutz, que j'évoquerai ultérieurement ou en tant que personnel soignant comme Friedel Bohny-Reiter, envoyée par la Croix-Rouge suisse, Secours aux enfants au camp de Rivesaltes en France dont je vais parler plus longuement. Confrontées aux mesures de l'occupant mais aussi des gouvernements mêmes d'une brutalité exceptionnelle, ces personnes ont su réagir et s'opposer à la volonté d'anéantir le peuple juif pour sauver des hommes, des femmes et des enfants.

- Une quatrième catégorie est constituée par quelques diplomates suisses dont je ne nommerai que les plus connus, Franz-Rudolf von Weiss, consul à Cologne, René de Weck, ministre [la Suisse n'avait pas encore d'ambassadeurs à l'époque] à Bucarest et Carl Lutz, vice-consul à Budapest.

La particularité de ces personnalités c'est d'avoir agi seules. Elles n'étaient pas portées par le soutien de leur gouvernement et je dirais même pas par un large courant public, au contraire, elles ont souvent rencontré la désapprobation des autorités, ainsi que celles de leurs concitoyens, et après la guerre, elles sont restées dans l'ombre pendant des dizaines d'années. Une de ces personnes est

Friedel Bohny-Reiter

Elle a fait partie d'une organisation appelée Croix-Rouge suisse, Secours aux enfants. Cette organisation a déployé, entre 1939 et 1945, un vaste réseau d'aide aux enfants basé surtout au sud de la France, dans la zone dite « libre » : on y trouvait des homes et des colonies d'enfants, une maternité, des atelier-écoles dans les Cévennes, et une large organisation de distribution de vivres, etc. De surcroît, plusieurs infirmières ont travaillé dans les camps d'internement de Gurs et de Rivesaltes. Les autorités françaises – le régime de Vichy – avaient érigé des camps d'internement pour y détenir des étrangers – des Républicains espagnols, des Juifs de toutes les nationalités et les Gens du voyage, les Tsiganes. La gestion de ces camps était si mauvaise que plusieurs organisations humanitaires ont demandé d'y placer du personnel pour combattre le manque d'hygiène, la malnutrition, la promiscuité, les maladies de carence etc. C'est ainsi que plusieurs Suissesses ont été infirmières-résidentes dans ces camps. Friedel Bohny-Reiter est restée au camp de Rivesaltes de fin 1941 à fin 1942. Elle s'occupait de la distribution de nourriture et organisait des activités pour les enfants. Parfois il était possible de faire libérer détenus, et Friedel en a obtenus de nombreuses, notamment des enfants et des femmes qui ont été placés dans les différents homes et colonies du Secours aux enfants en France.

Quand le gouvernement de Vichy a donné son accord aux Allemands de déporter tous les Juifs étrangers de France, le camp de Rivesaltes est devenu un camp de rassemblement d'où partaient les trains de déportation, vers Drancy en zone occupée, point de départ pour Auschwitz. Entre le 11 août et le 20 octobre 1942, 2313 internés juifs ont été déportés depuis Rivesaltes à Auschwitz⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ Anne Boitel, *Le Camp de Rivesaltes 1941 – 1942. Du centre d'hébergement au « Drancy de la zone libre »*, Presses universitaires de Perpignan, 2001, p.265.

Friedel a assisté d'abord au retour au camp des gens qu'elle avait pu faire libérer. Même les enfants des colonies placées sous l'égide de la Croix-Rouge suisse ont été arrêtés et ramenés à Rivesaltes. Elle qui pendant son séjour en France a écrit tous les jours quelques lignes dans son journal intime, note le 31 août 1942 –

« Je suis triste et furieuse. Triste, parce qu'on doit faire chercher tous les enfants qui sont partis en colonie. Que de nouvelles souffrances. Combien de mères sont venues vers moi en sanglotant. »

Le 2 septembre – « Y a-t-il quelque chose de plus triste que de voir ces enfants ? Et de savoir qu'on ne peut rien faire pour eux. Ils doivent partir, ils doivent être remis. Puis elle apprend par le directeur du Secours suisse aux enfants, basé à Toulouse, qu'il a pu faire libérer les internés qui travaillaient avec elles. Mais elle a peur qu'il ne soit trop tard. « J'attrape le commandant [du camp], « Non, non ils partiront. » Je lui explique – rien à faire. « Apportez-moi un papier de la préfecture. » Tout à coup il réfléchit, il va vers le téléphone. Je l'entends demander la préfecture. Je suis sur des charbons ardents. Enfin. Nos gens et nos enfants peuvent rester. J'avais envie de lui sauter au cou. Mais je me suis contentée de lui offrir une cigarette. »

Le même jour à 6h du matin – « 1200 personnes sont présentes avec leurs bagages pour l'appel. Je trouve cinq enfants de nos colonies parmi eux. Pendant quatre heures je suis pendue au téléphone. Il sera difficile qu'on me remette les enfants sans papiers, ni attestations. Je les vois à l'appel, pâles et effarés. Il faut obtenir leur libération. La voiture du commandant est là. Je l'assiège une nouvelle fois. « Bon, dit-il, tâchez de les retirer et de les prendre dans votre baraque jusqu'à ce que votre papier arrive. »

Et un jour, elle écrit cette terrible phrase : « Je suis souvent saisie par la peur – nous qui sommes ici devenons presque complice de cette véritable traite des hommes. »

On ne sait pas combien de personnes, Friedel a pu faire libérer ainsi – plusieurs dizaines. L'action de sauvetage dans les camps était très limitée car les autorités avaient établi des quotas du nombre de personnes à déporter, il arrivait donc, que pour une personne libérée, une autre personne soit déportée à sa place.

Friedel Bohny-Reiter n'est pas la seule personne du Secours suisse aux enfants à avoir lutté pour sauver des vies – attitude reprouvée par la Croix-Rouge suisse. Après l'arrestation d'enfants à la frontière suisse qui avaient obtenu le soutien d'une des collaboratrices, la direction de la Croix-Rouge suisse Secours aux enfants s'est adressée à ses employés dans les termes suivants :

« Notre travail en France est une action de secours aux enfants victimes de la guerre, indépendante de toute considération idéologique. Il est donc naturel que nous observions une stricte neutralité politique,

confessionnelle ou idéologique. Les lois et les décrets du Gouvernement de la France doivent être exécutés exactement et vous n'avez pas à examiner s'ils sont opposés ou non à vos propres convictions. »⁴⁶

Il me semble que ce genre de document est un excellent point de départ pour parler des génocides dans l'histoire avec les élèves. Nous sommes en présence d'une institution qui exige de la part de son personnel une stricte obéissance à des lois, pourtant condamnées par certains, notamment par Monseigneur Saliège du diocèse de Toulouse. En plus, elle enjoint son personnel à ne pas se référer à sa propre conscience ce qu'une citoyenne d'un pays démocratique était particulièrement apte à faire en comparant les deux régimes. En faisant appel à la neutralité politique, l'institution se réfère à son rôle traditionnel de porter secours aux deux camps d'un conflit, pour les événements qui se déroulaient en France ce concept de neutralité n'avait aucun sens.

Malgré les rapports détaillés envoyés au siège à Berne, l'organisation de la Croix-Rouge feint l'ignorance – elle ne veut rien savoir des circonstances tout à fait nouvelles dans lesquelles se trouvent ses collaboratrices. Parmi ceux qui ont travaillé en France pour la Croix-Rouge Secours aux enfants, qui ont sauvé de nombreuses vies, quelques-uns ont obtenu de l'Etat d'Israël la Médaille des Justes, mais luttent encore aujourd'hui pour une pleine reconnaissance de leur action. Friedel Bohny-Reiter et son mari qui a été actif au Chambon-sur-Lignon ont été honorés par Israël en 1990. Pour illustrer le travail qui se fait dans les écoles dans la région de Rivesaltes, j'ai amené 3 affiches réalisées par une classe d'enfants de 10 ans qui ont étudié le « Journal de Rivesaltes ».

Si les événements auxquels a assisté Friedel-Bohny Reiter ont été dramatiques, que dire de ce qu'a vécu Carl Lutz ? Je pense que vous tous connaissez beaucoup mieux que moi, l'histoire de la Hongrie pendant ces jours tragiques, je me tiendrai donc strictement à l'action de Carl Lutz telle qu'on la retrouve dans les documents suisses et la biographie que lui a consacrée Theo Tschuy.⁴⁷

Carl Lutz

Carl Lutz est arrivé avec sa femme à Budapest début janvier 1942. Après Pearl Harbor, les USA et la Grande-Bretagne avaient demandé à

⁴⁶ Toutes les citations proviennent de, Friedel Bohny-Reiter, *Journal de Rivesaltes 1941-1942*, édité et préfacé par Michèle Fleury-Seemuller, Ed. Zoé, Genève 1993.

