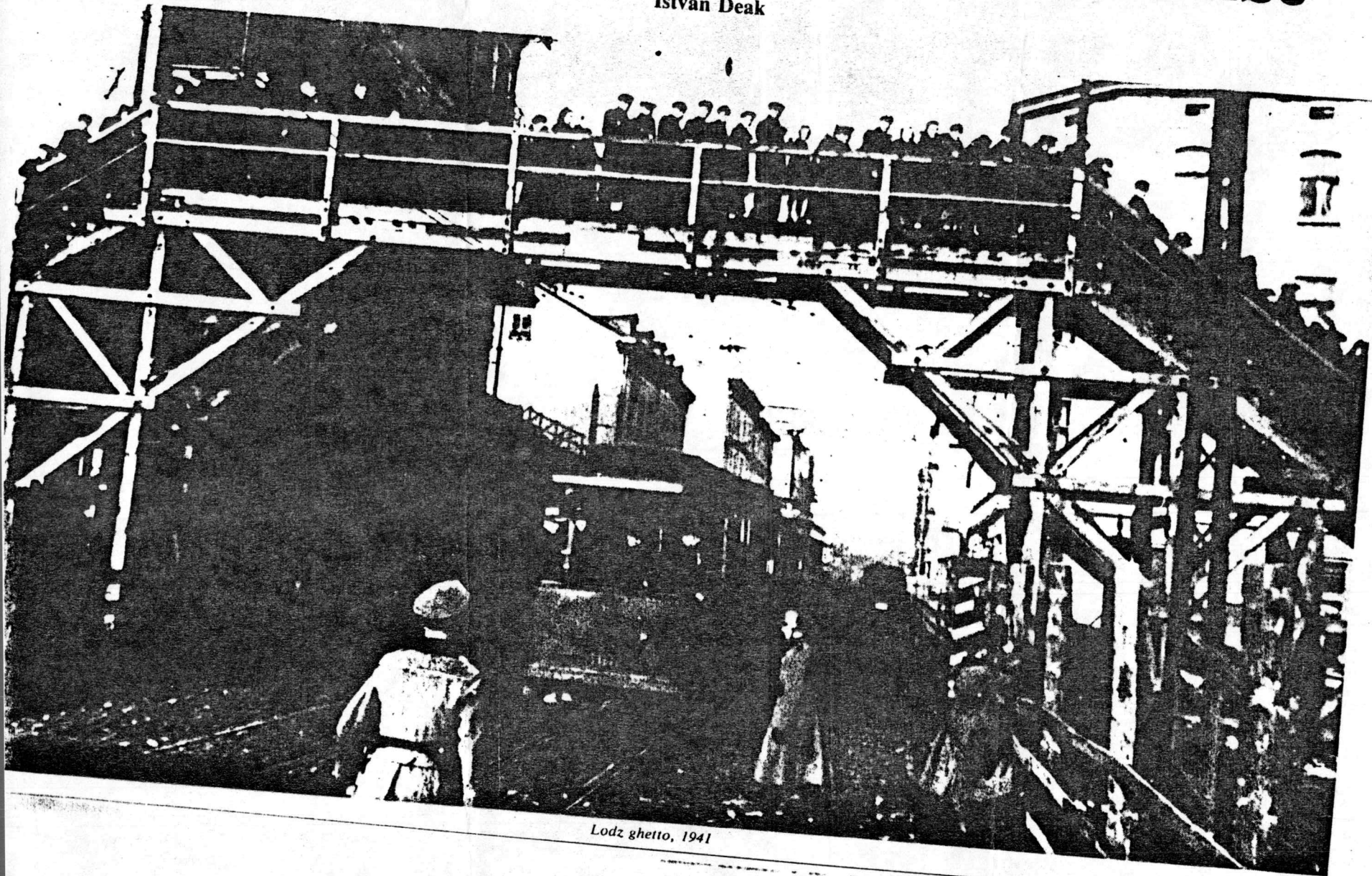
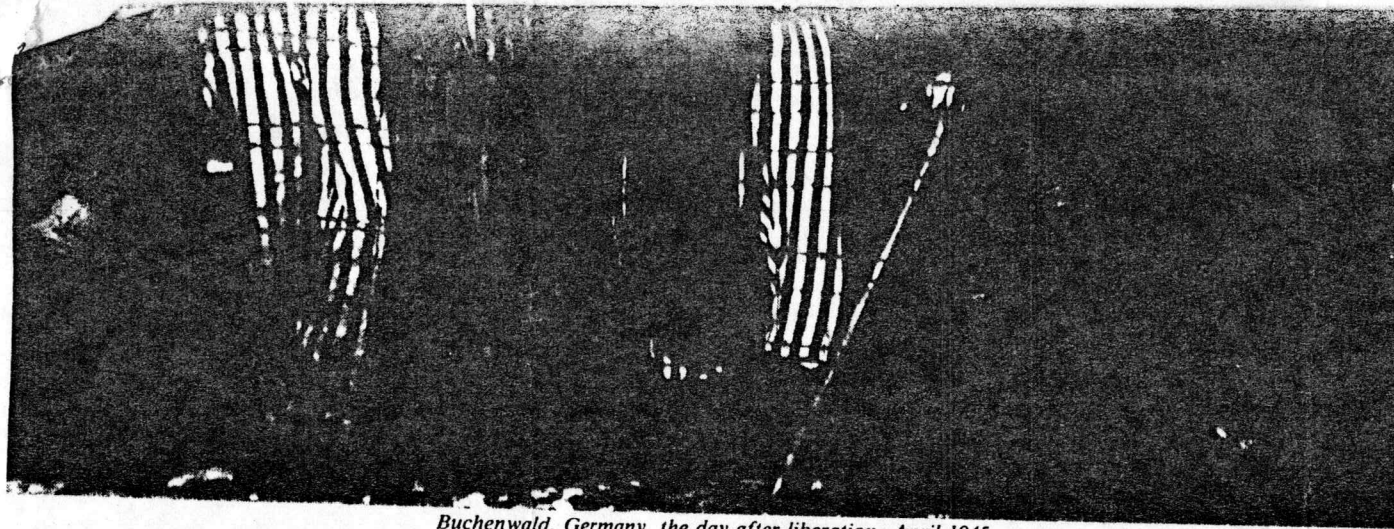


