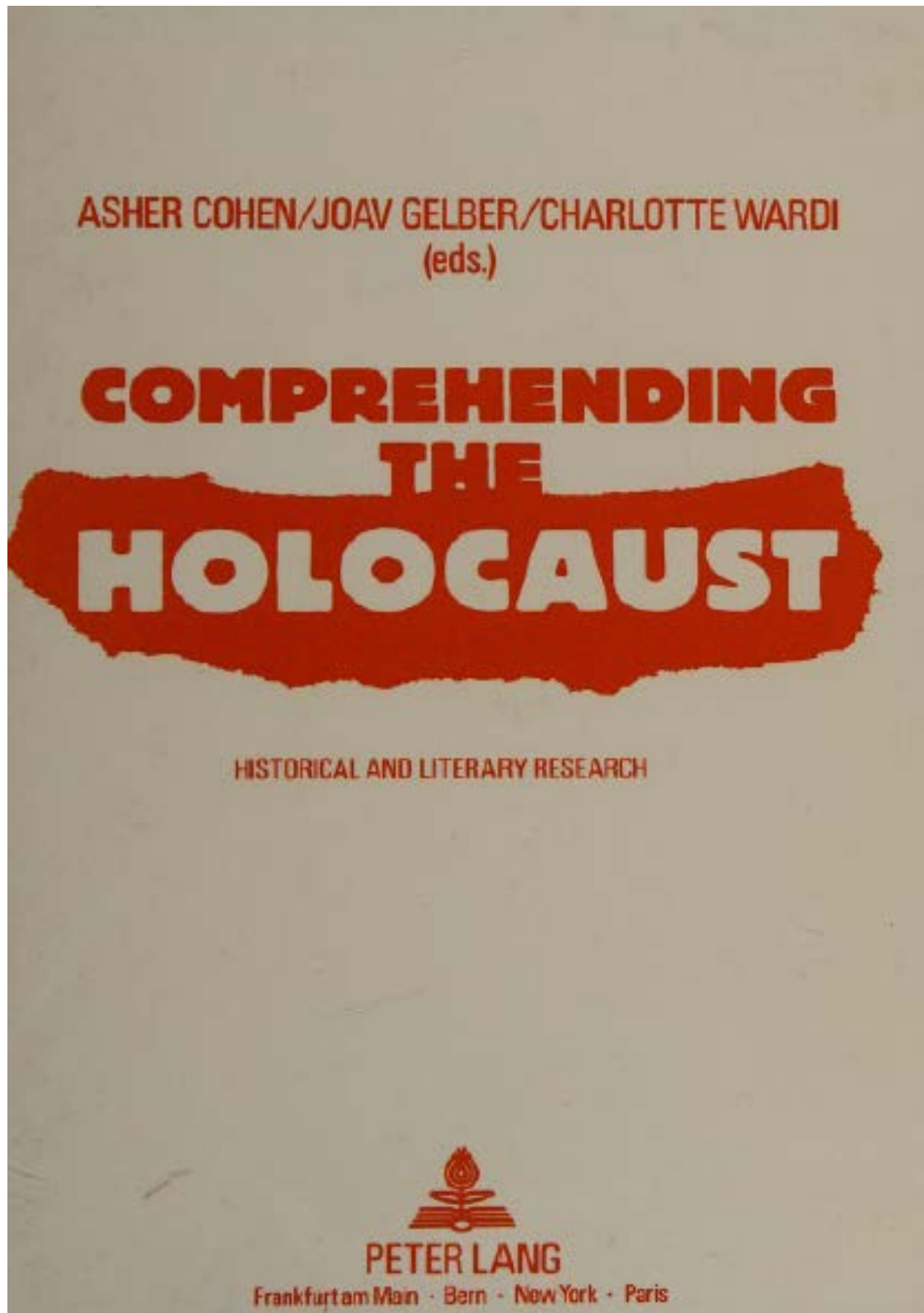


Comprehending the Holocaust: historical and literary research

Asher Cohen, Joav Gelber, Charlotte Wardi, editors

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Comprehending the Holocaust : historical and literary research

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SOME QUESTIONS THAT REMAIN OPEN

Elie Wiesel

For the next thirty-five minutes I shall take you on a journey that will reach beyond time, perhaps, and, surely, beyond space. We shall travel together to distant areas of human perception, some dark, others even darker, and see what we can do with worlds we have inherited, with ideas we have received. Can we share them at all? I am reminded of a marvelous anecdote, a true one, about a banker in the eighteenth century, whose name was Oppenheimer. Before he died, he decided to give a lesson to his successors. This is what he told them: "I am going to teach you business. What is a good businessman? To have a jewel and sell it to someone who wants it is no big deal, but not to have a jewel and sell it to someone who doesn't want it, that's a good businessman."