⁴⁷ Theo Tschuy, *Carl Lutz und die Juden von Budapest*, Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zurich 1995, p. 51.

la Suisse de représenter leurs intérêts vis-à-vis de la Hongrie. C'est pour organiser ce service que Carl Lutz, alors vice-consul, a été envoyé à Budapest. De 1934 à 1940, il avait été vice-consul en Palestine, séjour qui aura joué un rôle important quand il a fallu mettre toute son énergie au service du sauvetage de Juifs de Budapest. A ses débuts en Hongrie, Lutz déploie son activité normale de vice-consul.

Très vite, une autre activité s'ajoute au cours normal des affaires. En mars 1942, le Foreign Office, demande à la Légation de Suisse d'identifier 200 enfants et de les munir de Certificats pour la Palestine. Ce sont les débuts de la collaboration entre Lutz et Jewish Council of Palestine. Il s'agissait de contrôler les noms des enfants, d'obtenir des visas de sortie de la Hongrie et des permis de transiter la Roumanie, la Bulgarie et la Turquie. Il fallait aussi trouver des bateaux sur le Danube ou des wagons de train pour transporter les enfants vers un des ports de la Mer Noire. A partir de cette action qui avait réussi, le représentant hongrois du Jewish Council s'est adressé directement à Lutz pour obtenir les précieux certificats pour la Palestine qui permettait l'immigration légale. Pour son biographe, Theo Tschuy, cet événement réveille en Lutz un profond engagement pour les déshérités. Dans une lettre adressée au gouvernement à Berne, Lutz indique que jusqu'au coup d'état de mars 1944, 50 à 100 personnes par semaine prenaient le départ pour la Palestine⁴⁸. Malgré le conseil du Chef du Département des Affaires étrangères (appelé alors Département politique) d'agir « avec la plus grande prudence »⁴⁹, Lutz s'occupe du départ d'environ 10'000 personnes jusqu'à cette date.

Avec le coup d'Etat survenu le 19 mars, on sait que la déportation des Juifs hongrois a été mise en route. Les départs pour la Palestine sont évidemment interrompus. Le bureau du Jewish Council est fermé. Pourtant il reste encore 6000 jeunes adultes et 1000 enfants, dûment autorisés de partir en Palestine. Lutz obtient le 13 juillet 1944, l'autorisation pour leur départ du gouvernement hongrois. On lui assure que cette autorisation incluait également l'approbation des Allemands⁵⁰ car depuis mars aucune décision du gouvernement hongrois ne pouvait se prendre sans qu'il en ait référé aux Allemands⁵¹.

⁴⁸ Documents diplomatiques suisses, vol. 15 (1943-1945), no. 208, Benteli Verlag, Berne 1992, p. 562.

⁴⁹ Theo Tschuy, Carl Lutz und die Juden von Budapest, Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zurich 1995, p. 112.

⁵⁰ Documents diplomatiques suisses, vol. 15 (1943-1945), no. 208, Benteli Verlag, Berne 1992, p. 663.

⁵¹ Raul Hilberg, La destruction des Juifs d'Europe, éd. Fayard, Paris 1989, p. 715.

Dans une lettre à Berne, datée du 23 août 1944⁵², Lutz décrit l'organisation mise en place pour rendre ce départ possible. Sur la demande du gouvernement hongrois, Lutz a accepté de fonctionner comme instance officielle de cette action. Il fallait créer un bureau d'émigration. Le Conseil central juif lui mit des bureaux à disposition, ainsi que trente employés. Dès le premier jour, 1500 personnes se sont regroupés devant le bureau causant tellement d'inconvénients que Lutz a dû faire appel à la protection de la police. Lutz et ses collaborateurs voulaient avant tout placer des sionistes sur la liste. Mais entre temps, de nombreux détenteurs de certificats pour la Palestine se trouvaient dans les bataillons de travail, et Lutz ne retrouva que 2100 personnes, la majorité des Juifs hongrois, mais aussi des réfugiés de Slovaquie et de Croatie, ainsi que 300 enfants. Bien entendu, les Allemands refusent leur départ de Hongrie. Lutz demande alors au Département politique d'intervenir à Berlin. Mais le Ministre de Suisse à Berlin essuie un refus de la part des autorités allemandes.

Il faut ajouter ici que les Juifs en possession des certificats pour la Palestine avaient été déchus de leur nationalité, Lutz établissait alors, sur la demande du gouvernement britannique, des passeports collectifs, sorte de lettre de protection suisse. Le premier de ces passeports contenait 1967 noms. Peu à peu, Lutz s'est libéré des instructions britanniques concernant le quota pour la Palestine, et a attribué des certificats à 40'000 personnes.

Le bureau d'émigration, plus des immeubles environnant bénéficiaient du droit d'exterritorialité ce qui permettait d'y protéger 4500 personnes. De plus, avec la complicité du ministre hongrois de l'intérieur, 60 immeubles à plusieurs étages sont mis à disposition de la Légation appelés « Schutzhäuser » où les personnes munis de certificats de Palestine ou figurant sur un passeport collectif trouvèrent une protection. A la fin, le nombre de ses « Schutzhäuser » s'éleva à 72.⁵³ Lutz est rejoint plus tard par Frédéric Born, délégué du CICR, qui met 5 à 6000 enfants à l'abri en plaçant des orphelinats juifs sous la protection du CICR.

Le 15 octobre 1944, le régent de Hongrie Horthy est arrêté et déporté en Allemagne. Un gouvernement totalement aligné sur la politique des nationaux-socialistes prend sa place. La situation des Juifs empire une fois encore. Une espèce de course poursuite s'engage alors entre le gouvernement, décidé à déporter les derniers Juifs restés encore à Budapest, et les sauveteurs comme Lutz, Born et le Suédois

⁵² Documents diplomatiques suisses, vol. 15 (1943-1945), no. 208, Benteli Verlag, Berne 1992, p. 562-564.

⁵³ Theo Tschuy, Carl Lutz und die Juden von Budapest, Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zurich 1995, p. 191.

Wallenberg. Sous la pression des pays neutres, le gouvernement se déclare prêt à reconnaître les lettres de protection émises par leurs représentants pour environ 12 à 15000 Juifs. Mais Lutz ne se tient plus à ces engagements et laisse imprimer 120'000 de ces formulaires. Ce nombre dépasse nettement le quota des certificats pour la Palestine et n'aurait pas reçu l'approbation du Foreign Office. Lutz n'informe pas le Département politique à Berne de cette action lequel ne se serait jamais engagé pour les Juifs en bravant à la fois les Allemands et les Britanniques, selon le biographe de Lutz.⁵⁴

Quelles étaient les réactions du gouvernement suisse à l'activité déployée par Lutz ?

Examinons d'abord le message des Etats-Unis à l'adresse du gouvernement hongrois en juin 1944 que le représentant de la Suisse à Budapest serait appelé à présenter au nom du gouvernement américain :

« Le Gouvernement des Etats-Unis demande aux Autorités hongroises compétentes de faire connaître leurs intentions sur le traitement futur qui sera accordé aux juifs dans des ghettos et dans de camps de concentration, en particulier d'indiquer si les Autorités hongroises envisagent l'imposition de réduction des rations alimentaires, de déportation forcée en Pologne ou ailleurs, ou l'adoption d'autres mesures qui, comme celles mentionnées, reviendraient à une exécution en masse.

Le Gouvernement des Etats-Unis rappelle aux Autorités hongroises compétentes la gravité avec laquelle il envisage la persécution des juifs et des autres minorités et sa détermination de traiter toutes les personnes qui assument une part de la responsabilité pour de tels actes selon l'avertissement donné par le Président des Etats-Unis [...]. »⁵⁵

La Suisse entend prendre ses distances par rapport à cette déclaration et s'adresse à la Division spéciale de la Légation de Suisse à Budapest dans ces mots :

« Nous avons soumis cette affaire au chef du Département qui nous a déclaré que, comme nous, il ne voit pas d'objection à ce que ce message soit notifié par vos soins au Gouvernement hongrois. Toutefois afin de bien laisser entendre que nous ne nous associons pas aux observations du Gouvernement américain, le texte littéral du message devra être reproduit et communiqué au Gouvernement hongrois en annexe à une brève note d'accompagnement. »⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁵⁵ Documents diplomatiques suisses, vol. 15 (1943-1945), no. 159, Benteli Verlag, Berne 1992, p. 444.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Ce même mois, le Vatican adresse également un télégramme à la Hongrie, ainsi que le roi Gustave V de Suède, seul la Suisse s'abstient comme nous l'avons vu plus haut.⁵⁷

Un mois plus tard, le Chef du Département politique s'adresse au Ministre de Suisse en Hongrie. Il atteste avoir reçu de la part du ministre un rapport du Conseil central juif de Budapest et le rapport de deux détenus évadés d'Auschwitz connu sous le nom de rapport Vrba. Il avoue que ces informations ont déclenché de vives émotions parmi la population suisse, et que la Suisse a attiré l'attention du représentant allemand à Berne sur ces événements. Il conclut sa lettre avec ces mots – je traduis de l'allemand –

« Entre temps nous cherchons des voies et des moyens en collaboration avec le Département de Justice et Police de faire parvenir, si possible, de l'aide et de la protection à quelques Juifs hongrois [...]. »⁵⁸

Rappelons que le rapport Vrba contient une description détaillée de la déportation des Juifs hongrois à Auschwitz et indique le nombre arrivé au camp entre le 15 mai et le 10 juin, c'est-à-dire 335'000 personnes.⁵⁹ La disproportion entre ces chiffres et la proposition du gouvernement suisse est évidemment choquante, mais malheureusement nous avons dû constater que les attitudes des gouvernements n'ont pas été très différentes au Rwanda.