The Incomprehensible Holocaust

Istvan Deak



Lodz ghetto, 1941



Buchenwald, Germany, the day after liberation, April 1945

mother survived to be liberated in Auschwitz by the Red Army.

Unlike other survivors, she has only good things to say about the generosity and kindness of the Soviet soldiers she met. Of routine interest only (if any Auschwitz experience can be called routine), *Eva's Story* nevertheless confirms what has become evident from all the testimonies under review here, namely that a good social background, education, self-confidence, and familiarity with the German language were of immense help in the struggle for survival. Schloss's reminiscences also confirm what we have known for a long time, that whereas both her and Anne Frank's family were hidden by heroic Dutch Gentiles, they were also betrayed to the Gestapo by their Dutch neighbors, and were questioned and guarded by the Dutch police under SS orders.

Who are the survivors? What price in self-respect did they have to pay for being able to dodge the continual selection process? As their testimonies show, even the most heroic and noble among them may not be free of a gnawing sense of guilt. In the criminal *univers concentrationnaire* none remained wholly innocent,

Sprachrohr (Red Megaphones), not all of whom were Jews. Few stories have appeared, in English, on the tragedy of German Communists in the Third Reich. This alone makes the book worth reading, despite its dogmatism and naiveté.

⁷Zsolt Csalog, *Lajos M., Aged 42* (Budapest: Maecenas, 1989), pp. 18-19. On the troubled reminiscences of a great many survivors, see Antor Gill, *The Journey Back from Hell: An Oral History, Conversations with Concentration Camp Survivors* (Morrow, 1988). Of no less interest and value is Ruth Schuettfeger, *Women of Theresienstadt: Voices from a Concentration Camp* (Berg, 1989), which, besides describing life in Theresienstadt, Bohemia (Czech Terezin), contains testimonies in verse and prose as well as contemporary drawings by women inmates. As is well known, Theresienstadt was a "model" concentration camp, designed to mislead foreign visitors and the German public; it had formal autonomy, a welfare system, and schools. Most of its inmates ended up, nevertheless, in the gas chambers. One group was comprised of highly decorated Austrian Jewish war veterans, who, rather than emigrating, trusted the promises of the Gestapo and paid for it by being deported first to Theresienstadt and

according to the degree of overcrowding, the urgency of reducing the number of inmates, or the mood of the commandants. None of the accounts of survivors under

then to Auschwitz, where all were killed. Another major publication, David G. Roskies, ed., *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe* (The Jewish Publication Society, 1988), contains one hundred articles on the suffering of Jews from the destruction of Solomon's Temple in 587 BC to Auschwitz.

⁸In the same year the young German Communist Jonny Hüttner was arrested in Berlin, the young Austrian Communist Karlo Stajner was arrested in Moscow. Unlike Hüttner, however, who was given three years, then freed, then immediately rearrested and sent to a camp without a new trial, Stajner was given ten years, then retried far away from any court, in a Siberian camp, and sentenced to another ten years. He left the USSR for Yugoslavia in 1956, after twenty years in Soviet captivity. Perhaps this reveals a difference between the Stalinist and the Nazi concepts of justice. See Karlo Stajner, *Seven Thousand Days in Siberia*, translated by Joel Agee, with an introduction by Danilo Kiš (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988).

lives and contributions of six black Presbyterian and Congregational ministers who were, undoubtedly, among the most important in the nation in terms of abolitionist and race relations activity."

—Gayraud S. Wilmore

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