That may be true of business, but not of education. In education we must have a jewel, and we also need those who want it. Teachers must possess knowledge, students must seek knowledge or at least must be ready to receive it. The problem we are dealing with tonight is a singular one. Some of us, who went through certain experiences during the war, have received a certain knowledge which we very much would like to give, yet often we have the impression that there is no one who wants it.

This conference is a meaningful one. It is important for all institutions, Jewish and Christian, Moslem and Buddhist, for men, women and children who live in Israel, and elsewhere. In fact, in any country it is important to deal with this event which is the most significant in the history of modern times, and perhaps of all time. This conference will be remembered as painful but gratifying, and I think we should thank all its participants, and its organizers for their valuable

contributions. Their efforts are worthy and their struggle challenging. Their commitment is noble. We have heard questions and answers, perhaps sometimes more answers than questions, and with some of the provocative ones we may deal later. Yet, we must say that whatever we

have heard has been uttered in an atmosphere of collegiality. All of the participants have understood that all were motivated by the same irresistible desire to decode a mystery, a mystery that will haunt many generations. Organized by the able scholars of the Strochlitz Institute for Holocaust Studies, the conference reflected the passion and the human qualities of the man after whom the institute has been named. Sigmund Strochlitz, my friend and ally in so many crazy causes, deserves our total gratitude. Without his support, many of the projects linked to Haifa University would not have seen the light of day. Without him, Haifa University would not be what it is ~ a great institution of higher learning which, now under the distinguished leadership of President Evron, has been rising to even higher standards of excellence. I can also say that were it not for Sigmund Strochlitz many of the projects in which I myself am involved would not have seen the light of day.

As for the topic before us, "Questions that remain open," I would like to say that there is one question which is no question for me. That is to say, I had the answer before it even became a question. That is what we call in Hebrew Ahavat Yisrael, the love of Israel. I learned it in my childhood, and it dwells within me. The commandment that a Jew should love the Jewish people is as old as the Jewish people themselves. Yet it was never meant to be an exclusive love. Quite the opposite. It is because we love our people that we can love all peoples. If we turn against our people we turn against all peoples. Moses was punished for being too harsh with his people. All prophets were punished, or at least reprimanded, for the same reason. The love of Israel is for me a condition sine qua non for my love of humankind. The only way for a Jew to fulfill himself or herself is through his or her Jewishness. The only way for a Jew to attain universality is through his or her Jewishness. He who chooses to oppose one, will end up negating or betraying both. The place of a Jew is to be with and within his community. A Jew cannot be Jewish without his community, just as a Jew cannot be Jewish without his or her memory. And our memory cannot be selective, or limited to one period or to one area alone. We remember Egypt and Sinai. We remember the wanderings in the desert and the conquest of Canaan. We remember the judges, Yiftah

and Samson, who were so different. We remember Maimonides and Rabbi Itzhak Lurie, who were so different. We remember the Besht and the Gaon of Vilna who, surely, were different. We remember the dream of Jerusalem as we must remember the destruction which preceded it.

We all agree that the centrality of the Holocaust to our lives is irrefutable. We all agree that the event was a watershed: there is a before and an after; nothing is the same any more. Philosophy, psychology, sociology, theology and literature have all undergone mutation as a result of what happened in what we call today a kind of black hole in history — Auschwitz. Man's relationship to society, to his family, to his idea of himself, to his idea of man, man's relationship to his environment, both familiar and alien, and then, ultimately to God or to death — all these have been affected by whatever took place inside the forbidden kingdom of malediction. Man's attitude towards heresy and faith, language and silence, science and political science is no longer the same. How did a French philosopher put it? "The future itself is no longer what it used to be."