Concernant la protection accordée aux Juifs dans les ambassades et légations, le Département politique fait savoir dans un télégramme du 21 octobre 1944 – je traduis de l'allemand :

« Accorder l'asile dans les bâtiments des ambassades aux Juifs étrangers tels que ce serait pratiqué par la Suède [...] ne peut pas être envisagé car cela mettrait en péril nos intérêts primordiaux et légitimes auprès de la Hongrie. »⁶⁰

Mais à ce moment, plusieurs centaines de Juifs se trouvaient déjà dans les locaux de la représentation suisse.

En novembre, Lutz se rend pour deux jours à Berne pour expliquer la situation hautement complexe qui règne à Budapest. Il demande sa promotion au rang de consul laquelle renforcerait sa position auprès des autorités hongroises, mais il ne rencontre qu'indifférence.

Quelles conséquences son action à Budapest a-t-elle eu pour Lutz ?

⁵⁷ Theo Tschuy, Carl Lutz und die Juden von Budapest, Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zurich 1995, p. 181.

⁵⁸ Documents diplomatiques suisses, vol. 15 (1943-1945), no. 171, Benteli Verlag, Berne 1992, p. 481.

⁵⁹ Documents diplomatiques suisses. www.dodis.ch . DoDIS-11979. Ce rapport et d'autres documents a été mis à disposition sur internet à l'occasion de la célébration de la journée de la mémoire, le 27 janvier 2004.

⁶⁰ Documents diplomatiques suisses, vol. 15 (1943-1945), no. 292, Benteli Verlag, Berne 1992, p. 732.

Sa carrière consulaire s'est poursuivie normalement, cependant son action à Budapest n'est pas reconnue, il est même blâmé pour avoir émis les lettres de protection sous la dénomination de passeports collectifs suisses. Ce n'est que beaucoup plus tard que les autorités suisses lui rendent hommage.

C'est à l'étranger, surtout, qu'on reconnaît et honore l'action de Lutz. Israël lui remet la Médaille des Justes et une rue de Jérusalem porte son nom. La République fédérale d'Allemagne lui remet la « Grosses Verdienstkreuz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland ».

René de Weck

En m'apercevant qu'un membre de la Commission Internationale pour la Reconnaissance de l'Holocauste en Roumanie, Monsieur Vasile Ionescu, allait me précéder, j'ai trouvé intéressant de parler de René de Weck, un diplomate qui a représenté la Suisse en Roumanie de 1933 à 1945. Je ne dirai que quelques mots sur lui, pour ensuite vous présenter une lettre dans laquelle il s'élève contre l'emploi par l'administration suisse des catégories « aryens ». Proche de la pensée de l'Action française, le mouvement d'extrême droite de Charles Maurras, avant la guerre, il vit la chute de Paris comme un immense désastre. Il note le 14 juillet 1940 dans son journal intime : « Les Boches à Paris, je voudrais être mort ! » Officiellement neutre, en tant que diplomate suisse, il prend le parti du Général de Gaulle, dès le 21 juin comme le démontre son journal intime.

De Weck constate que les autorités suisses et surtout la Police des étrangers exige des certificats d'origine « aryenne » de la part des Roumains qui veulent se rendre en Suisse. A ce propos, il écrit à Berne le 23 décembre 1941, les lignes suivantes -

« Depuis quelque temps déjà, j'observe que la Police fédérale des étrangers exige des Roumains qui désirent se rendre en Suisse un certificat d'origine « aryenne ». D'autre part, de nombreuses autorités suisses délivrent couramment des attestations déclarant que M. X. ou Y. est « Aryen ». ...

Ce qui choque, en l'espèce (et plus encore dans l'usage interne), c'est l'emploi du mot « aryen ».

[...] le mot « aryen », employé (sans guillemets) par une administration suisse, donne à penser que cette expression est chez nous d'un usage courant et que nous acceptons comme une vérité acquise les théories racistes dont elle est désormais inséparable. Or, je me plais à espérer que ces doctrines, condamnées par les anthropologues les plus éminents, le sont aussi par la conscience de notre peuple.

Comme vous le savez, j'ai réussi à obtenir du gouvernement roumain qu'aucune des lois d'exception promulguées contre les Juifs de Roumanie ne soit appliquée à des citoyens suisses. A cet effet, j'ai usé

des arguments suivants : 1° article 4 de la Constitution fédérale : « Tous les Suisses sont égaux devant la loi. Il n'y a en Suisse ni sujets, ni privilèges de lieux, de naissance, de personnes ou de familles » ; 2° les droits que la Convention roumano-suisse d'établissement du 19 juillet 1933 accorde en Roumanie à nos compatriotes valent, sans restriction ni réserve, pour tous les Suisses. » [...] ⁶¹

De Weck n'entreprend pas d'action de sauvetage telles que Friedel Bohny-Reiter Carl Lutz. Mais il s'est employé à imposer l'égalité de traitement pour tous les Suisses résidant en Roumanie ce qui nous semble peut-être normal de la part d'un représentant diplomatique d'un pays démocratique. Pourtant cela n'a pas été le cas de tous les diplomates suisses.

Et nous trouvons à nouveau le cas d'une personne qui s'oppose aux mesures de l'administration de son pays. Il conclut sa lettre par la recommandation de ne plus établir de « certificats d'aryanisme » et de ne plus exiger de la part des étrangers, demandeurs de visas, de prouver qu'ils sont « aryens ». Toutefois de Weck admet que la Suisse exige une déclaration de la part des autorités étrangères attestant que le demandeur n'est pas considéré comme Juif.

CONCLUSION

Que nous apportent ces trois actions exemplaires pour enseigner la mémoire de la Shoah ?

Les trois personnalités dont j'ai parlé nous montrent que même dans des situations désespérées, face à des gens très déterminés, nous disposons parfois de marges de manœuvre qui nous permettent d'agir. La particularité des Suisses c'est d'avoir agi à un niveau individuel, une situation à laquelle des élèves peuvent s'identifier. Friedel Bohny-Reiter et Lutz, et aussi de Weck, ont laissé parler leur conscience et ont réussi à dépasser les limites que la Croix-Rouge suisse ou le gouvernement leur ont fixées, et ils ont surtout réussi à s'opposer à la volonté apocalyptique des nazis d'anéantir les Juifs d'Europe.

⁶¹ Documents diplomatiques suisses, vol. 14 (1941-1943), no. 142, Benteli Verlag, Berne 1992, p. 427.

The Caravan of Memory by Pawe Barabasz

Over the centuries the foundation of the identity of the Romanies and their sense of ethnic and cultural independence has been their language, a wealth of oral traditions passed from one generation to the next, and an intuitive sense of common origins and history. These have recently been enriched with the memory of the Romany Holocaust, which immediately became a vital element of identification for members of the Romany community. To a certain degree, this stems from the fact that the process of creating the contemporary identity of the Romanies has been facing numerous difficulties. Despite the attempts made in the late 20th century to standardise it, the Romany language is still known to be exceptionally diverse. Moreover, in many parts of Europe it has been partially or entirely forgotten. At the same time, what is now referred to as the Romany tradition or aspires to be such tends to be influenced more and more by the dominating cultures, whereas the knowledge and understanding of the Romany history by the Romanies themselves continues to be inconsiderable. With the above in mind, the still-alive memory of the Holocaust which affected the Romanies during the Second World War is beginning to be created by the Romany elites to become the principal element of the community's developing national identity.⁶²

The idea of the "Forgotten Holocaust" or its equivalent "Romany Holocaust" has over the last decade attracted the attention of journalists, scientists, publicists and Romany community leaders, the evidence of which is the fact that both ideas more and more frequently appear in the public discourse. All of a sudden, the nation commonly regarded as one "without its own history" was born in the public consciousness as a community not to be ignored any longer in discussion on the genocide and memory of the Nazi crimes against humanity. At the same time, the knowledge of the particular character, circumstances, social dimension, course and the consequences or extent of the Romany tragedy was not very thorough, even among the Romanies themselves – the awareness of the scale of the genocide carried out on the Romanies was limited. The origins of this situation remain not only in the generally poor education of the majority of the Romanies or the lack of intelligible writings dealing with the subject, but also in certain cultural factors – traditionally, the limits of the social consciousness of the Romanies included only those events which had been considered to be worth remembering for the sake of a particular group in order to maintain its traditions and bonds within.

