



THE ISG NEWSLETTER

Number 44

SPRING 2010

NOTED WITH REGRET: OBAMA BACKS DOWN

MEMORIAL DAY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE
APRIL 24:

“Obama Marks Genocide Without Saying the Word:

President Obama, who as a candidate vowed to use the term genocide to describe the Ottoman mass slaughter of Armenians nearly a century ago, once again declined to do so on Saturday as he marked the anniversary of the start of the killings....’ On this solemn day of remembrance, we pause to recall that 95 years ago one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century began....In that dark moment of history, 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire.”....

“In March, the House Foreign Affairs Committee voted narrowly to condemn the killings as an act of genocide, defying a last-minute plea from the Obama administration to forgo a vote because it would threaten the Turkish-Armenian reconciliation efforts.”

Peter Baker, New York Times, April 25, 2010, A14.

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NOTED WITH REGRET: OBAMA BACKS DOWN

SUDAN COMMITMENT:

Nicholas D. Kristof, “Obama Backs Down on Sudan: “Until he reached the White House, Barack Obama repeatedly insisted that the United States apply more pressure on Sudan so as to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe in Darfur and elsewhere. Yet as president, Mr. Obama and his aides have caved, leaving Sudan gloating at American weakness. Western monitors, Sudanese journalists and local civil society groups have all found this month’s Sudanese elections to be deeply flawed—yet Mr. Obama’s special envoy for Sudan, Maj. Gen. Scott Gration, preemptively defended the elections, saying that they would be ‘as free and as fair as possible.’ The White House showed only a hint more backbone with a hurried reference this week to ‘an essential step’ with serious irregularities.’ “President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan—the man wanted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity in Darfur—has been celebrating. ... “Memo to Mr. Obama: When a man who has been charged with crimes against humanity tells the world that America is in its pocket, it’s time to review your policy”.

New York Times, April 22, 2010. A25

GENOCIDE SCHOLAR WINS CASE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN ECHR

The European Court on Human Rights ruled on December 22, 2009 in favor of a case litigated by co-counsel Sheri Rosenberg (for the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law and Human Rights Watch), ruling that the constitution of Bosnia which excludes Jews and Roma from the highest state offices is unlawful discrimination. The Bosnian constitution, drafted during the 1995 peace talks in Dayton, Ohio, restricts the highest office of state to members of Bosnia's three main ethnic and religious groups: Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims).

Sheri Rosenberg is Executive Director of the Institute for the Study of Genocide and a Professor

at the Cardozo School of Law and director of the Human Rights and Genocide Clinic there. The case was supported throughout by Minority Rights Group International and the Human Rights and Genocide Clinic at the Cardozo School of Law.

She said that "The court's ruling is a major step forward in Europe's struggle against discrimination and ethnic conflict. This decision affirms that ethnic domination should have no rule in a democracy."

ZIMBABWE: GENOCIDE OR CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY?

BY RHODA HOWARD-HASSMANN

Rhoda Howard-Hassman

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Note: References are available on request from the author: hassmann@wlu.ca

On 26 December 2008 Gregory Stanton, then President of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, and Helen Fein, then Executive Director of the Institute for the Study of Genocide, sent a letter to the New York Times, arguing that Robert Mugabe was committing genocide by attrition in Zimbabwe. The term “genocide by attrition,” they argued, fell under Article 2, (c) of the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention defining genocide *inter alia* as “Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.”

Helen Fein had first introduced the term “genocide by attrition” in 1993. Genocide by attrition, she said, “decimates group members by several methods, including creating conditions undermining physical and mental health that regularly result in death of part of the group and demoralization and atomization of the remainder”. Methods of genocide by attrition included “starvation, denial of heating fuel and clean water, overcrowding, overwork and exhaustion, and the consequent epidemics and diseases”. Fein’s examples were ghettoized Jews during WWII, victims of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and Southern Sudanese victims of various Sudanese governments (Fein in *Health and Human Rights* vol. 2, 1993.)