Now, let us remember that the enemy's aim to kill Jews was not new. His predecessors had done so during Crusades and pogroms. This is not new. Ever since our people left Jerusalem some two thousand years ago we have known suffering, we have known persecution. There was not a century in which Jews did not suffer somewhere. There was not a society from which we had not been expelled at one time or another. There was not a method which had not been used against the Jews at some time or another. But this time, we believe, it was different. There is something about the event which we can call unique ~ a uniqueness which does not include universal implications or applications. Yet it does. It is precisely because of its uniqueness that it has universal implications and applications. It is unique because the enemy tried to create a society, a framework, a history without Jews. Substituting himself for God, the SS man sought to recreate the universe in his own image. His endeavor was ontological. It was of a sociological nature. Those of us who were there remember. One was not allowed to look into the eyes of an SS man, for the SS man was God, and you cannot look into the face of God, just as you cannot look into the face of the Angel of Death. The objective of the enemy was, actually, to erect a new system, with new concepts of the absolutes: Time and Space, and even to create a new species. And so he established a world parallel to ours. He imagined a creation outside God's. Inside, everything was different. Time was different. One could age in a matter of days, if

not hours. Men and women looked alike, they were neither old nor young, neither perceptive nor obtuse, neither healthy nor sick. They were neither rich nor poor, they were something else. They had no name, no face, no

identity, no future. They did not laugh nor did they weep. They did not smile nor did they curse. They lived and suffered in a universe beyond our own, a universe dominated and willed by death. The killers themselves were dead, for their humanity had died in them. Inside that universe, hope and fear, triumph and defeat, had different meanings. A piece of bread was more important than the rarest work of art. In fact, a piece of bread was a work of art. A spoonful of soup elicited a deeper yearning than a bride does from the groom. No poet, no novelist, no artist could demonstrate more talent in his or her work than an inmate moved in describing what used to be a meal at home. The waiting for the daily portion of potatoes was a mystical experience.

Different laws existed inside that universe, different relations, different norms and codes of conduct. One experienced eternity in a second. One experienced the mysterious depth of total silence in the hour waiting for the selection. One experienced the limitless despair of language and the human waiting for redemption, simply waiting and waiting for death to pass. The definition of words such as faith, or death, or eternity, or friendship, or hope or loyalty, or humanity, was not the one we would commonly find in dictionaries. That is why it is impossible for someone who was not there to understand what it meant to be there.

I have read most of the books which have appeared on the subject — essays and plays, philosophical dissertations and literary analyses. Some are good, others superficial; some are filled with pain, others with ambition. My general feeling, however, remains the same: Only those men and women who lived through the experience know what it was, and others — to my great distress — will never know. Even if you were to see all the documentaries, listen to all the testimonies, visit all the camp sites and museums, read all the memoirs (and only the memoirs are important), you would still not enter the gates of that eternal night. Hence, here lies the tragedy in the survivor's mission. He must tell a tale that cannot be told, he must tell a story that cannot be communicated. We have no tools, we have no vehicles, we have no methodology. We don't even know where to begin. In this respect, to a certain degree, ironically the enemy's goal has been met. Because he pushed the crime to the limits and because we cannot reach those

limits with our language, the full story of his crimes cannot be told. His arrogance is at least partially justified. "People will not believe you," he

said to his victims. Had he said, "people will not understand you," he would have been as accurate, and perhaps more so.

Most of my books do not deal with this subject. Of my twenty-nine books only five or six deal with it. Why? I am simply afraid of turning something which is sacred for me into routine. I admire anyone who teaches the subject. Believe me, I admire teachers. I am grateful to them. I cannot teach that forbidden period. How can I teach my students? How can I give them grades? On what grounds? If they know the names of the camps they get an A and if they don't they get a B? And what do you do, if you teach well, after the lesson is over? If you teach well, then you could not teach anything else! And the students could not go anywhere else! What could they do afterwards? Go to Mathematics? Biology? It is impossible, so I cannot take on these courses. I do it once every five years perhaps. I teach a course, a tangential course about literature.

I published my first book in Yiddish thirty years ago, called: Und die Welt hot Geschwigen, (And the World was Silent.) I must say, that all of the questions which I have asked in that book and all of the questions which I have asked of myself, have remained unanswered, even questions of the word itself: The Holocaust.

May I confess to you, that I am afraid I am the one who introduced the word into this framework, and I am not proud of it. I cannot use it any more. First, because there are no words, and also because it has become so trivialized that I cannot use it anymore. Whatever mishap occurs now, they call it "holocaust". I have seen it myself on television in the country in which I live. A commentator describing the defeat of a sports team, somewhere, called it a "holocaust". I have read in a very prestigious newspaper published in California, a description of the murder of six people, and the author called it a holocaust. So, I have no words anymore. Also the questions remain questions. The questions remain questions regarding the past, and the present too. With your permission, I would like to speak of the present, at least briefly.