⁶² A.Bartosz *The Gypsy Memory Carawan* "Pro Memoriam" Information Bulletin of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum No. 10

For many years after the Second World War the memories of the war-time period were blotted out and hidden in the deep corners of memory. For those who survived as witnesses of unimaginable cruelties and crimes, those events remained a traumatic experience which had to be forgotten to be overcome. For others, the Holocaust was an occasional subject of conversations, with no mention of the details. For all of them, however, the meaning of the genocide is merely a link of a long chain of persecutions, humiliations and repressions which affected the Romanies over the six hundred years of their presence in Europe. The essence of the events that took place during the Second World War rested on the fact they served as continuation of the previous persecutions. Nevertheless, the lack of common interest in this subject was the result of the general situation of the Romanies in the Eastern Bloc after World War II. The attempts to uproot their cultural identity and independence also involved depriving the victims of the Third Reich of their identity, thus causing them to add to the overall number of anonymous victims.

Naturally, over the last few years the knowledge of the Romany Holocaust has become greater having a significant impact on the structure and the particular character of the Romany identity. Reaching the consciousness of the Romanies themselves, the gravity of the events that happened over sixty years ago has somewhat changed the way that the Holocaust has been seen. The tragedies of individuals, families or groups began to be perceived as part of the tragedy which affected the entire nation. The new perspective of looking on those events supplemented the individualized memory focused on only those events in which individuals participated, with a universal dimension which emphasised a sense of shared suffering caused by a criminal attempt to exterminate the entire Romany nation.⁶³

A significant contribution to this was made by both institutions and individuals from outside the Romany community for whom preserving the memory of those days was extremely important. One of the institutions is the Tarnów Museum of Ethnography, which, since 1979, has been the home of displays presenting the life and culture of the Romanies. There are copies of documents, photographs and maps which illustrate the history of the Holocaust. Alongside the displays, the museum has collections of documents dating back to those days, accounts of witnesses and evidence provided by those who survived. Since the display was opened, its organizers have been hoping to popularize the knowledge of the martyrdom of the Romanies with both the Polish and Romany general public by presenting evidence of the

⁶³ M.G.Gerlich *Rom will remember op.cit.*

past. This was also supported by various projects intended to extend the collections of the museum and make them even more attractive.

One of the projects is the so-called The Caravan of Memory, an event held annually and organized by the Tarnów Museum of Ethnography in co-operation with the Tarnów's Roma Socio-Cultural Association. The Caravan first set out on their way in 1996 with its destination being Szczurowa, a small town 45 kilometres to the north-west of Tarnów. On the map of the Romany martyrdom, the town is marked as a special place, which, since 1943, was the home of several Romany families who had close relations with the Polish community often resulting in mixed marriages between Romanies and Poles there. Nearly all of the town's inhabitants were killed at the local cemetery in July 1943. On the morning of July 3 the Romany settlement had been surrounded by a group of German soldiers who had earlier forced the local peasants to get their carts ready. The local Romanies had been loaded onto the carts and taken to the cemetery to be shot. The slaughter cost the lives of ninety-three Romanies, including children and elderly people.

Because of a large number of witnesses to the killings and the fact that some members of the local community were forced to help the Germans with carrying away and burying the dead, the tragedy of the Romany residents of Szczurowa has not been forgotten in the history of the town. With the assistance of the residents, the mass grave was brickworked, surrounded by stones and crowned with a cross and an obelisk. Members of the local community have since looked after the grave making it a historical monument and an important place in the history of Szczurowa. The fact that the names of the victims of the tragedy have been identified adds to the exceptional character of the town as a place of the Romany martyrdom. Most of the victims had been baptized at the local church, and their names had been recorded in the parish register. This seems particularly unique bearing in mind the fact that most of the Romanies who fell victim to the Nazi terror in Poland are anonymous – they were murdered in summary executions, with no witnesses, and destined to be forgotten. In the area of Tarnów there are several other places related to the martyrdom of the Romanies where mass graves were found. Unfortunately, those buried there are mostly unknown, and their graves were forgotten partially or entirely for many years. While setting the route of the Caravan, its organizers decided that it should run through at least some of the monuments of the Romany martyrdom scattered around Tarnów. Among these worth mentioning are Żabno, a town not far from Tarnów, with a grave of forty-nine Romanies who had presumably come from Germany and Hungary, and Bielcza, a village situated to the west of Tarnów, where, in July 1942, twenty-eight people, mostly members of a well-known Romany family – the Kwieks - were murdered by the Nazis.

As mentioned earlier, the idea of the Caravan of Memory, having matured for many years, was eventually effected in 1996. With the support of the local authorities and in co-operation with the aforementioned Roma Socio-Cultural Association, and using the original gypsy wagons which belong to the collections of the Museum of Ethnography, the Romanies of Tarnów, the guests invited and anyone who wished to join the event set out on the first historic Caravan of Memory. Year after year the Caravan was joined by more and more participants, also foreigners, mostly thanks to a major contribution on the part of the mass media which publicized the event. So, at the end of July a colourful cavalcade of wagons is to leave the forecourt of the Tarnów Museum of Ethnography on a four-day tour that will visit places remembering the martyrdom of the victims of the Nazi totalitarianism. Each stop on the way of the tour has its own symbolic importance – the Caravan will stop by a monument in the centre of Tarnów, which commemorates the first ever transport of prisoners to the Nazi concentration camp in Auschwitz. Then, the participants will pay homage to the Jews of Tarnów by lighting candles and putting flowers by a plaque in remembrance of the martyrdom of the Jews. The Caravan continues towards Żabno to visit the aforementioned grave of anonymous Romanies at the village cemetery. Joined by the dwellers of the village, including representatives of the local authorities, the participants will say prayers at the grave, and in the evening, will take part in a concert intended as a mark of gratitude to the villagers for protecting the grave. On the following day, the Caravan will head for Szczurowa to attend celebrations at the grave of Romanies murdered by German soldiers.

Much publicity given to the event by the mass media contributed to the Caravan attracting large numbers of onlookers, mostly kindly inhabitants of the towns and villages through which the Caravan runs. This helps us to accomplish one of the primary goals behind the organization of the event, which is making the Caravan a symbolic opportunity for both the Romanies and their Polish neighbours to meet and build a mutual understanding. The subject and message of the meeting is the memory – the memory which unites, and not divides. The difficult and painful knowledge of the past is expected to bond the two communities, which for many centuries have lived side by side but only physically, not mentally. Hence, the organizers of the Caravan decided on common prayers and meditation at the graves of the victims, in common touring, celebrating and singing.

By organizing the Caravan, its fathers hoped to awaken the memory of the Romany martyrdom in the consciousness of Polish society. It is not unreasonable to speak of the “Forgotten Holocaust”, understood as

genocide carried out on the Romany nation, knowledge of which, excluding the narrow circle of professionals, was practically absent in the public discourse. The publicity campaign which supported the whole undertaking as well as a wealth of promotional materials used by the Museum of Ethnography (e.g. a special album about the event with both pictures taken during the previous Caravans and information on the Romany Holocaust) help to develop a greater understanding in Polish society of the fact that the history of the Romany nation, with its most tragic events forms an integral part of Poland's history and does not deserve to be seen as something "separate".

Equally important are the possible benefits of the Caravans for the Romanies themselves. Their common engagement in the project is expected to integrate the Romanies of Tarnów, strengthen their national consciousness and their sense of the value of their own cultural heritage, awaken an interest in the often painful history of the nation, particularly among the young Romanies.

After eight years of organizing the Caravan, the time has come to evaluate the project and the benefits it has brought throughout the years. Have we managed to accomplish all our goals? Yes, for the most part, we have. There have naturally been some mistakes, and we have faced various difficulties, but the things we have done and the experience we have gained over the years will certainly be of benefit in the future. I should think that the project might set a great example to follow for those who wish to organize local events which do not require much finance and are likely to bring tangible benefits.

**Teaching Holocaust Remembrance Here and Now:
The Educational Approach of the International School for
Holocaust Studies by Hava Baruch, Yad Vashem**

Introduction

Yad Vashem, located on the Mount of Remembrance in Jerusalem, was established by an act of the Israeli parliament in 1953. As the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority of the State of Israel, the central task of Yad Vashem is to gather material about the Jewish victims who were murdered because they were Jewish and to perpetuate their names and those of their communities, organizations, and institutions which were destroyed. In addition to documenting and commemorating the Holocaust, Yad Vashem also places a very strong emphasis on organizing educational programming and sponsoring academic research. Yad Vashem has recently been awarded the prestigious Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement – A Unique Contribution to Society and to the State. The declaration was made by Minister of Education, Limor Livnat stating that on the eve of its 50th year, Yad Vashem “represents a symbol and a model of the unity of the Jewish people...it attracts all sections of the population and serves as a source of identification for individuals in Israel and worldwide.”

