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Holocaust Writing and Research Since 1945

Sir Martin Gilbert

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JOSEPH AND REBECCA MEYERHOFF ANNUAL LECTURE
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THE JOSEPH AND REBECCA MEYERHOFF ANNUAL LECTURE on the Holocaust has been endowed by a 1994 grant from the Meyerhoff family to promote excellence in and to disseminate Holocaust research. Lifelong residents of Baltimore, Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff were involved in philanthropic activities in the United States and overseas in music and the arts, Jewish learning and scholarship, and human services, among other concerns. Jewish history and education were a primary focus in their philanthropic efforts. This tradition has been upheld and enhanced by their children and their children's children. Their son, Harvey M. Meyerhoff, is Chairman Emeritus of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. The annual lecture is held in the Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Theater of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Mr. Meyerhoff, Rabbi Greenberg, Ambassador Kampelman, Sara Bloomfield, Paul Shapiro, ladies and gentlemen. I am greatly honoured to be asked to give the Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Annual Lecture, and to speak to you this evening on Holocaust writing and research since 1945. My own determination to embark upon Holocaust research began in 1959 when I visited Treblinka, then a desolate site without any museum or memorials. To reach it I had to persuade a Polish peasant to row me across the River Bug and then to take me by horse and cart to the deserted site. My own first book on the Holocaust was published in 1979, my most recent—and seventh—earlier this year.¹

Every historian of the Holocaust, however hard he or she might work, however many years devoted to the task, is dependent on the research and writing of many others: on collections of documents, whether in archives or in book form, on printed books and articles, and on survivors' testimony, published and unpublished. This lecture is a tribute to all those who have made their contribution to the mass of material on which every writer on the Holocaust must draw—a tribute to many hundreds, indeed many thousands of archivists and librarians, scholars and survivors.

I apologize in advance to those whose books, research, and testimony I do not mention this evening. This does not mean that I do not hold them in high regard, or

have not included them in one of my own bibliographies. In *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy*, first published in 1987, I included sixty-five pages of reference notes.² This is typical for most Holocaust studies. Even fourteen years ago the bibliography of the Holocaust was formidable in its span and detail.

You have asked me to survey a wide-ranging subject. It is one with regard to which, even as we are gathered here in this fine lecture hall, others—among them your own visiting scholars Yitzhak Arad and Ronald Zweig—are sitting in their studies, preparing to burn the midnight oil in order to bring us the fruits of their historical labours.

My survey this evening begins in the immediate aftermath of the liberation of the camps, when, in the summer of 1945, lists of survivors appeared in printed form. Under the Hebrew-language title *Sharit Ha-Platah* (The Survivors), five volumes of lists were issued in Dachau itself—which after liberation had become a displaced persons camp. These lists give the names, birthplaces, and dates of birth of the survivors not only in Dachau but in Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen, Theresienstadt, and many sub-camps.³

These five volumes were cyclostyled—run off in several hundred copies on the postwar equivalent of a Xerox machine. In the immediate aftermath of the war there were few facilities for printed books, but there was a sense of urgency to enable survivors to be traced and contacted. The lists issued in Dachau were an early indication of the wide geographic range of the Holocaust. In my *Atlas of the Holocaust* I drew two maps based on them.⁴ Most people on the lists were from central Poland and from Hungary, a few were from as far afield as Amsterdam, Rome, Corfu, Rhodes, and Kiev. One of these survivors had been born in Auschwitz between the wars.

By the early months of 1946 the publication of books on the Holocaust, albeit often on the poor-quality paper available at that time—and which is today often brittle to the touch—had begun. In Bucharest, the Romanian section of the World Jewish Congress published, with photographs and documents, *Le Massacre des Juifs de Jassy*, giving horrific details of the killing of 4,000 Jews in June and July 1941 by Romanian fascists. I used this early publication as part of the material for the chapter entitled “Journey from Jassy” in my book *Final Journey: The Fate of the Jews in Nazi Europe*.⁵ In two trains on to which 4,330 Jews had been loaded and then taken in sealed wagons on a 250-mile journey southward, 2,650 Jews had died.

The World Jewish Congress publication printed the Romanian police reports giving the number of dead Jews taken off the train, station by station. At one station—

Roman—a local Christian woman, Viorica Agarici, the head of the regional Red Cross, had insisted that measures be taken to lessen the torment of the journey. Her intervention undoubtedly reduced the death rate beyond her town. In the story of the Righteous Gentiles (also known as the Righteous Among the Nations)—about whom I am at present collecting material for a book—hers has an honoured place. She is one of fifty-five Romanian non-Jews who have been honoured by Yad Vashem in the past four and a half decades.

Another set of lists, published in 1946, on which I was able to base one of the maps in my *Atlas of the Holocaust*, was entitled *Liberated Jews Arrived in Sweden in 1945*, published in Malmö. It includes the names of Jewish women who, too weak to survive after liberation despite all efforts to save them, died after reaching the safety and care of Sweden under the auspices of Count Folke Bernadotte of the International Committee of the Red Cross. They were from Czechoslovakia, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Germany, and Yugoslavia. Among them was sixteen-year-old Bronislawa Dorfman from Czestochowa, twenty-year-old Rozalia Katz from Beregszasz, and seventeen-year-old Judit Sandor from Budapest. In the Swedish lists, as in my atlas, these women (and many more) have “a place and a name.”⁶

Among the books published in 1946, the first full year of peace, were Marek Edelman’s book on the Warsaw ghetto uprising, *The Ghetto Fights* (published in English in New York—it had been published in Polish the previous year, in Warsaw); Wladyslaw Bednarz’s study of the death camp at Chelmno, which had begun operation in December 1941, *Das Vernichtungslager zu Chelmno am Ner: The Extermination Camp at Chelmno (Kulmhof)*, published in Warsaw in German and English; Israel Tabakblatt’s *Khurban Lodz*, published in Yiddish in Buenos Aires, about the fate of the Lodz ghetto; Philip Friedman’s account of Auschwitz, published in Polish in the Polish city of Bydgoszcz (Friedman, a survivor, was to become a leading historian of the Holocaust); Szymon Datner’s *Walka i Zaglada bialostockiego ghettta*, published in Polish, in Lodz, giving details of the Bialystok ghetto revolt; and, also in Polish, *Dzieci Oskrzaja*, edited in Warsaw by Maria Hochberg-Marińska, the testimony of Jewish child survivors then living in a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw—published in English, but not until fifty years later, as *The Children Accuse*. Also first published in 1946 was Max Weinreich’s *Hitler’s Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany’s Crimes Against the Jewish People*, published in New York initially in two consecutive issues of *YIVO-bleter*, the journal of the Yiddish Scientific Institute,⁷ and subsequently in

English. A new paperback edition was issued in 1999 by Yale University Press, after the book had been out of print for several decades.⁸

In *Hitler's Professors*, Weinreich stated boldly: "What we are going to prove is that German scholars from the beginning to the end of the Hitler era worked hand in glove with the murderers of the Jewish people and that the official indoctrination literature of 1933–1945 which openly proclaimed: 'The Jew must be annihilated wherever we meet him!' repeated to the letter the 'facts' and 'reasons' contained in the scholarly literature. To a degree, this may be said even of the actual orders to kill."

Weinreich argued that, from 1919 to 1933, "only a small number of German scholars were intellectually opposed to what in the course of time turned out to be the philosophy of national socialism." He gave details of how the German Nobel Prize–winner (for physics) Phillip Lenard had supported Hitler from 1924, and he quoted another German Nobel Prize–winner, Johannes Stark, at the opening of the Lenard institute in 1935: "With pleasure I even today recall a conversation which I had with Lenard in 1928 or 1929. I explained with a sorrowful air, how mighty Jewish influence was in trades, in economy, in politics, in the press, and in scholarship. Lenard's eyes flamed up, and waving his arms he said: 'And that's just why the Jews must be sunk to the centre of the earth.'"

