

Nazi Women: *In the Killing Fields*

BY MEGAN TROUTMAN

Jan. 27 was the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the Holocaust death camp. The Martin-Springer Institute, a group dedicated in part to recognizing various experiences of World War II, commemorated the horror of the Holocaust by putting together a presentation for the anniversary.

"I have to confess, I am not particularly fond of anniversaries of massacres, human-made catastrophes and genocides," said director of the Martin-Springer Institute Björn Krondorfer.

Krondorfer introduced the presentation, which took place at Ardrey Auditorium. The presentation is called "I Want to Prove Myself to the Men: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields" and was presented by Wendy Lower.

Lower is a professor of history at Claremont McKenna College. She received her bachelor's degree from Hamilton College in Clinton, N.Y., and her Ph.D. at American University in Washington D.C. With her recent publication of the book, *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields*, Lower was eager to share her newfound discoveries about the Holocaust from the eyes of German women.

"I'm really looking forward to reading *Hitler's Furies*," said freshman computer science and German major Alexis Villegas. "I'm so happy there's a researcher who actually looked at the topic of women roles in Nazi Germany."

Villegas attended Lower's presentation and was intrigued by her discoveries. While most Holocaust memorial events involve the exchange of horrifying concentration camp stories, this event examined the Holocaust through the eyes of Nazi women.

"In elementary school when we got to world history or European history, you never got to hear the feminine side of the story," Villegas said. "I actually liked how in the presentation women were not portrayed as victims or just following the orders of men but they . . . bought into the idea that the government was feeding them that this was the proper thing to do."

Villegas has always been fascinated with the history of the Holocaust. Lower's presentation brought up the fascinating subject of women in Nazi Germany, an angle not often studied.

One Holocaust account in particular was from the perspective of a Nazi German woman, Erna Petri, who was trying to "prove herself to the men." Petri was convicted for shooting ten Jews, including four adults and six children. She claimed that she "lived only among SS men and seldom came into contact with other women. She did not want to stand behind the SS men. Petri wanted to show them that she as a woman could conduct herself like a man. So, she shot four Jews and six Jewish children."

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Track & Field Soars at Mountain T's Invitational

Freshman Royal Black competes in the heptathlon pole vaulting competition Jan. 31 at the Walkup Skydome. (Photo by Nick Humphries)

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