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**Part-time MA in 'Holocaust Studies', *Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies*,
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My aim has been to study the history of the Holocaust/*Shoah* by attending lecture courses and seminars, reading and submitting scholarly essays and a dissertation as an MA student in the *Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies*, University of London. The two year course has provided a link between my recent doctorate on the Book of Judges—submitted to the University of Oxford in 2005 followed by the publication of my commentary on Judges published by Sheffield Phoenix Press (2007)—and my proposed informal study program from September 2009 of reading and reflection about 'Holocaust Theology' under the provisional heading, 'Where is God in all this?'

The part-time MA consisted of three taught courses, an exam, a graduate seminar, the submission of three short essays, three long essays, a dissertation and a study tour of Lithuania.

The first course in the first year was, 'European Jewry and the Holocaust' which traced the origins of antisemitism, Jewish communities in the nineteenth century, the first world war, the rise to power of the Nazis, mass murder of Jews and other persecuted groups, ghettos, concentration camps, death camps, the emergence of the 'final solution', and Jewish resistance. As well as sitting an exam, I submitted three essays on the experiences of Jews as Germans before 1939, partisan and resistance movements, and the experiences of victims in ghettos and camps.

The second course in the first year was a graduate seminar on the 'History of the Holocaust' for which I was required to read recent scholarly historical books and give presentations on what I had read such as those by Doris Bergen, Christopher Browning, Nechama Tec, Marion Kaplan, Inga Clendinnen and others. I submitted a long essay on the motives of perpetrators based on a reading of Daniel Goldhagen's controversial book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (2006).

'Bystanders and the Holocaust' was a half taught course in the second year which traced the responses to the Holocaust of the German people and the responses of countries and governments in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. I submitted a long essay on bystanders in Lithuania, Poland, and France.

The final half taught course in the second year on 'Modern Jewish Politics from 1800' covered the Jewish experience in eastern Europe and Russia about the enlightenment, emancipation, assimilation, antisemitism, Jewish political movements and the emergence of the modern State of Israel. As a non-Jew I found this course a struggle because I lacked

the family and community background, however, I enjoyed reading for the long essay which was about the shift in Jewish communities from traditional to modern politics. The relevance of this particular course for me was the insights into Jewish life prior to the Holocaust.

For the dissertation (15,000 words) I made a historical and scholarly investigation into what I was able to discover about Battery Sergeant Major Charles Coward, a British prisoner of war who rescued Jewish prisoners from Auschwitz while he was in working camp E715 in 1944. I also made an evaluation of John Castle's documentary novel, *The Password is Courage* (1954), which is about Coward's wartime experiences. The research method was firstly, to identify and gather historical sources in autograph documents and files from the National Archives, the British Library and the Wiener Library; secondly, to read, understand, evaluate and discuss primary sources in their historical context; and thirdly, to interview members of the Coward family and those who knew him in order to consider their recollections. I concluded that the Castle book was reliable and that it was so very fitting for Coward to be recognized by Yad Vashem, Jerusalem as 'Righteous Among the Nations' in 1965 and that the honours which have been bestowed on him since the war are justified. Coward was a modest man and an altruist who was embarrassed to be thought of as a hero.

The MA course also included a four day field trip to Lithuania to visit sites and memorials of the mass slaughter of Jews. Our guide took us to the sites of the Kovno and Vilnius ghettos, mass burial sites in the Ponar forest, the Seventh Fort, the Ninth Fort, and the forest hiding places of partisans. Even though this was no holiday and the subject matter was grim, we dined well, drank a little and laughed a lot. This was an outstanding tour which complemented what I had heard in lectures, read in scholarly accounts and presented in essays.

I am grateful to Sion College for the grant towards fees and books which has made possible my participation in this very demanding but rewarding course of academic study. I am also grateful to Professor Michael Berkowitz in the *Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies* for his insight, advice and support. I am able to say that neither the congregation of St Mary's nor the parishioners of Summerstown were neglected during the duration of the course.

From September 2009 I hope to continue as a part-time honorary research associate in the *Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies* in order to make an informal study of 'Holocaust Theology' for which my recent studies has been a preparation.

My long term goal is to compare the genocide text in Judges 21.8-12 with what I have learnt about the Holocaust and with the vast amount of suffering and injustice we see in the world around us—which from time to time threatens to overwhelm faith communities—in order to consider the question, 'Where is God in all this?'