I don't understand what is happening in Austria. Is it possible that forty years later old demons could be resurrected? Can you understand it? The man who was the number one civil servant of the international community, lied. My God, if one percent of what he admitted were to happen in our country, that man would be disqualified, but forty-nine

percent of the Austrians have voted for him. I don't understand that. Haven't they read, haven't they learned anything? I don't understand the fact that there is antisemitism in the world. I swear to you, I was convinced in 1945 that antisemitism had died with its victims. Now, we know that Jews perished but antisemitism is still alive. Is it possible, that antisemitism is now on the rise in so many countries?

Reactionary movements spring up in France: Three million people voted for Le Pen! I write in French and I am fond of French culture. French is my language. I am grateful to France for having brought me there, as it had brought a young man whom I have just met again here tonight. We were part of a group of four hundred children that General deGaulle brought from Buchenwald. We received a new home in Ecouis, a chateau near Normandy. They gave us a new home. Is it possible that in France today, in a university called Nantes, the history department should confer a doctoral degree on someone whose dissertation "proves" that Auschwitz never happened? I am a French writer, or if you will, a Jewish writer who writes in French; I tell you, I am embarrassed! I'm offended! And I do hope that the academic authorities in France will take proper measures to rescind that act of shame in order to restore the honor and good name of French education and French culture.

I don't understand how a man could devote five or six years of his life to prove that it didn't happen. But he is not alone. In our own country, we have dozens and dozens of pseudo-scholars, who are publishing similar books. By now, they have already published over two hundred pamphlets, saying it didn't happen. They gear their lives to "proving" it didn't happen. Just as we devote our lives to memory, so they spend their lives to distort memory. What kind of life is this?

Unfortunately, people read, people listen, and if we are not careful, in a hundred years from now they will say the destruction of the Jews in Europe was a controversial issue: Some said it happened, others said it did not. Tell me, what can we do about it? They try to provoke us to debate, but I never accept. I think we should never dignify them with debates. But then what else should we do? How does one fight ugliness? I know how to fight injustice. I try. Be it apartheid in South Africa, be it fascism, be it poverty, be it hunger, I try to fight inhumanity. But how do you fight ugliness? That, I don't know. Perhaps the only way to fight is through memory and education.

But there are other things I don't understand with regard to the present. I don't know what else we can do for our people in Russia. Right now there is a gathering taking place in Jerusalem. Believe me,

my heart is there, too. I travelled to Russia for the first time in 1965, and since then it has become my life's devotion. What can we do to bring Vladimir Slepak out? What can we do for Ida Nudel? What can we do for Victor Brailovsky? These are peaceful people; they do not want revolution; they do not seek violence. All they want is to live as Jews among their people. What's wrong with that? Maybe you have an answer. I do not. We have tried everything. We have spoken to presidents and senators and to other people of influence with no result. What is happening to the Russian mind? Why is it that they are so obtuse about it? There are, perhaps, ten thousand people who are active refuseniks and all they want is to leave, and the Kremlin says no. Why not? I do not understand.

These questions I cannot answer. They remain open, just as all the questions I had in 1945 remain open. Like open wounds. I must tell you that just as I do not understand the present, so I still cannot understand the past. How was it possible that Jews throughout occupied Europe had the coinage to go on living? I still do not know why the tragedy occurred. We know that this event could have been prevented. Why wasn't it? I don't understand. If Roosevelt had spoken up more valiantly, more vigorously, if the Allies had shown more concern, the catastrophe would not have occurred. Why is it that our friends — and they were our friends — in the free countries gave Hitler the impression that as far as the Jews were concerned he could do whatever he wanted? That was his impression. Read Goebbels' diaries and you will see that, day after day, he wrote that the democracies didn't care. Why didn't they? I do not understand the killer, nor do I understand the victim.

I am sure that you have been puzzled, the way I have been puzzled, by the fact that so many of these killers had Ph.D. degrees. How was it possible to have a Ph.D. degree in theology or in philosophy, or in psychology, and engage in the systematic brutalization of so many fellow human beings? How was it possible for physicians, lawyers, musicians, opera lovers to kill children in the presence of their mothers?

Lohamei Hageettaot is working on a project about remembering children — nothing is more important than that. Because if what happened to our people belongs to a sacred area of our memory, then what happened to the

children is the Sanctum Sanctorum, the Holy of Holies. We know from literature that children appeal to the best in human beings. We once felt, romantically, idealistically, that if a

child were to face a killer, the killer would not be capable of going through with the act. Yet there we saw a million — a million and a half children, facing the killers and the killers didn't stop. Why didn't they stop? How could they look at the children and then kill them? How could they, afterwards, go on living, working, laughing, singing, eating?

