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Media Relations

Survivors Of Nazi Slave Labor Camps Focus Of UNH Holocaust Lecture Oct. 12

September 30, 2010

DURHAM, N.H. – The history of Jewish slave labor camps in Poland and how the victims survived is the focus of the Hans Heilbronner Lecture at the University of New Hampshire Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2010.

Presented by the College of Liberal Arts and the Department of History, the lecture "Holocaust History and Survivor Testimony: The Case of the Starachowice Factory Slave Camps" begins at 4 p.m. in the Memorial Union Building, Theatre II. The lecture and following roundtable discussion are free and open to the public and sponsored by the Endowed Fund for Holocaust Education.

Christopher Browning, the Frank Porter Graham Distinguished Professor, Department of History, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, will present the lecture based on his newest book, *"Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp."* The book is a study of the Jewish factory slave labor camps in Starachowice in central Poland and is based on nearly 265 survivor testimonies.

In 1942 the liquidation of the Jewish-Polish ghetto of Wierzbnik sent 4,000 Jews to their deaths in Treblinka and enslaved another 1,600 at factory camps in the nearby town of Starachowice. Wierzbnik, at its peak, had 5,400 Jews, of whom 600 to 700 survived the war, and half of these left testimonies in memoirs or others forms.

Browning bases his study primarily on survivor testimonies from the slave labor camps at the Starachowice factory. Nuanced survivor accounts from live interviews, memoirs and archived accounts depicts some Ukrainian guards as sadistic anti-Semites while others were lenient, well-behaved, or corruptible.


Browning's other publications include: *"Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942"* (2004); *"Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland"* (1992); *"The Path to Genocide"* (1992); *"Fateful Months: Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution"* (1985); and *"The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office"* (1978).


A roundtable discussion, "Crossing a Line: Why do Ordinary People become Murderers or Bystanders," will follow the lecture at 7:30 p.m. in Richards Auditorium, Murkland Hall. The roundtable will feature Browning, and UNH professors John Kirkpatrick, David Hiley, Vicki Banyard, and Ben Harris.


The Hans Heilbronner Lecture is named in honor of professor emeritus Hans Heilbronner, who taught Russian history at UNH and who served the university with distinction from 1954 until 1991. He was one of the first Jewish faculty members at the university, and his family escaped Nazi Germany after his veteran father was released from a concentration camp.


The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling more than 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

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