

Letters to the Editor: Trump, Germany and Poland's Holocaust bill

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Naming a Jerusalem train station for a defender of Nazis

When I was in Jerusalem for the New Year I was horrified to read that Israel was going to name a train station after Donald Trump. I am aware he recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and for that Israeli politicians are grateful. However, Donald Trump is a bigot, racist, sexist and has defended Nazis.

When a group of Nazis marched in the Charlottesville and one killed a woman with his car, Trump came out and said some of the marchers were “good people”. Good people! A Nazi is a Nazi!

I was at Yad Vashem and saw what Nazis did to Jews. Have the Jews who want to name this train station after Trump forgotten? In America Trump is seen by the majority (he lost the popular vote, remember) for what he is: a racist. To name anything after such a man is a disgrace to the memory of all the Jewish dead memorialized in the Holocaust Museum. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

Joseph Distler

Paris

German FM forgets the French

In response to “German FM Weighs in on Polish Holocaust Bill: Germany Alone was Responsible for the Holocaust ‘And No One Else’” (February 3, Haaretz.com)

German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel is quoted as saying: “There is not the slightest doubt as to who was responsible for the extermination camps, operated them and murdered millions of European Jews there: namely Germans. This organized mass murder was committed by our country and by no one else. Individual collaborators do not change that.” But was the “organized mass murder,” which we call the Holocaust, really committed by Germany alone – “and by no one else”? Were non-German “individual collaborators” the only others involved?

Let us have a look at France. German historian Ahlrich Meyer asked, “Who was involved?” His reply: “Like everywhere, in France, too, numerous German offices participated in the ‘final solution’; and these offices were dependent on cooperation with the officially sovereign Vichy regime and its police forces –

not just due to reasons of staff, but also to legitimize the anti-Jewish steps in the eyes of the French population.”

Meyer gives the following details on this cooperation between German offices participating in the “final solution” and the Vichy regime and its police forces:

René Bousquet, general secretary to the Vichy regime police, suggested on July 2, 1942 to hand over Jews from the non-occupied part of France. On July 4, Pierre Laval, head of government of the Vichy regime, confirmed this offer. On the same day Laval offered to deport children under 16 years of age.

Again on July 2, Modest Graf von Korff, chief of SD Chalons-sur-Marne, asked the French prefects of his district to concentrate all the Jews able to work in a camp at Chalons-sur-Marne. And in fact, on July 20, French police arrested 43 persons who were imprisoned in Chalons and then brought to Drancy. On July 27, nearly all of them were deported to Auschwitz.

In the night of July 15, French police arrested 70 Jews in the Bordeaux area. The children who were arrested with their parents were given to other families or to children’s homes, then captured again at the end of August and brought via Drancy to Auschwitz. This “tragic episode”, Meyer says, is connected with the name Maurice Papon. The adults’ train transport from Bordeaux to Drancy was guarded by French policemen.

In Poitiers there was a French internment camp, the so-called camp for nomads and Jews Route de Limoges, from where the SD Poitiers took a larger group of Jews to bring them to Angers. On July 20, a train left Angers which arrived on July 23 in Auschwitz.

Meyer mentions a “dispositive of persecution.” Its participants were from German offices, but also the French police. Its instruments, according to Meyer, were the register dossiers of the French prefectures, the system of French camps and the Wehrmacht prisons. Meyer also says that the police raids on Jews in Paris were handled exclusively by French police forces.

So again the question: Was the Holocaust committed by Germany alone, and were only non-German “individual collaborators” involved? In France, the mentioned examples suggest that there were not just individual French collaborators, but that mass murder was organized in concert with the French government at the time, the Vichy regime.

Soonim Shin

Vienna

The Shoah was not Polish

Why are people suddenly so furious at Poland, and why do they want to

associate Auschwitz and the rest of the Shoah with that country? There was anti-Semitism and episodic anti-Jewish violence all over central and eastern Europe before and during World War II. But the incomparable character of the Shoah is also obvious and something we continually and rightly emphasize – the Final Solution, Six Million dead. And that was German. And the camps to exterminate all the Jews in Europe were German. A German plan and German implementation. Why are so few people willing to acknowledge this most profound and fundamental fact?

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