One essential source for researchers is derived from evidence submitted to war crimes tribunals and enquiries. In 1946, in Lublin, one of several local Jewish historical district commissions examining Nazi crimes summoned Chaim Hirszman to give evidence. He was one of only two survivors of Belzec. He gave his evidence on 19 March 1946, then prepared to go home to work on his evidence for his second day as a witness. As he left the courthouse he was set upon by Polish anti-Semites and murdered—on the courthouse steps. The next day his widow, Pola, arrived at the courthouse. She had married him after liberation. Her husband, she said, had spoken about almost nothing else but Belzec since their marriage (his first wife and children had been murdered at Belzec). Could she give evidence on the basis of what he had told her? The court said, yes, so she gave her testimony. It, and that of her husband, is in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Forty years later I published both in *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy*.

Starting in 1947, and continuing until 1953, the Nuremberg trials transcripts and documentation were published, the first forty-two volumes in Nuremberg and the subsequent fifteen volumes in Washington. In all fifty-seven volumes were published.⁹ They have formed the basis of all subsequent historical writing on the Holocaust which

focuses primarily on the murderers. In 1961 the publication in Warsaw of Hans Frank's diary made available in book form one of the more astonishing of the documents presented at Nuremberg, the view of a leading perpetrator, quantifying and justifying mass murder.

Substantial use of the Nuremberg documents was made in 1953 by Gerald Reitlinger in his book *The Final Solution: The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe 1939–1945*; in 1958 by Lord Russell of Liverpool in *The Scourge of the Swastika: A Short History of Nazi War Crimes*; and in 1971 by Raul Hilberg, in a pioneering work, *Documents of Destruction: Germany and Jewry, 1933–1945*. In 1976, five years after Hilberg's volume, a comprehensive guide to the Nuremberg Trial documents was published in Jerusalem.¹⁰ The Nuremberg trial documents cover the way of destruction in copious and often sickening detail. In 1982 I used material from more than fifty of the Nuremberg documents as basic reference material for several maps in my *Atlas of the Holocaust*. This included material on the expulsion of Polish-born Jews from Germany in October 1938; the murder of Hungarian Jews at Kamenets-Podolsk in August 1941; the Einsatzgruppen reports—which were subsequently published in book form by Yad Vashem; the death of 400 Dutch Jews deported to Mauthausen in October 1941—including, it later emerged, the distinguished Czech pharmacologist Emil Starckenstein, who had earlier found refuge in Holland; the deportations from Hungary in the summer of 1944; and Paul Blobel's affidavit, of 6 June 1947, about the work of his Unit 1005 in obliterating the evidence of mass graves.

The pioneering work of Philip Friedman saw further progress in 1947 with the publication in Munich of his Polish-language *Zagłada Żydów Lwowskich* on the fate of the Jews of Lvov. Friedman's volume of collected articles and writings, *Roads to Extinction: Essays on the Holocaust*, which includes essays on the Jews of Lvov and on Jewish resistance, was published in New York and Philadelphia thirty-three years later, in 1980. Another pioneering work was published in 1947, in New York: Albert Menasche's *Birkenau (Auschwitz II): Memoirs of an Eyewitness: How 72,000 Greek Jews Perished*. In 1948, in Zurich, Eugene Levai published his *Black Book on the Martyrdom of Hungarian Jewry*. Slowly, but surely, and devastatingly, the picture was emerging in all its geographic range and human tragedy.

Further advance in our detailed knowledge came in 1952, when Tatiana Berenstein published eleven statistical tables for the ghettoization, deportation and destruction of the Jews in Warsaw, and in the Jewish communities throughout the Warsaw region. These tables were published in the *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu*

Historycznego (Bulletin of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw). Five years later Tatiana Berenstein published in the same bulletin a further ten statistical tables for the destruction of Jewish communities in the Lublin District. Ten years later, she published a further twelve statistical tables for the ghettoization, deportation and destruction of 139 Jewish communities in Eastern Galicia.

Three more Polish-Jewish historians published lists in that bulletin. They were Danuta Dabrowska, who in 1955 published sixteen statistical tables of ghettoization, deportation, and destruction in Lodz and in other towns and villages in the Wartheland; Adam Rutkowski, who, also in 1955, published thirteen statistical tables for Radom and the Radom region, including Kielce; and Szymon Datner, who in 1966 published eight statistical tables for Bialystok and the Bialystok region. Their collective work remains an essential guide to the deportation timetables, and to the numbers of Jews in each deportation: it charts the methodical, comprehensive, meticulous destruction of Polish Jewry.

Zdenek Lederer's *Ghetto Theresienstadt*, published in 1953, gave a complete listing of each deportation train into Theresienstadt, and each deportation out of the ghetto to the death camps, with considerable details about the fate of each train, some of which were sent to Riga, some to Izbica, some to Treblinka, many to Auschwitz. It was Lederer who identified Maly Trostenets (eleven miles from Minsk) as the destination and place of death of 23,500 Jews from Theresienstadt alone. From most of the trains to Maly Trostenets, each with a thousand Jews on board, there were no survivors. I drew a map of these deportations in my recent book *Never Again: A History of the Holocaust*. Maly Trostenets still awaits its historian. For my own references to it in *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy*, I was able to obtain material from Leningrad (in 1984) from a young refusenik historian, Igor Kotler, who is now with the Shoah Foundation in Los Angeles.

Poignant sources for all Holocaust historians are the diaries of those who did not survive. Reflecting on the Jewish diarists of the Holocaust years, Cracow-born Rafael Scharf, who came to England before the outbreak of war, wrote in his recent memoirs:

In one respect at least the Germans were unlucky in their choice of victim. "The People of the Book" were literate and had faith in the written word. The compulsion to record, to leave a trace in writing, was widespread and overwhelming. The fear that the incredible events of which they were the witness

and victim might not become known or would not be believed was greater than concern for their own survival. The last words in one of the most searing documents of that time, the diary of Chaim Kaplan, before his deportation to Treblinka, were: “If I die, what will happen to my diary?”

Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Ghetto Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan was published in 1965 in New York.¹¹ The first English-language edition of Anne Frank’s diary had been published twelve years earlier, in 1953. In 1972 Kibbutz Lohamei Ha’Gettaot in Israel published an English-language edition of *Vittel Diary, 22.5.43–16.9.43* by the writer and poet Yitzhak Katznelson. From Vittel—in southeastern France—Katznelson had been taken back to Poland and murdered at Auschwitz, together with his eldest son. His wife and their two younger sons had been murdered at Treblinka a year and a half earlier. Several hundred Polish Jews who had been taken to Vittel by the Germans, ostensibly for onward transit to South America, for which they had passports, were taken to Auschwitz, an episode which I described in my book *Auschwitz and the Allies*.

In 1973, Yitskhok Rudashevski’s *The Diary of the Vilna Ghetto, June 1941–April 1943* was published in Tel Aviv. Rudashevski recorded an incident that took place on 5 April 1943, when 300 Jews from the ghettos of Sol and Smorgon were deported to Ponary. They had been told that they were to be “resettled” in the Kovno ghetto. On reaching Ponary they realised that they had been deceived. Rudashevski, then fifteen years old, recorded in his diary the story that reached Vilna within a few hours: “Like wild animals before dying, the people began in mortal despair to break the railway cars, they broke the little windows reinforced by strong wire. Hundreds were shot to death while running away. The railway line over a great distance is covered with corpses.”

Also published in 1973 was a collection of the diaries of Jews who had been members of the Sonderkommando working in and around the gas chambers and crematoria at Birkenau. Some of them had made extraordinary efforts to record what they saw, and to hide their writings in thermos flasks and tins, just under the ground. Several of these were discovered after the war. They were published by the Auschwitz Museum as *Amidst a Nightmare of Crime: Manuscripts of Members of Sonderkommando*, edited by Jadwiga Bezwínska and Danuta Czech.

The impact of these Sonderkommando diaries is such that I hesitate to choose any one paragraph over another. I have chosen a short extract from Salmen Lewental’s

diary, which was discovered in the ground at Birkenau in 1962, almost twenty years after he buried it there:

Many girls stood and sat around, their heads bowed, and preserved a stubborn silence, looked with deep revulsion at this base world and particularly at us.