In making their case for genocide by attrition in Zimbabwe, Stanton and Fein cited two events. The first was the cholera epidemic that began in 2008 (and continued through 2009), conforming to Fein’s argument that spread of disease is an aspect of genocide by attrition. Undoubtedly, the cholera epidemic in Zimbabwe was caused in whole or large

part by the breakdown of Zimbabwe’s infrastructure, itself caused by severe neglect, corruption, and lack of funds to maintain the infrastructure consequent upon economic breakdown. Most Zimbabwean medical professionals had also fled the country by 2008. There were 98,592 cholera cases reported in Zimbabwe between August 2008 and mid-July 2009, resulting in 4,288 deaths. While these deaths were undoubtedly an avoidable tragedy, they do not appear to have been of sufficient numbers to indicate genocide.

The second event that Stanton and Fein cited as evidence of genocide was “Operation Drive Out Trash,” the expulsion in 2005 of about 700,000 urban residents from their homes and small businesses. In her definition of genocide by attrition, Fein included denial of shelter “with intent to discriminate against the victim group.” It does seem clear that Mugabe’s intent in instituting Operation Drive Out Trash was to discriminate against the group he defined as opponents to his regime by driving them out of their shelters. Many of the expelled residents, however, returned to the cities and rebuilt their homes, many moved to other parts of Zimbabwe, and many were presumably among the estimated 3 million refugees in South Africa, Botswana, and elsewhere. Again, while they undoubtedly experienced severe hardship, it is difficult to argue that the expellees were victims of genocide.

Finally, Stanton and Fein accused Mugabe of creating famine: “State-created hyper-inflation has caused famine, though not for Mugabe’s partisans,” they argued. Deliberate creation of famine is a principal means of genocide by attrition. In this case, Stanton and Fein were correct that hyper-inflation helped create famine, but they did not go far enough in their analysis. Other policies were more important in creating famine

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than the hyper-inflation that Stanton and Fein observed in 2008. Most important was the policy of violent takeover of white-owned commercial farms, initiated in 2000. This resulted not only in the expulsion of the white owners, but also in loss of livelihood for about 200,000 farms workers and their dependents, affecting an estimated million and a half to two million people. Moreover, the expulsions meant the end of large-scale production for the internal food market, so that the entire country began to suffer from lack of food. Food exports also declined considerably, undermining the government's capacity to collect revenue that could be used to support infrastructure. Meantime, Mugabe distributed state-owned grain only to his supporters, withholding it from his real or perceived opponents. From 2000 to 2009, mass starvation was prevented only by the good offices of the World Food Program and other intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies. Statistics on Zimbabwe provided by international bodies do not list deaths from starvation; they do indicate a drastic decline in life expectancy from 56.4 years from 1990 to 1995 to an estimated 37.3 years in 2005-2010. It is unclear how much of this decline was caused by the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS, rather than starvation; on the other hand, the intermixture of HIV/AIDS and malnutrition is a "new variant famine," to use Alex De Waal's terminology (De Waal in *The New Famines*, 2007).

The UNGC entails obligations on states to prevent and punish the crime of genocide. But even if it could be shown that Zimbabweans were suffering famine in the early 2000s, the famine was not technically genocide. The UNGC defines potential victims of genocide as members of national, ethnic, racial, or religious groups, but those who died from hunger or related causes such as cholera in Zimbabwe were persecuted on the basis of

their real or perceived opposition to the Mugabe regime, not their memberships in any of these four groups.

It is possible, however, that the minority Ndebele people of Zimbabwe suffered disproportionately from hunger and other aspects of mistreatment in Zimbabwe, as compared to members of the majority Shona people, among whom was Mugabe himself. At independence in 1980, about 80 per cent of the population was Shona, while about 10 per cent were Ndebele. During the war of independence, Mugabe had been allied with Joshua Nkomo, leader of a separate Ndebele-based independence movement. Although Mugabe and Nkomo had reached an accord in the early independence period, Mugabe was anxious to force Nkomo and his party out of the political arena as soon as possible.