In marking 50 years since its founding, Yad Vashem has decided to significantly expand its educational activities. In order to remain the central source for Holocaust remembrance and education in the next century and ensure Holocaust remembrance for future generations, Yad Vashem is placing primary emphasis on Holocaust studies for educators, students, soldiers, and youth in Israel and abroad. One of its goals is to ensure that every student in Israel participate in a full day seminar at the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem.

At the core of the Holocaust was the decision to murder every single Jewish man, woman and child. Nazi antisemitic ideology, propagated by the Nazi Party from the early 1920s until Germany's surrender in 1945, was based on pseudo-scientific fallacies. This ideology ruled over political, national and economic considerations.

The Holocaust, an unprecedented event, has fundamentally challenged the foundations upon which human civilization rests. It has forced us to reflect upon our most basic assumptions about the nature of humankind and of society, of the modern state, and of our responsibilities as citizens of the world to speak up and act to stop the unjust suffering of innocent people everywhere. Clearly, the Holocaust serves as a universal warning and places a heavy responsibility on us to teach it.

The International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem

The staff of the International School for Holocaust Studies, currently over one hundred people, is firmly committed to Holocaust education. We believe that it is our mission to enrich the knowledge of educators from around the world as well as to provide them with pedagogical guidelines and age-appropriate tools on how to teach this difficult subject matter.

The International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem has worked with thousands of teachers from all over the world over last decade - both in Israel and abroad. Over the years we have recognized the vital importance of teacher education and have channeled huge efforts in this direction. It appears clearer than ever before that there is a general consensus about the need for Holocaust education, not only basic facts about the event but rather a deeper understanding of specifics. Overall, pupils' knowledge of the Holocaust is also very shallow. In order for children to delve into the study of the Holocaust, their teachers must first learn more about the subject. Our mission must be to better educate our teachers by providing them with more study seminars and in-service training courses that include both factual knowledge and pedagogical guidelines on how to teach this difficult subject in the classroom.

Educational Guidelines

Yad Vashem educational materials (books, timelines, kits, maps, poster sets, multimedia and videos) concentrate on life before, during and after the Holocaust as well as the moral dilemmas people were forced to confront on a daily basis. Jews were part of modern civilization, and educators should not begin their lessons on the Holocaust with the destruction of the Jewish people, but rather with a detailed picture of European Jewish life and culture between the world wars. After all, how can students learn about the destruction of communities without ever knowing about the vibrant and rich cultural traditions of the Jews who lived there? A study of Jewish life should not be restricted to East European countries, and therefore must include how people lived throughout Europe.

Clearly, Holocaust education must be based on historical accuracy. Therefore, we do not only concentrate on the Nazi extermination process, but rather on personal stories that encourage students to empathize with the victims. The perpetrators took away the victims' homes, belongings, clothes - and most importantly - their human

identities. Nazi Germany sought to dehumanize Jews by reducing them to yellow patches, tattooed numbers and mass graves.

In recent years, the staff of the International School for Holocaust Studies has placed a greater emphasis on the everyday life of the victims, and their struggle to survive under insurmountable conditions. When studying this subject, Jewish students should grapple with some of the following questions: How did Jews cope with Nazi anti-Jewish decrees? What ethical choices did they make on a daily basis? How did they perceive their fate?

An in depth inquiry about the identities of the victims should also not be limited to their pre-war lives and Holocaust experiences. We also need to examine the post-war journeys of the survivors - their return to life. For example, what dilemmas did the survivors confront? For example, how did they deal with issues of revenge? What kind of difficulties did they endure? How did they rebuild their lives in the dark shadow of the Holocaust?

Addressing complex questions vis-à-vis the perpetrators and bystanders are extremely difficult tasks for educators. Students must try and comprehend that there are no easy answers to questions regarding how it was humanly possible to commit acts of brutality and be indifferent to suffering of such mass proportions. Wrestling with questions such as why members of the German armed forces murdered Jews, or why people who lived next to concentration camps in the Reich could claim that they did not know what was happening in their midst, is part of the study of the Holocaust. We teach dilemmas and encourage students to exercise their critical thinking skills - and not arrive at simplistic conclusions.

In addition, we must also focus on the choices of moral goodness that a small minority of people made in the shadow of darkness. As of January 1, 2004, 20,205 Righteous among the Nations have been recognized by Yad Vashem⁶⁴. The stories of these persons, who endangered their lives to do acts of kindness during the Holocaust, need to be told, and as educators we need to instill the values of caring and responsibility in our students as well as highlight their legacy of humanity.

We have also determined that teaching the Holocaust need not be the exclusive domain of history teachers. Holocaust education with an interdisciplinary approach - through art, music, literature, theology,

⁶⁴ It is important to note that these figures are not necessarily an indication of the actual number of Jews saved in each country, but rather reflect material on rescue operations made available to Yad Vashem.

drama and science - allows students to gain a broader understanding about this complex subject matter.

We believe that it is important to begin teaching the Holocaust from a young age in an age-appropriate manner. In today's world, children at an early age develop an awareness of the Holocaust. In Israel, in particular, children are exposed to the two-minute siren from a very young age and become curious about what happened during the Shoah and begin to ask questions. However, the information they often receive about the Holocaust usually comes from sources (older siblings, media) that are far beyond their emotional and intellectual level. Some children choose not to approach adults about this subject, and those who do turn to adults for more information sometimes do not receive direct or relevant answers to their questions. Many educators have admitted that they find it easier to evade the children's questions about this "taboo" topic than to present the story of the Holocaust in a sensitive manner and on an age-appropriate level. On the basis of our experience, we believe that in order to prevent children from being overwhelmed by information that is beyond their emotional and scholastic level, they need to learn about the *Shoah* in stages from a young age in an age-appropriate manner.

Clearly, the Holocaust raises a number of universal, as well as particular, educational issues. After learning about how Jews lived before the war, how their lives changed under Nazi rule, and how those who survived regained their will to live again, pupils will better comprehend the meaning of tradition, friendship and responsibility as well as the dangers of ideological hatred - only some of the universal lessons of the Holocaust.

For more information about teacher-training programs on the Shoah in English, educational materials in various languages, guidelines for Holocaust remembrance ceremonies and participating in teacher-training seminars at Yad Vashem, please visit www.yadvashem.org or contact: international.school@yadvashem.org.il

Conclusions par Claude-Alain Clerc

Ces deux jours, nous nous sommes souvenus et nous avons aussi rendu hommage aux différentes victimes du régime nazi, particulièrement les Juifs, les Roms et les Témoins de Jéhovah. Les dates choisies pour la tenue de ce séminaire coïncident avec la Journée de la mémoire en Hongrie. Le 16 avril 1944 a vu des faits atroces se dérouler dans ce pays. Le premier ghetto juif fut créé à l'est de la Hongrie dans la ville de Murbach au moment même où la libération était proche en France. Mais nous devons aussi nous rappeler que l'émancipation des Juifs de Hongrie – leur entière égalité en droits – fut réalisée en 1867, année du compromis entre l'empereur François-Joseph et la nation hongroise et de la création de la Monarchie austro-hongroise. Ces deux faits contradictoires sont essentiels.

Le 16 avril 2004 fut aussi une journée mémorable à Budapest, puisque le nouveau Musée de l'Holocauste a été officiellement inauguré. Il veut, et c'est essentiel, que l'on se souvienne de toutes les victimes.

Ce mois d'avril 2004 est aussi destiné au souvenir des victimes du génocide rwandais. En ouvrant mon journal quotidien, *L'Express*, le jeudi 8 avril, je pouvais lire : Dix ans après, le Rwanda a commémoré dans l'émotion hier le massacre d'au moins 800 000 personnes en 1994... Depuis Genève, Kofi Annan a annoncé un « programme d'action » pour éviter d'autres génocides. » Sur la même moitié de page, un autre article a attiré mon attention : « Craintes d'un « nettoyage ethnique » au Soudan. » Le même jour, à la radio suisse romande, le général canadien en retraite Roméo Dallaire s'est exprimé sur ce qu'il a vu et sur ce qu'il n'a pas pu empêcher. Militaire de carrière, le lieutenant-général Roméo Dallaire s'est surtout fait connaître de la population pour avoir commandé la mission des Nations-Unies au Rwanda en 1993-1994. Il en a rapporté un livre. *J'ai serré la main du diable*. Le 15 avril 2000, dans un journal canadien, *La Presse*, il disait : « Dans mon âme et dans mes pensées, je demeure convaincu que seule la main du diable lui-même peut expliquer ce désastre. Le démon est venu et on le voyait dans leurs yeux. Un jour, un des chefs de milice est venu me rencontrer pour une négociation, et il avait encore du sang sur les mains. »