One of them spoke, "I am still so young, I have really not experienced anything in my life, why should death of this kind fall to my lot? Why?" She spoke very slowly in a faltering voice. She sighed heavily and proceeded, "And one should like so much to live a little bit longer."

Having finished, she fell into a state of melancholy reverie and fixed her gaze on some distant point; fear of death emanated from her wildly shining eyes.

In 1981 *The Diary of Dawid Rubinowicz* was published in Edinburgh.¹² It was a young boy's account of the isolation and dangers in Bodzentyn, a village in Poland. His diary entry for 1 June 1942 read: "This morning two Jewish women, a mother and a daughter, had gone out into the country. Unfortunately the Germans were driving from Rudki to Bodzentyn to fetch potatoes and ran across them. When the two women caught sight of the Germans they began to flee, but were overtaken and arrested." Rubinowicz added: "They intended shooting them on the spot in the village, but the mayor wouldn't allow it. They then went into the woods and shot them there. The Jewish police immediately went there to bury them in the cemetery. When the cart returned it was full of blood. Who..." At this point Dawid Rubinowicz's diary ended. He was not yet fifteen.

The range of diaries by those who did not survive is remarkable. A Polish Jew, Yakov Grojanowski, who had escaped from the death camp at Chelmno in January 1942, had written a diary to which I found brief references, mostly in short footnotes, in several books. This led me to search for the original. In 1985 I received a photocopy of the whole diary from the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw and was so struck by its power—Grojanowski had compiled it immediately after his escape, while being sheltered by the rabbi of the nearby village of Grabow—that I published it in full, in a twenty-six page chapter to itself, entitled "Eye Witness to Mass Murder," in *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy*.

The Jewish prisoners at Chelmno were used to take the bodies of Jews and Gypsies from the gas vans and to put them in pits. In his diary entry for 8 January 1942,

Grojanowski writes of how the guards ordered him and his fellow slave labourers to sing:

I said: “Friends and honourable people, we shall now sing the ‘Hatikvah’.” And we sang the anthem with our heads covered. It sounded like a prayer. After this the gendarme left and bolted the door with three locks.

We couldn’t stop crying and said that the world had never ever known such barbarism. To liquidate Jews and Gypsies in such murderous fashion, and to force us to sing on top of it. We hoped they would end up like “Haman.” The Almighty should put an end to this terrible fate.

Mosche Asch, a worthy man from Izbica, said, “We are a sacrifice, indicating that the time of the Messiah is at hand.”

Grojanowski did not survive the war. It is believed that he may have been killed in Warsaw during the uprising.

Not only diaries, but the poetry of those who perished provides an insight into the reality of destruction. Yitzhak Katznelson, who in interwar Poland was known for his light verse for children—poems that reflected the joys of life, wrote “Song of the Murdered Jewish People,” with its haunting lines.

I dreamed a dream ——
 t’was grievously sore,
My people had perished
 t’is no more, no more!

Woe! Oh Woe! I arose with a moan,
My dream is true! I cried with a groan.
All atremble I called, Oh God! God on high!
My people died! Wherefore? Oh Why?¹³

Just before I came into this lecture hall this evening, I read on the walls of the nearby corridor Katznelson’s haunting words: “The first to perish were the children. From these a new dawn might have risen.”

In the last few years two complete editions of Mordechai Gebirtig’s songs have been published, one in the United States by Gertrude Schneider and one in Israel by

Sinai Leichter.¹⁴ Gebirtig's words are cries of pain from a world that was being destroyed. As the Cracow ghetto was being established, and as he fled to a nearby village where he was able to shelter for a whole year, he wrote, using the Yiddish for Cracow—Kroke: *Blayb gesunt mir, Kroke!* (Farewell, my Cracow):

Farewell, my Cracow.

Farewell.

Horse and wagon are waiting in front of my house.

The wild enemy drives me out.

Like one drives a dog

Without mercy away from you.

Farewell, my Cracow,

Today I see perhaps

All that is dear to me for the last time.

At my mother's grave,

I cried out my heart.

Parting from her was difficult.

I cried out my eyes

Until there were no more tears.

With them I moistened my father's cold gravestone....¹⁵

Gebirtig returned to the Cracow ghetto in January 1942. He was killed—shot dead by a single German bullet—on 4 June 1942, during a deportation roundup. He was sixty-five years old.

In 1958, in Munich, an extraordinary contribution to Holocaust research was completed by Edward Kossoy. It consisted of only three pages: three single-sheet maps. The first showed the deportation routes with dates and numbers, from Austria, Slovakia, Bukovina, Ruthenia, Transylvania, Banat, Bacska, and Serbia, with an inset map showing concentration camps, labour camps, and internment camps in Italy. The second sheet showed concentration camps and labour camps throughout Poland, with inset maps showing camps in France, Transnistria, North Africa, Upper Silesia, and the Warsaw region. The third sheet showed concentration camps, slave labour camps, and

deportation routes, with dates and numbers, in the General-Government, the Baltic States, Upper Silesia, Danzig West-Prussia, East Prussia, and the Wartheland.

These three single-sheet maps were the first publications to show the scale of the deportations and the concentration and labour camp system.¹⁶ Kossoy's work inspired me twenty years later as I began work on my 316-map *Atlas of the Holocaust*. Kossoy also published in 1958 a handbook which included camp tattoo numbers and the regional origin of the deportees to Auschwitz, a list of displaced persons camps after 1945, and the date of the Jewish holy days during the war: this latter a crucial guide, as so many survivors date an event by its fast or festival: for example Purim 1941, Passover 1942, the Day of Atonement 1943, or Hannukah 1944.

In 1959 another remarkable publishing venture began, the "Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz Birkenau," published in article form that year and in the following five years by Danuta Czech—herself a former member of the Polish resistance in the Tarnow region—in eight consecutive issues of the *Hefte von Auschwitz*, a publication of the Auschwitz State Museum. Among its aims was to record all deportation trains reaching Auschwitz, with dates, and the fate of those on them, as well as details of all attempted escapes.¹⁷ How and when the news about Auschwitz—of the different deportations, and of the gassing procedure—reached the West as a result of three of these escapes (those of Jerzy Tabau, Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler, and Czeslaw Mordowicz and Arnost Rosin) and how that news was received, was a central part of my book, *Auschwitz and the Allies*.

Starting even while the war was still being fought, and with great intensity in the immediate aftermath of the war, Jews from individual towns compiled accounts of the fate of their town. Finding survivors with particular stories, recalling pre-war Jewish life, trying to establish the chronology of the destruction, determined to tell of the fate of individuals, and of their whole community, they published these books, mostly in Yiddish, in many different formats, from short booklets to volumes of many hundreds of pages. One of the largest collections of these memorial books is in the library here at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Each adds previously unavailable detail to the narrative of what happened. *The Kalish Book*, edited by I. M. Lask and published in Tel Aviv in 1968, gave details of the first mass gassing of Jews—290 men and women from the Jewish Old Age Home, taken in October 1940 in a van from Kalisz to the nearby Winiary woods, and told that they were being relocated in another town, Padernice. No such relocation was intended. When the van reached the woods they were dead, killed by exhaust fumes deliberately pumped into the van. In

1980, I made a pilgrimage to those woods, where I drew a map of that journey and published it in my *Atlas of the Holocaust*.¹⁸

In *Pshitik, A Memorial to the Jewish Community of Pshitik*, published in Tel Aviv in 1973, the editor David Shtokfish included details of the Przytyk pogrom of 1937, when, despite a vigorous self-defence which drove the Polish attackers away from the centre of the small town, three Jews were killed in a house on the outskirts. It was this pogrom that inspired Mordechai Gebirtig's song *Undzer shtetl brent!* (Our town is burning!)—which was to be sung within a few years by victims of far greater destruction. Its final lines are an exhortation:

Don't look on with folded arms
And shake your heads
Don't look on with folded arms
While the fire spreads!