I was here during the Eichmann trial. When I came I wanted to picture Eichmann as a monster. I wanted him to be a man like the Minotaur by Picasso — with three ears, four noses. But he was human. He had a sense of humor, a good appetite. He slept well; he had dreams. He even had logic. How was that possible? Yet the total dehumanization of the killer remains a puzzle to me and a source of fear. Yes, fear. They remind us of what is possible. Is it possible for human beings to study, to absorb culture, to fall in love, and to fall in love with art and ideas, to admire poetry and philosophy, and still commit the gravest offenses against humanity?

I cannot understand the victims either. How could they live their own death and survive another day, another night? How could they continue without losing their sanity? I am thinking about the nocturnal processions of multitudes going towards the mass graves. I am thinking of the descriptions we read of Jews walking towards the abyss quietly, at times without a whisper. And everything in me is invaded by darkness. What took place there? What did they see? What did they feel? Some prayed silently. Some shouted Sh'ma Yisrael! Others remained mute.

I also do not understand the fate of the believer; nor do I comprehend the absence of faith in those who were not believers. I once asked the Lubavitcher Rebbe: How can you have faith after what happened? And he answered: How can you not have faith after what happened? Now, I accept his answer as a question, but not as an answer.

Let me give you more examples: How is it possible that here, in this land of Israel, which is so dear to us, three years after the war, an independent state came into being? Where did the Jewish people find the courage, the imagination, the faith, to build a new nation in its ancient homeland? How could these people have moved so fast from the depth of despair, to the height of dreams? How could these people hold on to sanity? Ask any

psychiatrist and he will tell you: had this happened to an individual, he would have lost his mind, his mental balance. But the Jewish people remained sane and human. How can I not be proud of our people? There are problems, of course. There are

problems and there are tragedies, unfortunately. But basically, the people of Israel remain true to their tradition. This was always so.

Inside ghettos and camps Jews managed to study and pray. I did. I studied and I prayed inside the camp. How did they manage to speak of God? To God? In a world where death had all the attributes of God? Some of them chose to serve as chroniclers and historians in a time when history had reached its ultimate eschatological upheaval.

One of our brilliant colleagues here suggested that maybe the only language in which to deal with the event is German. The language of the killer. Why not the language of the victim? What about Yiddish? And what about Hebrew? Has Job become obsolete? Jeremiah no longer exists? When we speak of tragedy what words do we use? Jeremiah's words! But spoken with our memories they have a different meaning. Job's words on our lips have a different connotation. What about the children who wrote poetry? I don't really believe that one can speak about it, but if there is a language, it is the children's — those who wrote poems, those who wrote prayers, who had dreams, unspoken, mutilated. That is the language.

Chaim Kaplan and Emmanuel Ringelblum and Shimon Huberband and Moshe Flinker and Yitzhak Katznelson, and above all, the poets, Jacob Glatstein, Levick. And what about the Sonderkommandos, Aryeh Leibel Langfuss, the Dayan, the judge, and Zalman Gradowsky? Where did they take the courage, the patience, the vision to bequeath words for the future? Did they believe there was a future? What kind of future was it?

I know at least one Jew who from the moment he arrived in the camp was convinced that he would never leave it alive. I remember the first night. I saw hundreds and hundreds of Jews from all over the world converging towards the flames. And I was overcome with fear. I thought: "This is the end of the Jewish people." The Sonderkommando witnessed much worse. They saw our people consumed by flames. Is it conceivable that they had more faith in the future than I? And the question of questions: If humankind failed, and it did; if civilization failed, and it did; if culture failed, and it did — where was God in it all? Whenever Rabbi Yehoshua

Halevy, in the Talmud, would meet the prophet Elijah, he would ask him: "What does God do? What is the Almighty doing when all this is going on in His world?" I wish that I too could meet the prophet one day, just to ask him this question alone. What did He do? Where was He?

Our problem is that we can turn to no one with these questions. I have written about them. I have written about God being on trial. I have even written a play on it. I will tell you why I have not fulfilled my plan. I have seen that trial: Three scholars who wanted to have a Din Torah (trial) with God. But I felt it couldn't be told. It cannot be communicated. So I told the story as a story and that's all. But the question remained a question: Where was God in all that?