In 1983-4, there was an uprising in Matabeleland where the Ndebele lived. This uprising was impelled in part by charges that the Ndebele were being deprived of development funds and drought relief. In response, forces loyal to Mugabe tortured, killed and starved to death thousands of minority Ndebele, with very little criticism from the international community; the exact number killed is not known, as the Zimbabwe government refused to release a report it commissioned. Using dehumanizing language typical of pre-genocidal situations, Mugabe and his allies referred to Nkomo and his supporters as "germs" and "snakes". As Genocide Watch reported in 2002, "The crimes included mass murder of whole villages, mass rape, and widespread torture. The victims were often forced to sing Shona songs before being beaten and killed." The principal reason for this massacre was to intimidate Nkomo's followers to switch their allegiance to Mugabe, although a residual reason

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might have been historic resentment of 19th-century raids on Shona by Ndebele, whose arrival in Zimbabwe was part of the vast expansion of the South Africa-based Zulu Empire.

Stanton and Fein refer to the 1983 Matabeleland massacre as genocide, as the Ndebele fell directly into the legal category of an ethnic group. This is probably a correct usage of the term. However, the majority Shona victims of Mugabe's continued abusive rule in Zimbabwe in the 21st century constitute a different category of victim; it is a stretch to claim that they are victims of genocide, even genocide by attrition. On the other hand, one might argue that Mugabe's opponents, whether white, Ndebele, or Shona, are victims of politicide. Evidence for politicide includes not only the disease, expulsions, farm invasions, and politically-biased distribution of food noted above, but also systematic murders, torture, and rapes of Mugabe's opponents, extending into 2009, after Mugabe's formal agreement to share power with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change. Schabas notes that "the concept of genocide has been extended to acts that compromise the survival of a group" (Schabas in *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, vol. 1, 2006), but politicide, although commonly used in the academic literature on genocide, does not yet have a firm legal basis as a type of genocide. Moreover, one would have to consider what "survival" of a group means in this context. One might argue that whites are victims of ethnic cleansing in so far as they no longer constitute a group, "white citizens of Zimbabwe," since many have emigrated, but they are certainly not victims of genocide. Shona and Ndebele people still constitute ethnic groups within Zimbabwe, despite massive refugee movements and even though many are currently living in extremely degraded conditions. Their survival as such is not threatened, though it

might well have been had not the world community been distributing food in Zimbabwe for the last ten years. The group, "opponents of Mugabe's rule," targeted for politicide, still exists, despite massive persecution.

On the other hand, one of the crimes that Mugabe and his allies have been committing is faminogenesis, a term introduced by David Marcus in the *American Journal of International Law* (vol. 97, 2003). Marcus proposes four degrees of faminogenesis, of which the first is deliberate creation of famine, as in Zimbabwe. Deliberate creation of famine is not yet specified as a separate crime in international law, either as a crime against humanity or as a type of genocide. Famine is covered in the International Criminal Court's definition of crimes against humanity which include "other inhumane acts...intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health". Thus, in the absence of clear legal agreement that politicide is a type of genocide, we can definitely argue that Mugabe and his allies have been committing massive crimes against humanity in Zimbabwe. The unnecessary creation of disease, expulsions of people from their homes, and faminogenesis, are all inhumane acts that cause great suffering and serious injury to bodily and mental health, and all were and are the consequences of deliberate policy choices by Robert Mugabe and his allies in Zimbabwe.

NEW RESEARCH ON THE ALLIES' FAILURE TO BOMB AUSCHWITZ BY RAFAEL MEDOFF

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Historians researching the Allies' response to the Holocaust have pinpointed a number of specific steps that might have been taken to rescue Jews from the Nazis or at least interrupt the mass-murder process. These include opening Palestine to escapees from Europe, using returning U.S. troopships to bring refugees to the United States or Latin America temporarily, and providing meaningful funding to the U.S. government's War Refugee Board to carry out unorthodox rescue operations in Europe. But the step that has attracted by far the most public attention over the years is the idea of bombing the death camps or the railways leading to them.