Within thirty years of the end of the war, more than 400 memorial books had been published, mostly for Polish towns, but also for towns elsewhere, including Sombor in Yugoslavia and Salonika in Greece. Each of these books is a history of the Holocaust in miniature. In 1983, Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin edited a selection of articles from them in *From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry*.¹⁹

In 1957, in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem published the first issue of *Yad Vashem Studies*. This was to become a leading journal of Holocaust research. In his article in this first issue Joseph Kermish gave details of a tax which the Jewish Council in Warsaw imposed on bread coupons, which was levied on the poor and the unemployed as well as on those who could better afford it.

The question of the role of the Warsaw Jewish Council—its chairman Adam Czerniakow had committed suicide rather than hand over children from the Jewish orphanages—received heightened awareness in 1958 with the publication in New York of *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum*, edited by Jacob Sloan. Subsequent editions of Ringelblum's journal, free from Communist-era censorship, and published editions of Ringelblum's other writings, gave him a high place in the ranks of wartime recorders of events. In 1974 Joseph Kermish and Shmuel Krakowski edited the book Ringelblum had written in the Warsaw ghetto, *Emmanuel Ringelblum: Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War*. In 1986 Kermish edited *To Live with Honor, and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from Warsaw*

Ghetto Underground Archives "OS" ("Oneg Shabbath"), which contained some of the most important material Ringelblum had helped to collect.²⁰

Isaiah Trunk, in his comprehensive National Book Award–winning *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation*, published in New York in 1972, examined the many different responses of the Jewish councils, including those that were active in trying to organize resistance. Trunk gave details of Jewish council chairmen in many ghettos who, refusing to carry out German orders, had been shot as a result of their defiance. Two years after Trunk's volume was published, documentation regarding Jewish councils was enhanced with the publication of Lucjan Dobroszycki's edition of the Lodz ghetto diaries, *Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto, 1941–1944*, in which the controversial Chaim Rumkowski was the central figure. In 1979 the first English-language edition of Adam Czerniakow's diary was published: it has just been reissued in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

In 1990, Harvard University Press published *Surviving the Holocaust: the Kovno Ghetto Diary*, a day-by-day account of the work of the Kovno ghetto Jewish Council by Avraham Tory, its secretary. Tory included in his diary as he was writing it—and hiding it each night—many wartime documents, German orders, ghetto announcements, and the like, as well as the letter which Dr. Elkanan Elkes, the council chairman, wrote to his son Joel and daughter Sara—who had gone to Britain just before the war. Dr. Elkes died in Dachau in 1945, shortly before liberation. His letter to his two children ended: "Remember, both of you, what Amalek has done to us. Remember and never forget it all your days; and pass this memory as a sacred testament to future generations."

In 1978 a book of lists published in Paris: *Le Mémorial de la Déportation des Juifs de France* edited by Serge Klarsfeld, was to have a profound impact on that "sacred testament." The word "edited" is a misnomer: Klarsfeld deciphered more than seventy almost illegible wartime lists of deportees, and traced the fate of those deportees. The book prints the lists of each deportation from France by train, mostly to Auschwitz. The lists include names, dates of birth, and places of birth. In his introductory notes to each of the deportation lists Klarsfeld published many extra details beyond the listings, including eyewitness testimony about them. He also made great efforts to find out who had survived each deportation. Several of those survivors were *flitzers* (escapees)—men who had managed to jump off the train while it was still on its eastward journey. One of those *flitzers*, Leo Bretholz, originally from Vienna, deported from Paris on 6 November 1942, now lives in Baltimore, and has recently

published his memoir *Leap into Darkness: Seven Years on the Run in Wartime Europe*.²¹

Klarsfeld's continuing further contribution to Holocaust research includes lists of the Jews deported from Belgium (edited with Maxime Steinberg), Romania, and Grodno. He has also edited the only known series of photographs showing the arrival of Jewish deportees at Birkenau, *The Auschwitz Album: Lili Jacob's Album*; and the astonishingly powerful *French Children of the Holocaust: A Memorial*, which he compiled in 1996 with Susan Cohen and Howard M. Epstein. Another of Klarsfeld's publications is an album of David Olere's paintings of the gas chambers and crematoria at Birkenau: paintings which were denigrated as pornography by David Irving in his recent libel action against Deborah Lipstadt.²²

In 1982 I tried to make Klarsfeld's lists visual in twenty-eight of the maps in my *Atlas of the Holocaust*. These include maps of "Birthplaces of Polish Jews in the first Paris deportation," "Bulgarian Jews deported from Paris to Auschwitz...," "Greek-born Jews deported...," "Jews born in North Africa, deported...," "Children under four deported...17 August 1942," and "American-born Jews deported..." I also drew three maps, based on Klarsfeld's lists, showing the birthplaces and names of children deported to Auschwitz from France on 31 July 1944, more than six weeks after the Allied landings in Normandy, while the Allied troops—British, French, Polish, American, and Canadian among them—were still struggling to break out of the Normandy beachhead. Among those on that last train was one-year-old Dario Safati, born in Lyon, and the five Sonnenblick children, born in Paris, aged between eleven (Myriam) and four (Simone).

Klarsfeld published one list of 878 Jews who had been deported from Paris on 15 May 1944, not to Auschwitz, but to Kovno and Reval. Only twenty-three survived the war. Among those who were murdered was Abraham Cherchevksy, who had been born in Jerusalem in 1901 (others deported on that train, all of whom were rounded up in France, had been born in Jaffa, Safed, Cuba, French North Africa, Baku, Baghdad, Damascus, and London—twenty-two-year-old Louis Rotstein and twenty-seven-year-old Isidore Libine).

Abraham Cherchevksy's daughter, Eve Line Blum, who was twelve years old when her father was deported, took that list of deportees and, after prodigious research, published in 1999, in Besancon, a 443-page book entitled *Nous Sommes 900 Français* (We Are 900 Frenchmen)—the words carved by one of the deportees on a prison cell in the Ninth Fort in Kovno. Eve Line Blum turned every name on Klarsfeld's eight-page

list into a full page story and more, usually with several photographs, and with the details she had traced of that person's life before the Holocaust.

New material emerges in many different ways: in 1961 the Eichmann trial, held in Jerusalem, generated one of the most important sets of previously unpublished material on the Holocaust. These were the testimonies of eyewitnesses and survivors, given under oath and cross-examination. While many of the Eichmann trial's German and Nazi documents had been published earlier as part of the Nuremberg trial evidence, the testimony of Jewish witnesses in the courtroom in Jerusalem who recalled every phase of the Holocaust was new and extensive. In *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy* I used more than fifty Eichmann trial testimonies, including that of Zindel Grynszpan, given on 25 April 1961, about the deportation of Polish-born Jews from Germany in October 1938. It was Zindel's account of the deportation which he sent to his son Hershl, then living in Paris, which led Hershl to assassinate the young German diplomat Ernst vom Rath, and gave Hitler the excuse to let loose the *Kristallnacht*.

Other Eichmann trial testimony transcripts which I used included those of Abba Kovner about the Vilna ghetto, Israel Gutman about Majdanek, Moshe Bejski about Plaszow, Dr. Aharon Peretz about the children's action in the Kovno ghetto, and Shimon Srebnik about the final phase of Chelmno (Srebnik was later interviewed by Claude Lanzmann for his nine-hour film epic *Shoah*). It was not until 1992 that the Eichmann trial transcripts were finally published in book form, in six volumes, by the Ministry of Justice of the State of Israel.²³

In 1961, the year of the Eichmann trial, Livia Rothkirchen published *The Destruction of Slovak Jewry: A Documentary History*. This, and Randolph Braham's two-volume *The Destruction of Hungarian Jewry: A Documentary Account* published in 1963, are models for all country-by-country presentations, whether documentary or narrative (Braham's narrative history *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary* was published in 1981). Among the country-by-country studies published in subsequent years were Tuvia Friedman, editor, *Dokumentensammlung über "Die Deportierung der Juden aus Norwegen nach Auschwitz,"* (Ramat Gan, 1963); Josef Fraenkel, editor, *The Jews of Austria: Essays on their Life, History and Destruction* (London, 1967); Jacob Presser, *The Destruction of the Dutch Jews* (New York, 1969); Frederick B. Chary, *The Bulgarian Jews and the Final Solution, 1940–1944* (Pittsburgh, 1972); Dezider Tóth, editor, *The Tragedy of Slovak Jews: Proceedings of the International Symposium* (Banska Bystrica, 1992); Alex Faitelson's *Heroism and Bravery in Lithuania, 1941–1945* (Jerusalem, 1996); and Andrew Ezergailis, *The*

Holocaust in Latvia, 1941–1944 (Riga, 1996). Ezergailis' book as well as Radu Ioanid's *The Holocaust in Romania: The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu Regime, 1940–1944* have been published under the auspices of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Such country-by-country publications will continue.