Quels que soient les événements tragiques que nous commémorons, nous ne devons pas seulement nous souvenir. En effet, comme l'a si bien dit M. Raoul Delcorde, ambassadeur de Belgique au Forum international de Stockholm en janvier de cette année, « commémorer n'est pas simplement se souvenir. Le souvenir des violences passées doit s'associer à la volonté de mettre tout en œuvre afin qu'elles ne

soient jamais reproduites. Dans ce sens, on peut parler de devoir de mémoire. Pour les victimes, le génocide n'est pas terminé quand s'arrêtent les massacres. Les conséquences des atrocités demeurent, l'horreur restent inscrite dans la mémoire des survivants pour le reste de leur vie. L'histoire nous montre que l'oubli ne constitue pas un remède efficace. Lorsqu'elles ne sont pas assumées, les blessures du passé ne tardent pas à refaire surface. »

Le passé auquel ce séminaire a été consacré peut paraître déjà lointain à nos élèves, mais beaucoup d'entre nous y sont directement reliés par leurs familles et leurs amis. Beaucoup, comme le Dr Alfred Schönher, n'ont pas eu de grands-parents et comptent de nombreuses victimes parmi leurs proches. De son témoignage, nous retiendrons un appel à la tolérance pour éviter tout retour de pareilles catastrophes. Cette tolérance selon lui doit être mutuelle entre les membres des différentes religions qu'il compare à un orchestre symphonique dans lequel toutes les voix et tous les sons doivent être colorés de la même manière et aucun ne doit dominer l'autre.

La table ronde a rappelé le sort des victimes de l'Holocauste, plus particulièrement les Juifs de Hongrie, les Roms et les Témoins de Jéhovah. Il est important que les élèves de nos écoles se souviennent de leur sort. De nombreux témoignages directs leur permettront de mieux saisir ces tragiques événements. Le témoignage du passé est déterminant pour former l'esprit critique des jeunes aujourd'hui. Le roman de l'écrivain hongrois, prix Nobel de littérature 2002, Imre Kertész, *Être sans destin*, est aussi exemplaire. Nous devons penser que se souvenir est douloureux pour ceux qui ont survécu à l'horreur de l'Holocauste. Dans son discours à Stockholm, le 12 décembre 2002, Imre Kertész disait notamment : « Quand on écrit sur Auschwitz, il faut savoir que, du moins dans un certain sens, Auschwitz a mis la littérature en suspens. A propos d'Auschwitz, on ne peut écrire qu'un roman noir ou, sauf votre respect, un roman-feuilleton dont l'action commence à Auschwitz et dure jusqu'à nos jours. Je veux dire par là qu'il ne s'est rien passé depuis Auschwitz qui ait annulé Auschwitz, qui ait réfuté Auschwitz. Dans mes écrits, l'Holocauste n'a jamais pu apparaître au passé. »

Comment peut-on comprendre ce que les témoins ont ressenti pendant et après cette tragique expérience? Cette question, de nombreuses jeunes filles et jeunes gens se la posent aujourd'hui. Angelina, de Lyon : « J'aimerais savoir que sont devenus les survivants des camps de déportation : comment se sont-ils réadaptés à la vie ? Quelles conclusions ont-ils tirés de ce génocide? Pensez-vous que cela pourrait se reproduire? Pourquoi? » Sophie Lemaire et Magali Kaminski ont du mal à comprendre comment cela a été possible : « ... Comment

imaginer une horreur mise au point par l'homme ayant pour objectif la persécution et l'extermination du peuple juif ? » (*Mémoire juive et éducation* - <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/d-d.natanson/sa>)

Écoutons ce que disent des rescapés. Joseph H., né à Bratislava en 1930, déporté à Sachsenhausen en 1944, répond : « On ne peut pas escamoter toute l'histoire du camp de concentration, c'est bien clair. Mais j'ai essayé de faire comme si de rien n'était. Je ne peux pas en parler sans arrêt. Avec ma belle-mère, je parle de tout, sauf d'Auschwitz. Par contre, quand j'arrive chez une autre tante, alors, en l'espace de dix minutes, je suis déjà à Auschwitz, sur le quai. Ce n'est quand même pas supportable ! Combien de temps et combien de fois peut-on en parler ? Nous avons été frappés par une chose épouvantable, et c'est ce qui explique pourquoi on ne peut pas sans cesse en reparler. C'est dégradant pour nous.

Que des êtres humains soient capables de mettre en place un camp de concentration, d'ôter la dignité à leurs semblables, de les déshumaniser de la manière la plus brutale, cela, quelqu'un qui a été dans un camp de concentration a été obligé d'en faire l'expérience la plus intime. Après le camp de concentration, on ne peut plus jamais être naïf et tenir l'être humain en haute estime. D'un point de vue rationnel, pas d'un point de vue émotionnel, je peux comprendre qu'une telle machinerie meurtrière ait été mise en place de manière professionnelle par les SS. Il suffit d'une idéologie pour le justifier. Aujourd'hui aussi, des idéologies peuvent justifier un génocide. Mais ce que je comprends moins, c'est que les victimes elles-mêmes se laissent abusivement utiliser, de sorte qu'elles participent au génocide. » Raphael Gross, Eva Lezzi et Marc R. Richter (éds.), « *Un monde qui avait perdu sa réalité...* », Lausanne, Editions Antipodes, 2003, p. 75.

Golda L., née à Berlin en 1935, répond : « J'ai vécu la guerre et l'atmosphère à Berlin avant la guerre, mais pas pendant l'Holocauste. Car j'étais en France et après en Suisse. Donc comme je suis née avant la guerre, j'appartiens à la première génération, mis en même temps, on ne peut pas me comparer aux personnes des camps de concentration qui ont survécu à l'Holocauste... Ce que j'ai donné plus loin, c'est de vivre avec un sentiment de solitude totale comme celui qui a accompagné mon errance dans le monde, depuis que j'avais 3 ans et demi. Je me suis sentie dépassée lorsqu'il s'est agi de transmettre à mes enfants un sentiment de sécurité et de chaleur, ce que d'autres mères sont peut-être mieux à même de donner. On me l'a énormément rapproché et je pense que la deuxième génération a aussi beaucoup de difficulté à le comprendre... » Raphael Gross..., ouvrage cité, pp.59-60.

Le second volet du séminaire a permis de rendre hommage à ceux qui ont su résister. Cela évite de penser qu'il ne sert à rien de faire quoi que ce soit, qu'il faut seulement courber l'échine et attendre l'arrivée de jours meilleurs. L'exemple des diplomates suisses Karl Lutz à Budapest et René de Weck à Bucarest est significatif : ces hommes ont réussi à sauver des dizaines de milliers de Juifs et ont passé outre aux consignes de leur gouvernement. D'autres personnes ont agi de manière plus anonyme soit dans le cadre de leurs activités professionnelles, comme Friedel Bohny-Reiter au camp de Rivesaltes entre 1941 et 1942, soit à titre privé. Il est assez inquiétant qu'il faille parfois attendre des décennies pour que leurs mérites soient universellement reconnus. La lecture du Journal de Friedel Bohny-Reiter peut contribuer à éviter que l'holocauste ne devienne une souffrance abstraite pour les jeunes gens de nos écoles .

Le dernier volet concerne plus particulièrement les moyens d'enseignements dont peuvent disposer les professeurs et les élèves de nos écoles. Le titre de cette session ***Journée de la mémoire » dans les écoles*** m'amène à quelques réflexions. Le 18 octobre 2002, les ministres européens de l'éducation des Etats signataires de la Convention culturelle européenne ont réaffirmé leur volonté de mettre en oeuvre, à partir de 2003, dans les écoles, une journée de la mémoire de l'Holocauste et de la prévention des crimes contre l'humanité, à une date choisie selon les pratiques et priorités nationales. La Hongrie a choisi le 16 avril, de nombreux pays ont adopté le 27 janvier, jour de la libération d'Auschwitz par l'Armée rouge. En Suisse aussi, la date du 27 janvier a été retenue, car nous n'avons pas dans notre histoire de cette période de date plus significative. Il nous a paru essentiel de choisir pour cette « Journée de la Mémoire » trois volets : le rappel du drame de l'Holocauste, un rappel plus général des génocides qui ont marqué l'histoire de l'Europe au XX^e siècle, une réflexion sur les droits de l'homme, la tolérance ainsi que sur le dialogue interreligieux et interculturel. Il faudra donc compléter le matériel didactique à notre disposition et former les enseignants à cette tâche.

Ici, en Hongrie, *M. András NYÍRI*, membre de l'association hongroise des professeurs d'histoire, nous a présenté le travail réalisé en collaboration avec le ministère hongrois de l'Education pour la mise au point de matériel scolaire consacré à ces événements. Il est intéressant de constater que plusieurs institutions ont étroitement collaboré : l'Association hongroise des professeurs d'histoire, des instituts pédagogiques, des historiens, des auteurs de manuels et bien entendu le Ministère hongrois de l'Education. Cela a permis la mise au point de guides pour les enseignants, de matériel destiné aussi à donner des idées aux maîtres concernés. Ce matériel est interdisciplinaire, il contient une chronologie, des textes d'archives, des lettres, des

poèmes, des extraits de romans, des plans de leçons ainsi qu'une liste de livres et de films en relation avec les événements qui nous occupent.