Discussed occasionally in the postwar Jewish press, the bombing issue was also raised by a number of Holocaust and genocide historians in the 1960s and 1970s, from Raoul Hilberg in *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961) to Helen Fein in *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization During the Holocaust* (1979). It received its most comprehensive treatment in an essay by David S. Wyman for *Commentary* in 1978, later incorporated in his bestselling book, *The Abandonment of the Jews* (1984).

Wyman revealed that in the summer and autumn of 1944, the U.S. repeatedly bombed German oil factories situated extremely close to Auschwitz, in some instances less than five miles from the gas chambers. This information dispelled a number of prevailing myths about the bombing issue. First, it proved that U.S. bombers were capable of reaching the death camp; second, it demonstrated that they could have struck Auschwitz at a time when the gas chambers were still operating and therefore might have saved lives; and third, it shattered the

claims made by Roosevelt administration officials at the time. When Jewish organizations requested the bombing of the death camp in 1944, Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy, who received the requests, insisted that attacking the camps would divert resources that were "essential" to Allied military operations elsewhere.

Wyman's work was not, however, the final word on the subject. In recent years, evidence has come forth to shed additional light on a number of aspects of this important topic.

NEW EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY

In a series of oral history interviews conducted by the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, former Auschwitz prisoners have provided eyewitness accounts of some of the Allied bombings in and near the camp.

Lidia Vago of Tel Aviv, widow of the the renowned European Jewish historian Bela Vago, was assigned to a slave labor battalion on the outskirts of Auschwitz. She was there when the Americans began bombing the oil factories in August 1944. "Each time the Americans bombed the area, the air-raid sirens would sound," Mrs. Vago recalled in the interview. "The SS men all ran to shelters, but of course the Jews were left unprotected. Our building was never directly hit, but the windows and the glass part of the ceiling shattered from the force of the explosions nearby. Of course we were scared--but we were also very, very happy. Even though we knew that we or other prisoners might be killed by the bombings, we knew that we were all going to be killed by the Germans anyway, so we hoped and prayed that the Allies would bomb the gas chambers and the crematoria. That would have stopped the mass murders."

Dr. Tomas Radil, a scientist who lives in Prague,

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was at age 13 taken to Birkenau, the mass murder section of Auschwitz, where he was housed with one thousand other teenage boys. Radil and his fellow-prisoners watched in amazement as Allied planes bombed the camp's industrial zone on August 20, 1944. "The first one was a fantastic mass festivity among the prisoners," he said in his interview with the Wyman Institute. "Hundreds of prisoners were shouting loudly and joyfully, not being afraid at all of any potential bombing while watching the American aircraft flying above. The danger of being killed by the bombs was ridiculously small in comparison with the danger of being murdered by the Nazis in the camp. For the first time, it was the Germans who were scared--it was big fun for the prisoners."

Sigmund Rolat, a New York City-based businessman and philanthropist, was a teenage prisoner in the Nazi slave labor camp of Hasag Pelcery, less than fifty miles from Auschwitz. In his interview, Rolat described how one morning in August 1944, he, suddenly heard a roaring sound in the sky above. "I looked up and saw something unbelievable. American planes, right above us. It seemed like a miracle." Rolat and his fellow-prisoners cheered.

Five years ago, Rolat, filmmaker Stuart Erdheim, and Israel Television's Chaim Hecht headed a Wyman Institute team that recorded the recollections of the most prominent bombing witness of all: former U.S. Senator and 1972 presidential candidate George S. McGovern. In World War II, McGovern was a pilot in the 455th Bomb Group, which bombed the industrial section of Auschwitz. "There is no question we should have attempted ... to go after Auschwitz," McGovern said in the interview. "There was a pretty good chance we could have blasted those rail lines off the face of the earth, which would have interrupted the flow of people

to those death chambers, and we had a pretty good chance of knocking out those gas ovens." He added: "Franklin Roosevelt was a great man and he was my political hero," he said. "But I think he made two great mistakes in World War Two." One was the internment of Japanese-Americans; the other was the decision "not to go after Auschwitz ... God forgive us for that tragic miscalculation."