Books on concentration camps and death camps, another important category of writing, include Leon Weliczker Wells' comprehensive memoir of the Janowska camp on the outskirts of Lvov, *The Janowska Road*, published in 1963; Alexander Donat's edition *The Death Camp Treblinka: A Documentary*, published in 1979; and Miriam Novitch's edition *Sobibor, Martyrdom and Revolt: Documents and Testimonies*, published in 1980, which focuses on the revolt at Sobibor. My own research included correspondence with Sasha Pechersky, one of the survivors of the Sobibor revolt, who, when I made contact with him by letter in 1984, was living in the Soviet city of Rostov-on-Don. While taking my University College, London, students around Europe in 1996, as described in *Holocaust Journey: Travelling in Search of the Past*, reading aloud Pechersky's account of the Sobibor revolt at Sobibor itself was a harrowing experience, as was reading Jan Karski's account of his traumatic hours at Izbica Lubelska, watching Jews being loaded onto cattle trucks for their final deportation to Belzec.

Another recollection which I included in *Holocaust Journey: Travelling in Search of the Past* was recorded by Harold Werner. In 1981 Werner, then living in the United States, attended the world gathering of survivors in Jerusalem, the first event of its kind, and left a testimony of a few pages at Yad Vashem. A few months later, one of the historians at Yad Vashem, Shmuel Krakowski, pointed out to me some unusual aspects of Werner's short account of the resistance efforts of a small group of young men and women in hiding, to the east of the Parczew forest. I noted down the man's address and when I was next in his home town, Miami, asked my host to take me to that address. Mr. Werner was not there. Driving back into Miami, we had travelled about ten or twelve blocks when I saw a car passing in the other direction and thought, "That is Mr. Werner." I made my host turn his car round and, following the other one, we came to the same house. It was indeed Mr. Werner. He invited me in, he told me his story, and I urged him to write his memoir in full. I heard no more.

Then, four or five years later, I received a letter from his son saying that Mr. Werner had died, and that among his papers they had found a complete manuscript. I undertook to help find a publisher. The result was the 1992 Columbia University Press publication *Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War II*. Four years

later, standing by the roadside and looking at the very hamlet which Werner describes, I read to my University College students his account of an attack by some seventy Jewish partisans on an estate. Before the war that farm had belonged to a Warsaw Jew, David Turno. The partisans had set it on fire, destroying the buildings, the animals, and the grain being used by the Germans. Werner wrote:

While running from the burning estate, I noticed a bulky form crawling on all fours, like an animal, and making very strange noises. It tried to stand upright but could not, and fell back down. I pointed it out to Symcha, running next to me, and we both decided it might be a human being, perhaps a Jew.

We each took hold of one arm and dragged him along with us. The fight continued around us. We ran several miles from the estate, and then stopped to rest and look at this heap of a man. He was covered with hair down to his waist. His clothes were in shreds, and he could not stand on his feet. He looked like a skeleton and had no teeth.

From his mumblings I discovered that this being was my friend Yankel, David Turno's nephew from Warsaw. He was half delirious and did not recognize me. I understood from his mumblings that he had dug a hiding place under the feeding troughs for the cows. No one knew he was there, and he had been able to survive on the food in the troughs and the milk from the cows.

He had been in this hiding place for almost a year, but the heat from the burning buildings had driven him out of his hiding place.

We continued on to the village of Mosciska, where we put him on a wagon to take him to our base. Moniek cut his long hair, and we tried to feed him, but he could not hold down any food. He was extremely weak, and a few days later he died from his malnourished state. We buried him in the woods. Afterward we grieved for what had happened to a good human being, my friend Yankel.

Published in New York in 1963, another book opened up a considerable area of study and knowledge. This was *The Martyrdom of Jewish Physicians in Poland*, edited by Louis Falstein, with studies by Dr. Leon Wulman and Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum, and research and documentation by Dr. Leopold Lazarowitz and Dr. Simon Malowist. In it are biographical sketches of more than 2,500 Polish Jewish doctors murdered between 1939 and 1945, most by the Germans, some by the Soviets (at Katyn), some by Soviet partisans when the doctors tried to join them, and a few by Poles after the war. The

short biographies take up 194 pages; pages which turn statistics into people—into faces, careers, achievements—cut short by barbarity.

I would like to read you three examples. The first is for Abram Abramowski, of whom the editors write:

One of the leaders of the resistance movement in the Baranowicze ghetto, he often provided Jews with certificates of illness in order to relieve them of the onerous tasks imposed upon them by the Germans. In his spare time he trained the people in the use of arms. Eventually he led an unsuccessful uprising. When the Germans began decimating the ghetto populace, Dr. Abramowski escaped to the Polesia woods and joined the partisans. He was murdered by Russian partisans.

The second biographical sketch which I have chosen is that for Jozef Stein, born in 1904:

Dr. Stein, who specialized in pathological anatomy, held a doctor's degree in philosophy. He was assistant to the professor of pathological anatomy at the University of Warsaw, and a lecturer. During the German occupation he was interned in the Warsaw ghetto, where he became one of the directors of the Jewish Hospital.... His research work on micropathology of the brain in typhus was well known even to German pathologists, who came to the ghetto to learn more about his findings....

He was the guiding force in organizing the clandestine medical school in the ghetto....

A man of great courage, Dr. Stein refused an offer to escape the ghetto. He took an active part in the ghetto uprising. Deported to Treblinka with his wife, he perished in the gas chambers.

Sometimes almost nothing was known about a murdered doctor. But there is still a listing. That is what gives the book its strength. Thus the entry for Nioma Zeitlin reads, in ten words: "A young Rowne physician, she perished during the German occupation."

No one book can ever be more important than any other. But this volume is always on my desk, reminding me that when we speak of the "six million" we are referring to six million individuals, each one of whom had something that could benefit a family, a circle of friends, a profession—or humanity.

The year 1965 saw a Yad Vashem publication that remains to this day the standard work on the number of Jews living in Europe on the eve of the Holocaust. Based on prewar census reports, it even lists villages where there was a single Jewish family, or a single Jew. The book was titled *Blackbook of Localities whose Jewish Population was Exterminated by the Nazis* (not to be confused with the Grossman-Ehrenburg Black Book of which I will speak in a moment).

The Yad Vashem *Blackbook* is a formidable compilation, which gives insight into where Jews lived, and how many, in every town and village and hamlet, in a dozen countries, even in the remotest regions. Several hundred of the villages which appear in this book, home to two or three dozen Jewish families, or a single Jewish family, were considered too small—insofar as the number of Jews living in such places was a concern—to merit inclusion in Yad Vashem’s own Valley of the Lost Communities. Knowledge of their existence survives only in a book that has been out of print, and generally unavailable, for more than a quarter of a century. From it I was able to show in my *Atlas of the Holocaust* the location of some of the smallest Jewish communities in different parts of Europe that were to fall under German rule and Nazi tyranny.²⁴

The help given by non-Jews to Jews is an integral part of the Holocaust story. In 1957 Philip Friedman published in New York *Their Brothers’ Keepers: The Christian Heroes and Heroines Who Helped the Oppressed Escape the Nazi Terror*. For almost a decade Friedman’s book was alone in its field. In 1966 an important book on German non-Jews who helped German Jews was published in London: H. D. Leuner, *When Compassion Was a Crime: Germany’s Silent Heroes*. In 1968, in Warsaw, Szymon Datner published a short book about non-Jews in Poland who had helped Jews: his book, *Las Sprawiedliwych* (The Forest of the Righteous) was in Polish. A year later, in 1969, in Tel Aviv, the Austrian-born Arieh L. Bauminger, a survivor of the Kovno ghetto whose brother had fallen fighting in the Cracow ghetto uprising, published *Roll of Honour*, a ninety-four-page edition of stories about individual “righteous people” (as Abba Eban described them in his introduction). Also in 1969, Leni Yahil published her book *The Rescue of Danish Jewry: Test of a Democracy*, the story, not of individuals but of a whole nation’s righteous behaviour.