I have heard answers — all cliches, theological answers and political slogans. The fanatic believers from extreme orthodox circles say we were guilty, for we had been Zionists. Politicians answer that we suffered because we ignored or opposed Zionism. Some place all the blame on God, others prefer to put all the responsibility on man. Some historians accuse Germany alone, others indict Christianity alone, still others criticize our own people.

As for me, as a Jew, I never see my role as that of a judge. I am only a witness, and all I can try to do is to tell the tale. Like Kafka's messenger, I do not know what the message is. The tale needs other words, other tools, other vehicles. All I can do is look for them. My story, therefore, is the story of a quest. It is written not with words, but against words. And yet, I profoundly believe that if our story could be told it would help, not only our people, but the whole world. I may sound arrogant, but I believe that only the memory of what happened to our people can save the world now. If we forget, we shall be forgotten. But if we remember, future generations will remember us as well. Hence the problem: If communication is impossible how can we fulfill our task to bear witness? If knowledge is restricted - if not totally forbidden - how can we make use of it and transform it into lessons? Lessons for whom?

I know this is a paradox, but I have learned to live with paradoxes. As a child, I once asked my teacher: "How can God be present, at the same time, both in good and in evil? How can He be both harsh and kind? Isn't it a contradiction?" And my teacher answered: "All this is to teach us that God dwells also in contradiction."

So, in spite of our inability to speak, we must speak. We must use language. We must share memories. We must evoke hope where there is none, and invent meaning where there is no meaning, and formulate lessons for all of us to learn. What are the lessons? Modest in scope, they are pragmatic in nature.

One: irrespective of our various beliefs, we must agree that any response to the catastrophe must be a moral one. It must indicate a

moral choice, a moral attitude, a moral statement, in other words: a statement of morality. Knowledge, if it remains abstract, can turn against humanity. Knowledge if it is humanized, if it is set in moral categories, helps humanity.

Two: whatever our convictions may be, they must be articulated as positions. In other words, we must take sides, we must be involved. Neutrality never helps the victim. Neutrality only helps the victimizer.

Three: when evil appears it must be unmasked and opposed immediately. We cannot give it a second chance. We must not allow hatred or evil or cruelty to grow and gain strength.

Four: the principal danger lies in indifference. Indifference to murder is criminal. Indifference to oppression is sinful. Indifference to injustice is condemnable. The enemy feeds on our indifference. As I have tried to say so often, but not often enough, the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, but indifference. The opposite of faith is not arrogance, but indifference. The opposite of tolerance is not fanaticism, but indifference, and the opposite of memory is not oblivion, but indifference. Therefore, the most urgent response to the catastrophe is to fight indifference.

Five: how does one fight indifference? How does one combat injustice? How does one resist injustice and oppression? Again, I believe, only through memory. Memory may not be the only answer, but there is no answer without memory. As a writer I've always been tempted by silence. I have tried to introduce silence into every word of mine. I have tried to surround my words with silence. And yet, I know that though the memory of silence is important, the silence of memory would be a scandal.

In conclusion, I would simply like to go back to one writer who has

influenced many of us for many years and in many ways: Franz Kafka. He died before the war, but his lesson remains. Surely you remember that in every one of Kafka's novels, there is a tragic character. Usually it is the messenger who cannot reach his destination, who cannot deliver the message. I often think that we survivors are actually Kafka's messengers, for we cannot deliver the message. People do not want to receive it. And therefore, the tragedy of the messenger is the worst and crudest of all. But then I think: in tragedy, and especially in Jewish history, there is always something worse. What is worse? It is that the messenger forgets to whom the message is to be

delivered. Is that the end? Oh no. There is something worse. It is when the messenger doesn't know the message. Is that the cruelest? No, there is something even worse. It is when the messenger forgets from whom he received the message.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE HOLOCAUST

Raul Hilberg

In the beginning there was no Holocaust. When it took place in the middle of the twentieth century, its nature was not fully grasped. There was a tendency to submerge it in the history of the Second World War, or to treat it as yet another occurrence in a long progression of anti-Jewish acts, or to view it more generally as persecution of a minority. It has taken some time to establish the idea that the Holocaust is a phenomenon sui generis, that it is not reducible to something larger, simpler, or more essential, and that it is a field of study by itself.