NEW INFORMATION ON REQUESTS TO BOMB

Research by this author, published in scholarly journals such as *American Jewish History* and *Modern Judaism*, found that calls by American Jewish leaders and organizations for the bombing of Auschwitz were much more extensive than previously known.

We now know that appeals for bombing either the camps or the railways were made, either in public or in private to U.S. officials, by, for example, the Labor Zionist journal *Jewish Frontier*; the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe (the Bergson Group), the Orthodox group Agudath Israel, *Morgen Zhurnal* columnist Jacob Fishman, the editors of the *Independent Jewish Press Service*, and, most important, Nahum Goldmann, who was the Washington, D.C. representative of Palestine's Jewish Agency as well as cochairman of the World Jewish Congress. Goldmann met repeatedly with U.S. and Soviet officials in Washington in 1944 and urged them to bomb Auschwitz.

Goldmann's role was particularly significant because another WJCongress official, A. Leon Kubowitzki, urged the Allies to send ground troops, and not planes, to attack Auschwitz, for fear that a bombing raid would harm prisoners. Until the new information about Goldmann's bombing requests was discovered, it was erroneously assumed that

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Kubowitzki's position was the official position of the World Jewish Congress leadership.

NEW EVIDENCE REGARDING BEN-GURION AND THE JEWISH AGENCY

There has also been significant new research on the role of David Ben-Gurion and the Jewish Agency in the bombing controversy.

Ben-Gurion's position has been the focus of interest because a longtime leader of the Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, William vanden Heuvel, has repeatedly claimed that Ben-Gurion opposed bombing Auschwitz. Mr. vanden Heuvel, an ardent defender of President Roosevelt's response to the Holocaust, contends that if Jewish leaders themselves were against bombing Auschwitz, it is unreasonable to blame FDR or his administration for failing to bomb it. Vanden Heuvel and his allies even succeeded, in 1996, in persuading the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to alter its exhibit on the bombing issue. The revised exhibit emphasizes alleged Jewish opposition to bombing, thus in effect minimizing the Roosevelt administration's culpability.

The Roosevelt Institute's claim concerning Ben-Gurion is based on a single document: a transcript of a June 11, 1944 meeting in Jerusalem of the Jewish Agency Executive, which Ben-Gurion chaired. During the meeting, the idea of asking the Allies to bomb Auschwitz was raised, and endorsed, by Yitzhak Gruenbaum, chairman of the Agency's Rescue Committee.

Ben-Gurion commented, "We do not know the real situation in Poland, and it seems to him [the Agency's recording secretary often presented the comments in the third person] that we cannot propose anything in this matter." Another member of the executive, Dr. Emil Schmorak, remarked: "It

is said that in Oswiecim there is a large labor camp. We cannot take on the responsibility for a bombing that could cause the death of even one Jew." Ben-Gurion concluded the discussion by saying that "it is the position of the Executive not to propose to the Allies the bombing of places where Jews are located."

Yet in the months following the June 11 meeting, senior Jewish Agency representatives in a number of countries --including Agency president Chaim Weizmann, in London-- tried to persuade Allied officials to bomb Auschwitz. How could Weizmann and other Agency officials lobby for bombing, given the declared opposition of the Agency's Executive? And does the absence of any record of the Jewish Agency leadership reversing its June 11 position prove that FDR's defenders have a legitimate point?

In the spring of 2009, I set out to resolve this mystery by examining the papers of Yitzhak Gruenbaum. This collection, housed at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, was closed to the public in the early 1980s in preparation for a digitalization project. They were reopened to the public in June 2009. Tracing Gruenbaum's actions during the days after the meeting, I found that for eighteen days, there are no records of Gruenbaum promoting bombing. Evidently he was honoring the position taken by the Jewish Agency Executive on June 11 to refrain from asking for such action by the Allies. On June 30, however, Gruenbaum suddenly resumed his efforts to advance the bombing idea. How can this be explained, in view of the June 11 decision? Either Gruenbaum chose to defy the Jewish Agency Executive--or something happened shortly before June 30 that resulted in the Executive changing its position.

Something did happen.