A book which gave prominence to the question of non-Jews who helped Jews was Wladyslaw Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewin, *Righteous among Nations: How Poles Helped the Jews, 1939–1945*, published in London in 1969. More recently, in 1986, Nechama Tec advanced the whole study, which Bartoszewski and Lewin helped to

pioneer, with her book *When Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland*.

The work of non-Jewish diplomats who helped Jews after the outbreak of war provides an inspiring aspect of the terrible Holocaust story. In Kovno, the British consul, Thomas Preston, helped provide 400 “illegal” certificates, in addition to 800 legal ones, for Jews who were then able to make their way to Palestine. Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese vice-consul in Kovno, and the acting Dutch consul in Kovno Jan Zwartendijk, provided more than 2,000 visas to enable Jews to escape Europe altogether, via Japan and the Dutch East Indies, many of them then reaching the safety of Shanghai, Australia, and the United States. The achievement of such men has been reflected most recently in Hillel Levine’s biography of Sugihara, Andy Marino’s biography of the American Varian Fry—to whom the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum devoted one of its earliest exhibitions—and Michael Smith’s biography of Frank Foley.²⁵ In *Never Again: A History of the Holocaust*, published this year, I give details of these and several other diplomatic rescuers, among them the Portuguese diplomat Aristide De Sousa Mendes, who, despite his own government’s reluctance, gave out visas on the French border with Spain as the German army was drawing ever closer.

What the Allies knew of the Holocaust as it unfolded, and Allied reactions to it, is the subject of my book *Auschwitz and the Allies*, published in 1981. Thirteen years earlier a pioneering study in this field was published by Yehuda Bauer: his article “When Did They Know?,” which appeared in the April 1968 issue of *Midstream*. In its original Polish and in English translation, Bauer printed the full text of the report sent to the West from Warsaw by the Bund, giving details of an estimated 700,000 Polish Jews killed between June 1941 and April 1942. When the report, in which only one death camp (Belzec) was named, reached Britain in the summer of 1942 a summary of it was immediately broadcast over the BBC. An internal BBC directive—which I found while writing my book in the BBC Written Archives Centre—stressed: “Please give full prominence to this. This also will have to be paid for. There will be retribution for the Jewish victims.”

In 1969 Yad Vashem published the first in a series of Hebrew-language volumes on regions of Europe, setting out the fate of the Jews town by town and village by village, as a result of considerable postwar research. The first volume to be published was the first volume of a two-volume set: *Romania*. Three years later *Germany-Bavaria* was published, followed in 1976 by both *Poland: The Communities*

of Lodz and its Region and Hungary. In 1980, *Romania* volume two and *Poland: Eastern Galicia* were published. The series is now being translated into English, although unfortunately in an abridged version. The Hebrew-language edition constitutes the most comprehensive encyclopaedic effort to tell the story of the Holocaust through locations, in graphic detail.²⁶

Each entry in the Yad Vashem communities volumes sheds some light on Jewish resistance, acts of defiance, and acts of individual courage. In 1968, Jewish resistance was highlighted with the publication of Yuri Suhl's edition *They Fought Back: The Story of the Jewish Resistance in Nazi Europe*. That year Yad Vashem held a five-day conference: "Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust." The papers given at the conference, and the debates that followed them, were published three years later, in 1971, as *Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Conference on Manifestations of Jewish Resistance, Jerusalem, 7–11 April 1968*.

Jewish resistance was emerging as a theme for serious research and publication. In 1974 Reuben Ainsztein published *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe: With a Historical Survey of the Jew as Fighter and Soldier in the Diaspora*, a pioneering work of formidable scholarship. In 1977 Shmuel Krakowski published another pioneering work, *Jewish Armed Resistance in Poland, 1942–1944*. Not until 1981—because she did not want it published until after her death—was Zivia Lubetkin's memoir and history *In the Days of Destruction and Revolt*, published. I was able to use this as one of the many sources already available on Jewish resistance and revolt in *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy*, in which Jewish acts of resistance, defiance and individual courage form an integral part of the day-by-day narrative, as they were of the events themselves. Ironically, I was rebuked a few months ago in *The Times* (of London) by a leading Anglo-Jewish historian for including too much about Jewish resistance in *Never Again: A History of the Holocaust*, which was published in June 1999 in conjunction with the opening of the permanent Holocaust exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in London.

To the benefit of all Holocaust historians, the 1970s saw the publication of several more books of lists, among them Michael Molho's *In Memoriam: Hommage aux Victimes Juives des Nazis en Grèce*, published in Salonika in 1973. Molho gave, community by community, the number of Greek Jews deported and murdered. I used his listings in preparing my maps of the deportation of Jews from Greece to Auschwitz in 1943 and 1944.²⁷ In 1975, two years after the Molho volume appeared, Giuliana Donati published in Milan *Deportazione Degli Ebrei Dall'Italia*, listing fourteen

deportations from Italy to Auschwitz, and seven other deportations, between 16 September 1943 and 14 December 1944, with the fate of the deportees.

A remarkably thorough listing was published in 1979 in Warsaw.²⁸ It gave details of 5,877 German-run labour camps, ghettos, concentration camps, prisons, and other mass murder and atrocity locations on Polish soil, with a comprehensive bibliography for each location. For political reasons relevant in 1979 the volume did not cover those areas of eastern Poland (including Eastern Galicia, Volhynia, and the Vilna region) which had been annexed by the Soviet Union in 1945. Also published in 1979 was Gertrude Schneider's *Journey Into Terror: Story of the Riga Ghetto*, which listed all the deportations from Greater Germany into Riga between 18 October 1941 and 6 February 1942, and described the fate of the deportees.

Works on individual Jewish communities and their fate are central to the writing and research of the Holocaust. These were appearing every year in the 1980s. In 1980 Yitzhak Arad published *Ghetto in Flames: The Struggle and Destruction of the Jews in Vilna in the Holocaust*, in which he listed all the "murder actions" in Vilna between 1941 and 1944 (a year earlier, in 1979, he had published a personal memoir, *The Partisan*, the story of Jewish partisan activity in and around Swiecany and Vilna). In 1981 Henry R. Huttenbach published *The Destruction of the Jewish Community of Worms, 1933–1945: A Study of the Holocaust Experience in Germany*. That community had been in existence in Germany for a thousand years. A compilation of sources on a comprehensive scale was published in New York in 1982, *The Holocaust: Selected Documents in Eighteen Volumes*, edited by John Mendelsohn. My own *Atlas of the Holocaust* was also published in 1982. In it I drew 316 maps to show the European Jewish prewar communities, the spread of German rule, the date of deportations throughout Europe, and the numbers deported to their deaths. I also plotted areas and episodes of resistance town by town and ghetto by ghetto.