By now the output of Holocaust historiography is sufficiently voluminous to qualify unmistakably as a separate undertaking. Today one may even divide the whole of Holocaust writing into three subareas: perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. The division reflects the historical development. Each of these groups had long had its own set of experiences and perceptions, and during the period from 1939 to 1945 each was also physically isolated from the others. Thus the war parted the Allies from the Axis, and the Holocaust as such segregated the Jews from the Germans and from the outside world. In the course of all these operations, ordinary channels of interaction were choked and normal contacts were severed. Killers, onlookers, and the doomed became three distinct personalities. No wonder that Holocaust research is similarly compartmentalized. Most often, in fact, the individual historian will focus on one of these groups, sometimes on two, but seldom on all three. Moreover, there is a further delimitation in terms of who is writing about what. Jews, for example, deal with Germans, or America, or the extinct communities. A gentile American ordinarily makes his choice between the German Reich and the United

States. A German confines himself to Germany and its Axis collaborators. The reasons for these self-assumed or self-imposed orientations are partly

situational, such as the accessibility of source material in a particular place, but they are also psychological, in that Holocaust studies are marked by unstated but well understood prerogatives and taboos.

Holocaust historiography is historiography. Even though the event was extreme and unprecedented, all writing about it is still writing. Whoever addresses himself to this history must wrestle with sources and meanings. No other way is open to the historian, and therefore the evolution of Holocaust historiography is in the final analysis the record of the manner in which a multitude of investigators have coped under varying conditions with the time-honored problem of information and its interpretation.

The Sources

The fundamental building blocks of writings about the Holocaust are contemporaneous documents and postwar testimony. If one were to arrange these materials according to issuing authority or authorship, the list would look like this:

I. Documents and related materials

A. Institutional records generated by public offices, private corporations, and other organizations
1. Addressed to the general public
Laws and decrees
Judicial decisions

Announcements and proclamations
Speeches and official explanations
Directories of office holders

Census reports and other published numerical data
Commentaries by officials about policies, enactments, and court judgments
Newspaper reports

Papers issued to individuals, such as ration cards, identification cards, permits, passes, and passports

2. Not addressed to the public
Directives, orders, and guidelines
Proposals and reports

Letters, conference minutes, and file memoranda

War diaries and logs

Personnel files and lists of persons

B. Personal records

Letters and diaries by private individuals, or by public officials writing in their private capacities

II. Testimony and related materials

Pre-trial interrogations and trial testimony Oral history

Memoirs, published and unpublished

Before 1945, a researcher had to rely on newspaper reports or on official materials available to the public. This limited sourcebase afforded a view of the ousting of Jewry from the economy and of ghettoization, but it provided no details about secret operations involving deportations and killings. All the books published in this period stop or become hazy at a point when they have to deal with the culmination of the destruction process. Examples are: The Institute of Jewish Affairs, *Hitler's Ten-Year War on the Jews* (New York, 1943); Eugene Kulischer, *The Displacement of Population in Europe* (Montreal, 1943); Jacob Apenszlak, ed., *The Black Book of Polish Jewry* (New York,

1943) ; and Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule In Occupied Europe* (Washington, 1944) .

In addition to such monographs, however, there were early studies aiming at an understanding of the Nazi phenomenon. Notable among such analytical efforts, not many of which have withstood the test of time, are Ernest Fraenkel, *The Dual State* (New York, 1941), and Franz Neumann, *Behemoth* (New York, 1942; 2d ed., 1944). Fraenkel observed that Nazi Germany was capable of maintaining old norms in its juridical and political structure to preserve stability, but that it was simultaneously prone to free itself from legal and traditional restraints to take measures against its victims — that it was also, in Carl Schmitt's terms, a *Massnahmenstaat*. This insight explains a good deal about the apparent normality of life between German and German, and the increasing devastation visited by Germans upon Jews. Neumann

in turn discovered the structure of Nazi Germany. He recognized four hierarchies that acted independently of one another as major power spheres: the civil service, the military, industry, and the party. Thus he pointed to the four major decision-making bodies that later were found to have formulated and carried out the measures with which Jewry was destroyed. Neither Fraenkel nor Neumann, however, could see what was going on behind the scenes in the German bureaucracy. This actuality was hidden in orders and reports that did not come to light before the end of the war.

Holocaust historiography began in earnest after the Allied victors had captured the German records. When these stocks were sifted for the first trial of major war criminals in Nuremberg, a number of crucial documents about the destruction of the Jews was found. In 1947, the American Jewish Conference published a compilation containing some of these newly discovered items: *Nazi Germany's War against the Jews*. The editor, Paul Krieger, wrote a loose 75-page introduction to the volume. The book was the first semi-coherent account of the Holocaust, based primarily on the evidence taken from the perpetrators. Its texture and contents, close to the events, foreshadowed the literature that was to come.