L'Avenir

Pour les enseignants, obtenir des renseignements sur le matériel existant est essentiel. Pour cela, le Conseil de l'Europe, en réunissant les informations provenant des pays parties à la Convention culturelle européenne, est au cœur du système. Un autre canal, ce sont les associations de professeurs d'histoire des différentes disciplines concernées par notre sujet. Elles jouent un rôle de premier plan.

L'avenir, c'est enseigner à nos élèves la mémoire, c'est-à-dire faire surgir, dans le visible, ce qui est absent. Il faut éviter de routiniser la mémoire collective et de banaliser le passé. Tout en répondant aux nombreuses questions qu'ils se posent et qu'ils nous posent, nous devons réfléchir avec eux sur le présent et sur l'avenir. C'est là le second volet de notre projet : éduquer à la prévention des crimes contre l'humanité. C'est aussi une façon de répondre aux préoccupations d'élèves et d'adultes qui s'inquiètent des remontées de la haine raciste. Isabelle Morin et Cécile Boucher veulent affirmer des valeurs de vie : « Nous aimerions vivre dans la plénitude et ne voulons pas que de telles horreurs se reproduisent. » Johanna Zézir et Aurélie Saint-Yves veulent que l'on regarde aussi autour de nous, aujourd'hui : « C'est à vous de juger, mais il ne faut pas oublier ce qui s'est passé autrefois et [regarder aussi] ce qui se passe aujourd'hui. Par exemple, les violences racistes, l'intolérance, les massacres dans certains pays ... » (*Mémoire juive et éducation* - <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/d-d.natanson/sa>)

Pour ce faire, dans le cadre du projet « Enseigner la mémoire-éducation à la prévention des crimes contre l'humanité », nous préparons et nous publions un certain nombre d'outils pédagogiques. Je mentionnerai notamment :

- *La catastrophe du XX^e siècle*, consacré plus spécialement à la Shoah et disponible sur le site Internet du projet ().
- La liste des journées de la mémoire adoptées par les différents Etats membres du CE avec les informations et les références actuellement disponibles
- Anne-Marie Baron. *La Shoah à l'écran, crimes contre l'humanité et représentation*.
- Les actes des différentes conférences et séminaires.
- En outre, est prévu un ouvrage sur l'utilisation pédagogique de la mémoire et des témoignages. Il doit avoir un caractère plus général et toucher aux différents événements tragiques du 20^{ème} siècle. Les

témoignages sont importants pour aider les élèves à porter un regard critique sur les événements d'aujourd'hui.

- Un ou plusieurs ouvrage sur le rôle des œuvres d'art : il est proposé de réfléchir à un recueil de bonnes pratiques pour les écoles en partant de l'interrogation : quelle est la force édifiante des œuvres d'art ?
- Une carte interactive des lieux de mémoire en Europe, qui sera disponible sur le site Internet du projet.

De même, la collaboration qui a commencé ici entre les projets *Enseigner la mémoire. Education à la prévention des crimes contre l'humanité* et *L'éducation des enfants Roms/Tsiganes en Europe* doit se poursuivre. Tous les deux ont un certain nombre d'objectifs comparables, en particulier en ce qui concerne la connaissance et le respect des droits de l'homme. La lutte contre le racisme l'antisémitisme, et toute forme de discrimination, la promotion du dialogue interculturel et interreligieux doivent être au centre de nos préoccupations.

Nous ne devons pas oublier non plus le rôle de la justice. Cette question est aussi essentielle. Après la seconde guerre mondiale, le 11 décembre 1946, dans sa résolution 96, le Tribunal militaire international a défini pour la première fois le génocide : « le génocide est le refus du droit à l'existence de groupes entiers, de même que l'homicide est le refus du droit à l'existence d'un individu; un tel refus bouleverse la conscience humaine, inflige de grandes pertes à l'Humanité qui se trouve ainsi privée des apports culturels ou autres de ces groupes, et est contraire à la loi morale ainsi qu'à l'esprit et aux fins des Nations unies. (...)". C'est "un crime du droit des gens que le monde civilisé condamne et pour lequel les auteurs principaux et leurs complices, qu'ils soient des personnes privées, des fonctionnaires ou des hommes d'Etat, doivent être punis, qu'ils agissent pour des raisons raciales, religieuses, politiques ou pour d'autres motifs ».

Le 9 décembre 1948, L'ONU signe la *Convention pour la prévention et la répression du crime de génocide* : « ... le génocide s'entend de l'un quelconque des actes ci-après, commis dans l'intention de détruire, en tout ou en partie, un groupe national, ethnique, racial ou religieux, comme tel : a) meurtre de membres du groupe; b) atteinte à l'intégrité physique ou mentale de membres du groupe; c) soumission intentionnelle du groupe à des conditions d'existence devant entraîner sa destruction physique totale ou partielle. d) mesures visant à entraver les naissances au sein du groupe. e) transfert forcé d'enfants du groupe à un autre groupe. »

La même année, l'ONU adopte la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'Homme. En 1950, les Etats membres du Conseil de l'Europe adoptent la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme et lui donnent un

caractère extrêmement concret par la Cour européenne des Droits de l'Homme.

En conclusion, tout en nous souvenant des dizaines de millions de victimes des génocides et des crimes contre l'humanité perpétrés au 20^e siècle sur notre planète, j'espère que nous pourrons faire du vœu de ceux qui voulaient réaliser cette promesse, " Never again - Plus jamais ", en 1947-1948 une réalité pour la société du 3e millénaire.

Conclusions by Claude-Alain Clerc

Over the last two days we have remembered and also paid tribute to the victims of the Nazis, particularly the Jews, Roma and Jehovah's Witnesses. The dates chosen for this seminar coincide with Remembrance Day in Hungary. 16 April 1944 was a day of atrocities in this country. The first Jewish ghetto was created in eastern Hungary in the town of Munkach just as the Liberation of France was drawing nigh. But we must also remember that the Jews in Hungary were emancipated and became completely equal in rights in 1867, the year of the Compromise (Ausgleich) between Emperor Franz Josef and the Hungarian nation and the creation of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. These two contradictory facts are crucial.

16 April 2004 was a memorable day for Budapest as well because it was on that day that the new Holocaust Museum was officially inaugurated. It was created - and this is essential - for all the victims to be remembered.

In April 2004 we also remember the victims of the genocide in Rwanda. When I opened my newspaper, L'Express, on Thursday, 8 April, I happened to see an article entitled "Dix ans après, le Rwanda a commémoré dans l'émotion hier le massacre d'au moins 800 000 personnes en 1994..." (Ten years on, Rwanda commemorated yesterday with great emotion the massacre of at least 800,000 people in 1994). From Geneva, Kofi Annan announced an "action program" to prevent future genocides. On the same page, another article caught my eye: "Craintes d'un "nettoyage ethnique" au Soudan " (Fears of "ethnic cleansing" in Sudan). The same day, on Switzerland's French-language radio station, the retired Canadian general, Romeo Dallaire spoke about what he had seen and what he had been unable to prevent. A career officer, he became known to the public as commander of the United Nations mission in Rwanda in 1993-94 and has recounted his experience in a book entitled Shake Hands with the Devil. On 15 April 2004 in La Presse, a Canadian newspaper, he stated, "In my soul and in my mind, I am still convinced that the devil's hand alone can explain this disaster. The Devil there and we could see him in their eyes. One day, one of the militia leaders came to negotiate with me, and there was still blood on his hands."

Whenever we commemorate a tragic event, we must do more than just remember. Indeed, as the Belgian ambassador, Mr Raoul Delcorde, said so aptly at the International Forum in Stockholm last January, "to commemorate is not simply to remember. The memory of past violence has to incorporate the will to do everything possible to ensure that it never recurs. In this sense we can talk about a duty to remember. For the victims, a genocide is not over when the killing stops. The

consequences of the atrocities remain, the horror is indelibly written in the survivors' memories for the rest of their lives. History teaches us that forgetting is not an efficient remedy. When wounds of the past are not confronted, they invariably come back to haunt us."

The past we have been addressing throughout this seminar may already seem very remote to our pupils, yet many of us are directly linked to it through family and friends. Many, like Dr Alfred Schönher, never had grandparents, and many of their close relations were victims. What particularly stands out from his testimony is a call for tolerance to prevent any recurrence of similar disasters. In his view, there must be mutual tolerance between members of different religions, which he compares to a symphony orchestra in which all the voices and sounds blend evenly, none drowning out the others.