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In April 1944, as the Germans prepared to deport hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz, two inmates, Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler, made one of the very few successful escapes from the camp. After an eleven-day, eighty-mile trek through southern Poland, Vrba and Wetzler reached Slovakia, where they met with Jewish leaders and dictated a thirty-page report that came to be known as the "Auschwitz Protocols." It described the mass-murder process in detail and included maps pinpointing the huge gas chambers and crematoria.

In mid-June, a copy of the Vrba-Wetzler report reached Richard Lichtheim, the Jewish Agency's representative in Geneva. On June 19, Lichtheim compiled a five-page summary for the Agency leadership, which he sent to Gruenbaum, as chairman of the JA Rescue Committee. In the summary, Lichtheim explained that, like his colleagues in Jerusalem, he had, until that point, mistakenly thought Auschwitz-Birkenau was a labor camp. The Vrba-Wetzler report revealed the truth. "We now know exactly what has happened and where it has happened," he wrote. "There is a labour camp in Birkenau just as in many other places of Upper Silesia, and there are still many thousands of Jews working there and in the neighbouring places (Jawischowitz etc). But apart from the labour-camps proper [there are] specially constructed buildings with gas-chambers and crematoriums....The total number of Jews killed in or near Birkenau is estimated at over one and a half million....12,000 Jews are now deported from Hungary every day. They are also sent to Birkenau. It is estimated that of a total of one million 800,000 Jews or more so far sent to Upper-Silesia 90% of the men and 95% of the women have been killed immediately..."

Now we can understand why Gruenbaum, on June 30, suddenly resumed pressing for an Allied bombing of Auschwitz--and why his Jewish Agency colleagues did not object to his efforts. They finally knew the truth about Auschwitz.

On June 30, Gruenbaum met with Julian Meltzer, the Jerusalem correspondent for the New York Times, provided him with details about Auschwitz and the deportation of Hungarian Jews, and gave him statements, on the record, urging the Allies to bomb Auschwitz, which Meltzer included in the article. (For unknown reasons, the article was not published.) Gruenbaum was trying to have his statements urging the Allies to bomb Auschwitz published in the most important newspaper in the world. It hardly seems plausible that Gruenbaum would have taken such a step if the Agency's opposition to asking for bombing was still in force.

Jewish Agency president Chaim Weizmann and Moshe Shertok, head of the Agency's Political Department, met on June 30 with the British Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, George Hall. Among other things, they urged that "death camps should be bombed." Later that day, Shertok cabled Ben-Gurion to describe the meeting. On July 6, Weizmann and Shertok met with British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden, in London, and urged the bombing of both the railways and "the death-camps at Birkenau and other places." Shertok again reported to Ben-Gurion--something that is inconceivable if the June 11 position against bombing was still in force.

Meanwhile, in Washington, Nahum Goldman, acting as a Jewish Agency representative, repeatedly sought to persuade Soviet and U.S. officials to "destroy these camps by bombing or any other

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means.” And on September 3, Eliahu Epstein, a close aide to Ben-Gurion, wrote to him from Cairo to report on his own recent attempt to convince a local Soviet diplomat that the Russians should “bomb the centers of Jewish extermination in Poland.” (The diplomat said “such an idea was out of the question politically, since the government of Russia would not adopt measures that were based on national grounds.”) There is no record of Ben-Gurion objecting to any of these efforts.

Two meetings in Jerusalem in the autumn of 1944 provide the final pieces to the puzzle.

At a September 5 meeting of the Jewish Agency-affiliated Smaller Zionist Actions Committee, Gruenbaum spoke of the need for the Allies to “bomb Osweicim, destroy Oswiecim, bomb transportation lines.” Then he added: “But it is impossible to say such things explicitly and openly in a resolution passed by the Actions Committee.” The implication was that there was an unwritten understanding within the Zionist leadership that the Jewish Agency and its affiliates would not go on record as calling for bombing. (Perhaps for fear of being blamed if any prisoners were inadvertently harmed in such raids.) If there was no such unwritten understanding, Gruenbaum’s September 5 remark would have made no sense.

