



Zev Garber, Richard Libowitz, eds.. *Peace, In Deed: Essays in Honor of Harry James Cargas*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998. xii + 253 pp. \$39.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-7885-0497-6.



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**Published on** H-Holocaust (May, 1999)

These stimulating and sensitive essays honor the leading Catholic scholar in Holocaust Studies, Harry James Cargas. The tributes in *Peace, In Deed* do not narrate the life of the man, but illuminate his spirit, work, and character as seen by colleagues and friends. The breadth of Cargas's life is seen in the variety and scope of the contributors, Christians and Jews alike. The outstanding scholarship and quality of the contributors is in itself a tribute to the memory of Harry James Cargas.

In the Foreword, Kurt Vonnegut identifies Harry Cargas as "a person of historical importance for having taken into his very bones, as a Christian, the horrifying mystery of how persons could profess love of Jesus Christ, as did most Nazis, ... yet commit a crime as merciless as the extermination of Europe's Jews. Every word he writes or speaks is somehow atonement..." (p. ix).

The centuries-long antisemitism of the Catholic Church is part of that mystery, and atonement is required. As an Irish Catholic with a Catholic education including a Ph.D. from Catholic University, my commitment to teaching the Holo-

caust is based on that mystery and the atonement required.

This work consists of twenty essays exploring Holocaust issues such as the Holocaust and higher education, the relationship between man and God after Auschwitz, and a call for philosophical examination of the question of evil. All readers are likely to find a host of interesting insights and questions, and whatever the level of interest *Peace, In Deed* is well worth the reading and will stimulate the other life in all of us.

The guiding spirits of this work are editors Zev Garber and Richard Libowitz, eminent scholars themselves, who also contribute essays relating to the relationship of man to God after Auschwitz. The editors intended the book "as a tribute," but due to Cargas's death in August 1998, it "must now also serve as a memorial to a true mensch" and "a devout post-Auschwitz Catholic" (p. v). They quote Harry Cargas's signatory statement: "Converting the 'teaching of contempt' to the 'teaching of reconciliation' is the reality of Peace, In Deed" (p. xii). Thus the title of the collection.

This reviewer found all the selections fascinating, but space limitations make it impossible to comment with justice on all the essays. I have focused on several questions to provide a few reactions to the work's fascinating thoughts. The several I have selected relate to areas which support my teaching of the Holocaust, and issues of the need to reassess higher education after Auschwitz.

In his essay on Holocaust denial, Alan L. Berger provides a concise overview of the subject, including some history, types of revisionism, and concrete examples. The scope of this essay will be of special interest and help to both Holocaust studies teachers and scholars.

In the section of Dr. Berger's essay on the universities, he raises the issue of the disappointing way universities have responded to Holocaust denial. He introduces what I consider a seminal issue facing institutions of higher education and reminds us of Dr. Franklin H. Littell's question: "How do we structure the university ... in relation to society and internally that its graduates function as men and women of conscience and wisdom with a commitment to life--and not as mere cogs in genocidal machines?" (p. 42).

Higher education is discussed in a thoughtful and challenging essay by Dr. Marcia Sachs Littell. She points to the fact that the educated Nazis "were not the products of Nazi-run universities, but of institutions widely regarded as among the best in the world. It was the pre-Nazi universities of the 1920s that failed to infuse ethics and humanity into their graduates but, instead, produced masses of technically competent barbarians" (p. 202).

This has been one of the hardest "how could?"s concerning the Holocaust for me. How could men of such education perpetrate the evil of the Holocaust? We know that of fourteen Nazi leaders at the Wannsee Conference, eleven held doctorates from European universities. Dr. Littell asserts that "without the cooperation of the edu-

cated professional elites, the Nazi regime could not have gained power, ruled the Continent for a time, and threatened the entire western world" (p. 204).

Dr. Littell points to the responsibility of the modern university to confront and learn from the lessons of the Holocaust. She questions whether in the 1990s American higher education is doing a better job than did the German universities in preparing professionals "with a more sensitized understanding of the value of the human person, with a deeper commitment to life? Do our skilled scientists and nuclear physicists have a commitment to maintain the highest level of morals and ethics, a commitment to social justice that equals their devotion to technical proficiency" (p. 202). Once again the limits of space inhibit examination of Dr. Littell questions, but the discussion must continue and be addressed by those who can effect change in the culture of higher education.

The problems of evil and responsibility are at the heart of Jacob Neusner's no-nonsense exposition on evil. He frames the analysis by asserting that we have "the rules for clear and cogent thinking" (p. 56) required to determine this responsibility. He identifies the reasoning process required to combat the failure of intellect that resulted in Daniel Goldhagen's assertions. He advises that "rigorous thought" is needed in the study of the causes of the Holocaust. In his assessment, "history flourishes but philosophy languishes...the story of what happened is told eloquently and accurately and responsibly. But thinking about what happened remains at its elementary stages..." (p. 56).

This article is not an easy read but well worth the effort as it reminds us that as rational intellectual beings, we have the tools to discover what we need to know. Dr. Neusner has pointed the way to address issues of causation and responsibility that have been missing in the study of the Holocaust.

Another essay of value to teachers of the Holocaust is the review of Christian-Jewish relations by Eugene J. Fisher. This is a thoughtful,

complete, non-defensive and useful historical overview of the unhappy relations between Christians and Jews over the centuries. Instructors will find firm footing for answering those difficult questions that deal with the essence of the Christian-Jewish historical relationship.

As a student in Catholic institutions where the word Holocaust was never mentioned, I looked forward to the essay on teaching the Holocaust at a Catholic college. I identify with Eugene Fisher's statement from an earlier essay: "When I first began my present position almost twenty years ago, I had to define for Catholic audiences what the term 'Holocaust' meant for Jews, but could presume an awareness of 'Christ-killer' or 'Deicide' charges." (p. 173).

Richard Libowitz initiated Holocaust courses in several Catholic colleges. One of his tasks was to encourage students to question matters they were not accustomed or comfortable challenging, without seeming himself "to be anti-Christian in general or anti-Catholic in particular" (p. 196). What is disappointing is that Catholic institutions left it to a Rabbi to teach about the Holocaust. Dr. Libowitz's anecdotes resonate in light of my own Holocaust teaching experience. Stand in front of a class of primarily Lutherans and describe Luther's writings on the Jews, and you know exactly what Dr. Libowitz is saying. The Holocaust will never be understood or addressed as long it is seen as a Jewish problem, or a Jewish domain. Unfortunately, this "us-them" does not only apply in Catholic institutions. When I lecture on the Church and anti-semitism to a class of mixed denominations, I often have to pull out my Irish Catholic credential to validate the motives of the instructor--me.

Finally, William Heyen's "Six Poems for Harry James Cargas" support the notion that prose words alone fail in getting to the heart of the matter of a horror like the Holocaust. Exquisite pain and memory are expressed in these small pieces.

To sum up: the great value of this work is that significant questions are identified in these essays which should be the basis for further pursuit. The brevity of this review cannot do justice to the depth of these essays, but the questions raised here must be addressed.

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**Citation:** Jane Calkins Forster. Review of Garber, Zev; Libowitz, Richard, eds. *Peace, In Deed: Essays in Honor of Harry James Cargas*. H-Holocaust, H-Net Reviews. May, 1999.

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