The round table recalled the fate of the Holocaust victims, particularly Hungarian Jews, Roma and Jehovah's Witnesses. It is important for our pupils to remember their fate. Numerous direct testimonies will help them understand these tragic events better. The testimony of the past is decisive in developing young people's capacity for critical analysis today. Hungarian writer Imre Kertesz's novel *Fateless*, which won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2002, is also exemplary. We must realise that remembering the horrors of the Holocaust is very painful for those who survived. Imre Kertesz expressed this in his speech in Stockholm on 12 December 2002 when he said, "When we write about Auschwitz, we must know that Auschwitz, in a certain sense at least, suspended literature. One can only write a black novel about Auschwitz, or a cheap serial, which begins in Auschwitz and is still not over. By which I mean that nothing has happened since Auschwitz that could reverse or refute Auschwitz. In my writings, the Holocaust could never be present in the past tense."

How can we comprehend what these people felt during and after this tragic experience? Many young girls and boys ask themselves this question today. Angelina, from Lyons, said "I would like to know what happened to the survivors of the deportation camps; how did they readjust to everyday life? What conclusions did they draw from this genocide? Do they think it could happen again and why?" Sophie Lemaire and Magali Kaminski find it difficult to understand how this was possible: "How can we imagine that human beings planned and implemented such a horror whose goal was the persecution and extermination of the Jewish people?" (*Mémoire juive et éducation*) - <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/d-d.natanson/sa>)

Let us listen to the testimony of some of the survivors. Joseph H., born in Bratislava in 1930, deported to Sachsenhausen in 1944, answers, "We cannot make the entire history of the concentration camps disappear, that is clear. But I have tried to act as though nothing had happened. I cannot talk about it all the time. With my mother-in-law, I talk about everything, except Auschwitz. However, when I visit another aunt, well, within ten minutes, I'm already at Auschwitz, on the platform. It's absolutely intolerable! How long and how many times can we go on talking about it? We have been through a nightmare, and that is why we cannot talk about it over and over again. It's degrading for us.

That human beings could be capable of setting up concentration camps, of taking away the dignity of their fellow human beings, of dehumanising them in the most violent manner, this is what those who were in concentration camps were forced to experience thoroughly, utterly, completely. After being in a concentration camp, one can never be naive or hold one's fellow human being in high esteem ever again. From a rational, and not emotional, point of view, I can understand that such a murderous machine could be created and run professionally by the SS. All that is needed is an ideology to justify it. Ideology can justify genocide today, too. But what I find more difficult to understand is how the victims allowed themselves to be taken advantage of, and in so doing participated in the genocide." Raphael Gross, Eva Lezzi et Marc R. Richter (Ed.), "Un monde qui avait perdu sa réalité... ", (A world that had lost its reality) Lausanne, Editions Antipodes, 2003, p. 75.

Golda L., born in Berlin in 1935, says, "I experienced war and the atmosphere in Berlin before the war, but not during the Holocaust. Because I was in France and later in Switzerland. Therefore, since I was born before the war, I am part of the first generation, but at the same time, I cannot be compared with those in the concentration camps who survived the Holocaust. Its impact on me is that ever since I was 3 and a half, I have had to live with a feeling of total solitude, my constant companion in my wanderings the world over. I was completely at a loss when I felt to me to give a sense of security and warmth to my children - something other mothers are perhaps better able to do. I have been much reproached for this, and I think that the second generation too finds it very hard time to understand." Raphael Gross, op. cit., pp.59-60.

The second part of the seminar was dedicated to honouring those who resisted. Their example keeps people from thinking that it is not worth doing anything and that it is best to knuckle under and wait for better days . The actions of the Swiss diplomats, Karl Lutz in Budapest and René de Weck in Bucharest, are significant: these men managed to save tens of thousands of Jews, and disobeyed their government's orders. Others acted more anonymously, either in the framework of their

professional activities like Friedel Bohny-Reiter at the camp in Rivesaltes in 1941 and 1942, or on a personal level. It is rather worrisome that sometimes decades have to pass before their merits are universally recognized. If the young people in our schools read Friedel Bohny-Reiter's diary, they will be less likely to see the Holocaust as abstract suffering.

The last part focussed particularly on the learning materials available to the teachers and pupils in our schools. The title of this session, "Day of Remembrance in our schools," merits a few words. On 18 October 2002, the European Ministers of Education of the European Cultural Convention signatory states reaffirmed their intention to institute in schools a Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the prevention of crimes against humanity, starting in 2003, on dates chosen in accordance with national practice and priorities. Hungary chose 16 April, while several countries adopted 27 January, the day that Auschwitz was liberated by the Red Army. In Switzerland the date of 27 January was also chosen because there was no more significant date during this period of our history.

We felt it was imperative to highlight three topics during this "Day of Remembrance": a reminder of the tragedy of the Holocaust, a more general reminder of the genocides that marked XXth-century European history, and reflections on human rights, tolerance, and inter-religious and intercultural dialogue. We will therefore need to supplement the teaching materials available and train teachers to carry out this task.

Here in Hungary, Mr Andras NYIRI, a member of the Hungarian association of history teachers, presented new teaching materials dealing with these events that have been compiled in co-operation with the Hungarian Ministry of Education. Several institutions have worked together closely on this project, including the Hungarian association of history teachers, teacher-training institutions, historians, textbook writers and, of course, the Hungarian Ministry of Education. Teacher guides have been prepared, as have materials designed to give teachers ideas. The materials are interdisciplinary, containing a chronology, texts from archives, letters and poems, extracts from novels, lesson plans and a list of books and films about these events.

The Future

It is crucial for teachers to be able to obtain information about existing material. The Council of Europe plays a pivotal role here, as it gathers information from all the member countries of the Council for Cultural Co-operation. History teachers' associations are also good sources of

information in the various areas of our subject; indeed they play a leading role.

The future lies in teaching our pupils remembrance, in other words in making immediate and visible that which is absent. Collective memory must not be rendered routine, nor the past trivialised. We must reflect on the present and the future with our pupils by answering the many questions they ask themselves and us. This is the second aspect of our project: to educate to prevent crimes against humanity. It is also a way to respond to pupils' and adults' concerns about resurgent racist hatred. Isabelle Morin and Cecile Boucher choose to focus on life values: "We would like to live full and happy lives and we fervently hope that such horrors will never be repeated." Johanna Zezir and Aurelie Saint-Yves also call for people to look at what is happening around them today, "Judge for yourselves, but what happened in the past must not be forgotten, and [also look at] what is happening today. For example, racist violence, intolerance, massacres in some countries." (Mémoire juive et éducation - <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/d-d.natanson/sa>)

To do this, we are producing and publishing a number of teaching tools in the framework of the project "Teaching Remembrance - education for the prevention of crimes against humanity." These include:

- La catastrophe du XX^e siècle [The disaster of the XXth century], deals primarily with the Holocaust and is available on the project's website ().
- The list of Remembrance Days chosen by Council of Europe member states and the information and references currently available ().
- Anne-Marie Baron. La Shoah à l'écran, crimes contre l'humanité et représentation. [The Holocaust on the screen: crimes against humanity and representation].
- The proceedings of each conference or seminar.
- In addition, a work on the use of remembrance and testimonies in teaching will be published. It will be more general and touch on the various tragic events of the 20th century. Testimonies are important in helping pupils develop a critical perspective on today's events.
- One or more texts on the role of works of art: consideration to be given to a compendium of good practices for schools based on a review of the instructional value of works of art.
- An interactive map of places of remembrance in Europe, which will be available on the project's website.

Likewise, the co-operation begun here between the projects Teaching remembrance: Education for the prevention of crimes against humanity and Education for Roma and Gypsy children in Europe should be pursued. Both have similar goals, in particular, everything concerning knowledge of and respect for human rights. Fighting racism and all

forms of discrimination and promoting intercultural and inter-religious dialogue must be at the centre of our concerns. The role of justice must not be neglected either; it is also crucial. After the Second World War, on 11 December 1946, the International Military Tribunal defined genocide for the first time in Resolution 96: genocide is the denial of the right of existence of entire human groups, as homicide is the denial of the right to live of individual human beings; such denial of the right of existence shocks the conscience of mankind, results in great loss to humanity in the form of cultural and other contributions represented by these groups, and is contrary to moral law and to the spirit and aims of the United Nations." ... It " is a crime under international law which the civilized world condemns, and for the commission of which principals and accomplices - whether private individuals, public officials or statesmen, and whether the crime is committed on religious, racial, political or any other grounds - are punishable."**

On 9 December 1948, the United Nations signed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide: "Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: a) killing members of the group; b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

That same year, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1950, the Council of Europe member states adopted the European Convention on Human Rights and created the European Court of Human Rights as a means to ensure its practical implementation.

In conclusion, I hope that, in remembering the tens of millions of victims of genocide and the crimes against humanity committed on our planet during the 20th century, we will be able to turn the wish expressed in 1947 - "Never again - plus jamais" - into a reality for society in the 3rd millennium.