Then, on October 3, 1944, the members of the Jewish Agency Rescue Committee, meeting in Jerusalem, received their most detailed on-the-record briefing about the lobbying campaign. Gruenbaum reported:

Since June we have sent emergency telegrams to all the countries regarding the fate of the Jews remaining in Poland in labor camps and we made a number of demands. We demanded, first of all, that they bomb Oswiecim, that they should destroy the

death camps. This is because the death factories facilitate the destruction of large numbers of Jews every day, whereas if they could not destroy them in this sophisticated industrial manner, it would require a long time and a large number of people, and in the situation which Germany now finds itself this would be very difficult for it. Therefore, if they would destroy the death factories it would be possible to save Jews. In the beginning, many months ago, when we made this proposal, the reply was completely negative. They asked if it was acceptable to us that when they bombed the death camps, Jews would be killed. Suddenly these people are worried about the Jews, that they would kill them in the bombings. At the time they bombed Budapest, they were not worried about that. They said: “Won’t the Jews raise a cry that not only the Germans are killing them but also the British?” I said to them, the Jews in the death camps face only extermination, Jews do not reside there. Even among us there were people who thought this was impossible, who had similar reservations. Ultimately, these matters were brought to London, placed before the government and reached the High Command. And the High Command decided that it is not practicable. There are reports from London from our colleagues who are in contact with the Polish government, that this is not correct.

Gruenbaum’s October 3 presentation and its reception were remarkable for several reasons. First, none of the committee members expressed any concerns or objections. If the June 11 position regarding bombing was never changed, surely members of the Agency’s Rescue Committee would have complained about Gruenbaum’s flagrant violations of Agency policy. Second, Gruenbaum, in referring to the opposition by some Agency figures to calling for bombing, referred to their opposition in the past tense, implying that it

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no longer existed.

By the late autumn of 1944, the Jewish Agency's efforts to promote bombing began to taper off. The Allies' repeated rejections of the bombing requests created a stone wall which the Jewish leaders seemingly could not penetrate. At the same time, the retreat of the German army and the approaching end of the war compelled rescue advocates to shift their focus from trying to stop mass killings in the camps to preventing the Germans' reported plan to wipe out the camps in order to kill the last inhabitants and eliminate evidence of their crimes.

CONCLUSION

The leaders of the Roosevelt Institute understandably seek to present FDR in the best possible light. That's their job. The opportunity to use one of the best-known Jewish leaders in modern history, David Ben-Gurion, in Roosevelt's defense may have seemed irresistible from a public relations standpoint. But it was not historically accurate. Their frequent public depictions of Ben-Gurion as an opponent of bombing, and their successful pressure on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in this regard, constitute a disservice to the historical record--but one which, fortunately, it is not too late to correct.

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Darfur: Genocide Before Our Eyes

ed. Joyce Apsel. Institute for the Study of Genocide, 3rd ed., 2007. \$20 in the U.S., \$25 in other countries by Global Priority Mail. Essays by Joyce Apsel on “Teaching About Darfur through the perspective of genocide and human rights”; Jerry Fowler, “The Evolution of Conflict and Genocide in Sudan,”; Eric Markusen and Samuel Totten, “Investigating allegations of genocide in Darfur”; Eric Reeves, “Darfur: Genocide before Our Eyes,”; Gregory Stanton, “Twelve Ways to Deny a Genocide”; and Jennifer Leaning, “The Human Impact of War in Darfur.” Also contains four maps, glossary, webography of sources on Sudan and the test of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. To order, first contact Joyce Apsel, jaa5@nyu.edu

The Prevention of Genocide: Rwanda and Yugoslavia Reconsidered

(Institute for the Study of Genocide, 1994)

\$10 US / \$15 International (Prepaid, international money orders, U.S. Dollars only)

Ever Again?: Evaluating the United Nations Genocide Convention On its 50th Anniversary. (1998) Essays by noted scholars, journalist and lawyers. \$15 US / \$20 International

Teaching About Genocide: An Interdisciplinary Guidebook with Syllabi for College and University Teachers

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