The last decade has seen no diminution in the amount or quality of Holocaust research and writing. In 1990 a four-volume *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* was published in New York, its editor-in-chief being Israel Gutman, survivor and historian, whose comprehensive book *The Warsaw Ghetto* had been published eight years earlier (in 1994 he published *Resistance: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* in association with this museum). A landmark in 1990 was a publication by Yad Vashem and the Federation of Volhynian Jews: Shmuel Spector's *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews, 1941–1944*. Spector's remarkable work includes a great deal of material on Jewish resistance and, in an appendix, lists the dates of the establishment and the liquidation of the forty-six

ghettos established in Volhynia. Among the many eyewitness accounts found and published by Spector is that of Isachar Trosman, one of a small group of Volhynian Jews living near Rokitno, which was then under Soviet partisan protection. Trosman tells of the Day of Atonement in 1944:

The time of reciting the *Kol Nidre* arrived, but who was going to say the prayer in its entirety, if there was no prayerbook? The ordeals we had gone through made us forget the prayer. But then, as if by a magic wand, everyone began reciting the prayer in one voice.

Sad sounds began filling up the room and it seemed it was breaking outside to the four corners of the earth: “And we shall forgive each and every community in the House of Israel...for all the people walk in error...”

Sounds of muffled weeping reached us from the open window. These were the women and girls who stood outside to listen to the prayer....

The leaders in prayer passed before the Ark of the Law; first [Chaim] Kak, followed by Pati, Shmuel and me.

Everyone recalled the prayer of his childhood and all comforted each other.

In 1991 the municipality of Frankfurt published a book listing all the Leipzig Jews who were deported to their deaths between 1942 and 1945. In 1994, in New York, Leslie Blau published *Bonyhad: A Destroyed Community: The Jews of Bonyhad, Hungary*, listing all those deported to their deaths from his town. Two years ago, John Garrard, a historian in Tucson, Arizona, found—and made available on the Internet—the names of those who were murdered in the ghetto of Brest-Litovsk.

Another result, for Holocaust research, of the collapse of Soviet Communism was the publication in 1993, in the independent Republic of Lithuania, of a book that had been published in 1946 but then immediately banned, and all copies destroyed. This was *Chornaya Kniga*, the “Black Book” of the fate of Soviet Jews under the Nazis, compiled by Ilja Ehrenburg and Vasilij Grossman. As Communism withered away, the original printer’s page proofs of the book were found in Moscow, where they had been kept under lock and key in the archives of the KGB. Although a somewhat edited version had been in print for some time, after forty-seven years the full book could see the light of day.

It is hard to single out books published more recently, there are so many, yet some stand out as of particular importance. In 1993, with the establishment of the

Holocaust Museum in Washington, Michael Berenbaum published *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, a book that brought accurate information about the Holocaust to hundreds of thousands of people who would otherwise have known nothing. In 1994 a multivolume project was launched in Hungary, the publication of factual details compiled fifty years earlier—in April 1944—about the Jewish communities of Hungary. The original compilers were the Central Council of Hungarian Jews; the German occupation authorities had ordered them to prepare it.

Also in 1994, Benjamin Meirtchak—who had fought in the Polish army in 1939 in the defence of Warsaw, and who later commanded a tank battalion in the Red Army—published in Tel Aviv, under the auspices of the Association of Jewish War Veterans of Polish Armies in Israel, the first of six volumes listing all the Polish Jewish soldiers who had died between 1939 and 1945. Some were killed while serving in the Polish army against the Germans in 1939, some as captives of the Germans, some as captives of the Russians (at Katyn), some as resistance fighters fighting alongside Poles in Warsaw and elsewhere, some as soldiers in the Allied armies in North Africa, Italy, and northern Europe, and some fighting in the Soviet Army on the Eastern Front.

Among the 7,890 soldiers listed by Meirtchak are Private Szymon Chmielewski, killed in action fighting in the Polish forces in France in 1940; Medical Officer Zygmunt Verstandig, murdered by the Soviets at Katyn in 1940; Captain David Konigstein, killed while fighting in the Polish uprising against the Germans in Warsaw in 1944; and Sergeant Szmuel Karp, murdered by Poles in the Kielce pogrom of 1946. Meirtchak's lists are a panorama of Jewish participation, patriotism, and suffering.

In 1996, in Amsterdam, Felicja Karay published *Death Comes in Yellow: Skarzysko-Kamienna Slave Labour Camp*, a major addition to our knowledge, not only of that terrible camp, but—as one of the 437 *Judenlager* in German-occupied Europe—of the whole slave labour camp system. At Skarzysko-Kamienna, of 20,000 Jewish slave labourers, most of them women, 14,000 were killed: seventy per cent.

A comprehensive listing of deportations to Belzec from throughout Galicia has been compiled by Robin O'Neil, and published in the year 2000 by the *Journal of East European Jewish Affairs*. Also published in 2000 was a remarkable book in German and English, *Letzte Spuren: Von Deutschen jüdischen Glaubens im Landkreis Bad Kissingen* (Last Traces of German Jews in the Landkreis of Bad Kissingen). Compiled by Cornelia Binder and Michael Mence, and reproducing documents and photographs, it detailed the communities whose Jews were deported to their deaths from a small

region in the centre of Germany. It also lists, town by town and village by village, the names of the deportees, their date of birth, and the place to which they were deported (principally Riga, Lodz, Theresienstadt, Sobibor, Izbica, Minsk, and Auschwitz). The authors wrote to me, on 27 August this year: “Our goal was not just a remembrance role but to use these lists as one of the points of departure to identify the German Jewish people...and put their names and lives on record.”

Recent years have seen massive efforts to put the “names and lives” of the survivors on record. Benjamin Meed has been at the centre of compiling a register of all Holocaust survivors in the United States. Survivors themselves have been more productive than ever in writing and publishing their memoirs, often inspired to do so by early works of recollection such as Primo Levi’s *If This Is a Man* (Italian, 1945), Vladka Meed’s *On Both Sides of the Wall: Memoirs of the Warsaw Ghetto* (Yiddish, 1948, English 1972), and Elie Wiesel’s *Night* (1960). In recent years, those who are now known as “hidden children”—young Jews who survived the Holocaust in hiding with or without their parents—are also beginning to write their memoirs. In 1998 Ingrid Kisluk, Viennese-born, living in Belgium during the war, published *Unveiled Shadows: The Witness of a Child*. That same year Miriam Winter’s *Trains: A Memoir of a Hidden Childhood During and After World War II* was published. She was eight years old when her parents handed her over to a Christian family in Poland.

During the past two decades, oral testimony programmes have gained momentum. Since 1979, Laurel Vlock’s Holocaust Survivors Film Project—later part of the Fortunoff Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale, of which she was a co-founder—set a pattern for oral history in video form. As of this year, Steven Spielberg’s Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation has recorded more than 50,000 testimonies. Many survivors have given their testimonies to individual historians. In my own book *The Boys: Triumph over Adversity*, published in 1996, I was able to quote from correspondence with more than 150 survivors, teenagers when the war ended, who had written to me over the previous decade about their prewar, wartime and postwar life. A further fifty survivors sent me their personal recollections for my book *The Day the War Ended*, recalling the first five months of 1945. I also made survivor testimony an integral part of my general histories: *Second World War* and *A History of the Twentieth Century*. Every historian is able to gain a crucial dimension of knowledge and understanding from the recollections of those who survived.

I would like to end tonight with a personal reflection which I know many historians share, and which Elie Wiesel has articulated, the feeling that however much a person who did not live through the Holocaust may study it, in the end the reality is beyond comprehension: that it is impossible to take in, to absorb, to visualize the actual atrocities. Twenty-five years ago I read the text of a letter which had been written in Warsaw just after the war. It was written by a survivor to a friend in Palestine, and was printed in a cyclostyled bulletin circulated in 1946 by the Jewish Agency, to let Jews and non-Jews know what had occurred during the Holocaust. The copy I saw, in the Foreign Office archives in London, was on disintegrating and yellowing paper. The survivor wrote:

I am sending you a photo of my adopted daughter. Look well at her and remember that such children were flung into the burning ovens. Just imagine that my little Tulcia is one of the few who was saved, and that hundreds of thousands of children like her were lost in the gas chambers when they were torn away from their parents.

If you have a pathological imagination you may be able to picture this yourself, but if you are a normal person you will never be able to bring this chapter of horrors to life in spite of all your imaginings.

This same view was expressed even while the war was being fought, by an American rabbi, Harold I. Saperstein, on 11 September 1942, the eve of the Jewish New Year.²⁹ There had been much in the newspapers at that time of the Nazi destruction of the Czech village of Lidice, not far from Prague, when as a reprisal for the assassination of the Governor of Bohemia and Moravia, SS General Reinhard Heydrich, 300 Czechs were murdered at Lidice. Speaking about the news which at that same time was even then flooding into the United States about the mass murder of Jews, Rabbi Saperstein—who had travelled much in Europe before the war—told his congregation:

We Jews unheralded, have had thousands of Lidices. Community after community has been destroyed; communities I know, where I walked, talked, and worshipped, now have not a single living Jew. The expressed purpose of the Nazis has been the complete elimination of the Jews from Europe.

Fortunately, there are limits to the human imagination. For if we really comprehended what the news items reveal of the unending exile and deportation, the pitiless scourges of famine and disease bound up with ghettoization, the

ruthless slaughter, we could no longer eat or sleep. We would not be human if we could ever laugh again. And yet the news reports are understatements of the reality.

We do still eat, sleep—and laugh. So perhaps we do protect ourselves from the full extent of the horrors. Yet it is a burden from which the Jewish people will never fully be freed. As in the days of Moses, however, slavery was followed by new life.

Notes

1. These books are: *Final Journey: The Fate of the Jews in Nazi Europe* (1979); *Auschwitz and the Allies* (1981); *Atlas of the Holocaust* (1982); *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy* (1987); *The Boys: Triumph over Adversity* (1996); *Holocaust Journey: Travelling in Search of the Past* (1997); and *Never Again: A History of the Holocaust* (2000).
2. The title in the United States was *The Holocaust: The Fate of the Jews During the Second World War*.
3. Volume one, Dachau; volume two, Buchenwald and its subcamps; volume three, Bergen-Belsen, Salzwedel, Gardelegen, and Theresienstadt; volume four, Dachau, Mauthausen, Celle, Innsbruck, Braunschweig, Mannheim, Regensburg, Linz, and Buchenwald (the latter list consisting entirely of children aged sixteen and seventeen); volume five, Dachau, Feldafing, Allauch, and subcamps in southern Bavaria.
4. “Some birthplaces of Dachau survivors” (map 310), and “More Dachau survivors” (map 311).
5. Published in Britain, the United States, and Holland in 1979.
6. My map was entitled “Women survivors of the camps dying in Sweden, May–November 1945” (map 308). The quotation, from which Yad Vashem takes its name, is from the Book of Isaiah: “Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name...I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.”
7. Later: YIVO, the Institute for Jewish Research.
8. Published by Yale University Press, with a foreword by Martin Gilbert.
9. *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal: Official Texts* (42 volumes), Nuremberg, 1947–49 and *Trial of War Criminals Before*

the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10 (15 volumes)
Washington D.C., 1949–53.

10. Jacob Robinson and Henry Sachs (editors), *The Holocaust: The Nuremberg Evidence, Part One: Documents*.

11. Abraham I. Katsh (editor and translator). An expanded edition was published by Collier Books in 1972. In 1999 this long out-of-print work was republished by Indiana University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

12. Edited and translated by Derek Bowman.

13. For permission to use this extract from Yitzhak Katznelson, *Vittel Diary* [22.5.43-16.9.43] I am grateful to Mrs. Hana Gordon, Head of Publication Department, The Ghetto Fighters' House (Beit Lohamei Haghetat): the translation, taken from *Vittel Diary*, is by Dr. Myer Cohen. In 1977 Miklos Radnoti's wartime poems were published in English, in a volume called *The Witness*, translated from the Hungarian by Thomas Orszag-Land. Radnoti, aged thirty-five, had died on a death march in August 1944.

14. Gertrude Schneider (editor), *Mordechai Gebirtig: His Poetic and Musical Legacy*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000); and Sinai Leichter (editor), *Anthology of Yiddish Folksongs*, volume 5, "The Mordechai Gebirtig Volume," Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2000.

15. I am grateful to Dr. Gertrude Schneider for permission to use her translation of Mordechai Gebirtig's poems and songs contained in the book *Mordechai Gebirtig: His Poetic and Musical Legacy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000).

16. They were titled *Judenvernichtung in Donauraum, Polen und Polen und Balticum am Endes des zweiten Weltkrieges*.

17. Danuta Czech's listings were eventually published in English, and in book form (but not until 1990) as *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939–1945*. Its 855 pages constitute an extraordinarily detailed and informative work of scholarship.

18. Map 54, “The Journey to ‘Padernice.’”

19. Published by Schocken Books, New York. A second, expanded edition was published by Indiana University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1998.

20. Ringelblum’s fate was tragic: he and his son were betrayed, with several others, to the Germans while they were in hiding after the Warsaw ghetto uprising.

21. Written with Michael Olesker, a columnist on the *Baltimore Sun*, and author of a book on Baltimore. The memoir was published in 1998.

22. On my return to London after giving this lecture I learned that Serge Klarsfeld had just been made an Officer of the Légion d’Honneur by President Chirac, who said at the presentation: “Everybody knows about the struggle led by Serge Klarsfeld at the head of the association he created, the Sons and Daughters of Jews Deported from France. He has fought in memory of his father, a member of the Resistance who died during deportation, and of all the victims of the Holocaust.”

23. *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann: Record of Proceedings in the District Court of Jerusalem.*

24. These regions included the Sudetenland (map 17), the valley of the River San south of Przemysl (map 27), the Banat region of Yugoslavia (map 63), Serbia (map 68), Volhynia (map 72), Bessarabia (map 77), Bukovina (79), and Bosnia (map 84).

25. Hillel Levine, *In Search of Sugihara: The Elusive Japanese Diplomat Who Risked His Life to Rescue 10,000 Jews from the Holocaust*, 1996; Andy Marino’s *Quiet American: The Secret War of Varian Fry*, 1999; Michael Smith, *Foley: The Spy Who Saved 10,000 Jews*.

26. The series is entitled *Pinkas Hakelillot Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities*.

27. These included the 43,850 Jews deported from Salonika and murdered, and the four Jews from the fishing village of Kalamata who suffered the same fate.

28. *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny.*

29. These sermons were published as *Witness from the Pulpit: Topical Sermons 1933–1980*, edited and annotated by Rabbi Saperstein's son Marc Saperstein, professor at George Washington University's Program for Judaic Studies (New York, 2000).

Sir Martin Gilbert is one of the United Kingdom's most renowned Holocaust scholars. A prolific author, he has published more than sixty works on modern European and Holocaust history. He was appointed the official biographer of Sir Winston Churchill in 1968, producing six volumes of the definitive eight-volume biography of the British statesman, and eleven volumes of Churchill documents, and was knighted in 1995 for "services to British history and international relations." Sir Martin has served as a historical consultant for several television productions and in 1981 coauthored the script for the Academy Award-winning documentary feature film *Genocide*. Sir Martin was a Fellow of Merton College at Oxford University from 1962 to 1994, and has taught at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, at Tel Aviv University, and as a member of the Jewish studies faculty at University College London. His works on the Holocaust include *Final Journey: The Fate of the Jews of Nazi Europe* (1979), *Auschwitz and the Allies* (1981), *Atlas of the Holocaust* (1982), and *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy* (1986). In recent years, he has also published *The Boys: Triumph over Adversity* (1996) and *Holocaust Journey: Travelling in Search of the Past* (1997), which recounts his personal experiences while leading a group of students on a two-week journey of Jewish historical sites in Europe. Sir Martin was a member of the advisory group for the permanent Holocaust exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in London. His most recent book, *Never Again: A History of the Holocaust*, is an illustrated history of the Holocaust published in conjunction with the 2000 opening of the Imperial War Museum's permanent Holocaust exhibition.

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“Jewish Resistance: A Working Bibliography,” by CAHS staff, 1999; third edition 2003; web version www.ushmm.org/research/center/resistance/biblio.htm, 2000, third web edition, 2003

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