By the late 1940's, about 40,000 documents were gathered for the subsequent trials in Nuremberg. Labeled NG, NOKW, NI, and NO, they were taken from the correspondence of German ministries, the armed forces, industrial enterprises, and Nazi organizations. The division was clearly reminiscent of Neumann's Behemoth, and much that dealt with the Jews was to be unearthed in each of these piles. Early publications based on these documents nevertheless relied on the NO series, and to a lesser extent on the NG records, as may be noted in the footnotes of Leon Poliakov's *Breviaire de la haine* (Paris, 1951), and Gerald Reitlinger's *The Final Solution* (London, 1953).

At this point document collection became a large enterprise. The United States alone held folders in boxes lining about 40,000 feet of shelf. Poland husbanded documents left on its soil; the Netherlands established a center for materials in its possession; and so on. Jewish archives with original collections were also formed: the YIVO Institute in New York, the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris, the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. Yet for the historians, these developments not only opened opportunities but also generated

problems.

The first difficulty to become manifest was the sheer quantity of the material. The individual pieces of paper, virtually all of them unindexed, were reaching the hundreds of millions. No solitary researcher could canvass more than a fraction of such holdings in a lifetime. The watchword of the writer was consequently manageability, or how much was enough. Intrinsicly, each investigator rediscovered for himself the old law of diminishing returns. Because each document contains something that another document covers, the point was always reached when there was less and less return for added effort.

The second obstacle was the scattering of collections in various archives, record centers, and libraries, not to speak of the several languages in which these documents had been written. Not surprisingly, more and more work was centered on a particular country, region, or city, for in this manner the obstacles created by geographic dispersals and linguistic diversity could be minimized. Even then, complete coverage of a whole country was rare. Let us take France, for example. To find out what the German administration did, one should consult Hans Umbreit, *Der Militaerbefehlshaber in Frankreich 1940-1944* (Boppard am Rhein, 1968). The French layer is best described by Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York, 1981). The Jewish council under the occupation, the Union Generale des Israelites de France, is portrayed by Cynthia Haft, *The Bargain and the Bridle* (Chicago, 1983).

The third barrier encountered by researchers are closed or semiclosed archives and private custody of essential materials. Time-locks on collections are a common feature in official archives. The availability of German documents so soon after Germany's surrender is thus an exception, not the rule. These German records were opened much sooner than many of their non-German counterparts, such as the prefectural reports in France or the files of the Office of Strategic Services in the United States. Some countries, however, have more or less shut the doors of their archives altogether. Conspicuously closed are the Soviet archives and those of East Germany. From scattered items released by the USSR and the East German government, one may estimate the importance of these collections. The Soviet Union, for example, handed over to West German authorities the report of Einsatzkommando 3, which killed over 100,000 Jews in the Lithuanian region, a report that is unique in its wealth

of detail. Similarly the USSR released a folder of the German railroads kept at the railway directorate in Minsk. This folder has unlocked much that was puzzling

about the system under which special trains carried the Jews to their deaths. East Germany on its part has a major collection of the Interior Ministry and holds missing links in other ministerial records as well. A few of these documents have been printed, and their appearance, like that of the Soviet-held items, raises the question: how many more are there where these came from?

Jewish archives, too, could be closed to unwelcome visitors. The following note appears near the title page of Jacob Sloan's edition of Emmanuel Ringelblum's diary, published in 1958:

This English version of Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto is based upon the selection printed in *Bleter Far Gesichte*, Warsaw, March, 1948, and in the volume published by the Jewish Historical Commission of Warsaw in 1952.

Unfortunately, it was impossible to secure access to the full text, either the original in Warsaw or the copy in Israel.

Ten years later, a missing portion of the diary was printed in volume 7 of *Yad Vashem Studies*. Edited by Joseph Kermish, the excerpts deal with June, 1942. Significantly they dwell on the Sobibor death camp and on the difficult question of impending deportations of the Warsaw Jews.

Documents in private collections may be yet another variant of closure or semi-closure. The Nuremberg collections in the NI series contain substantial materials from the files of Krupp, I.G. Farben, Flick, and the Dresdner Bank. Not much, however, can readily be found about German business outside this series. From the Federal Records Center at Alexandria, Virginia, corporate records were shipped back to their private owners without microfilming. Moreover, the records of many enterprises had not been seized in the first place. Hence the role of insurance companies in expropriations is virtually unknown.

Materials are held not only by corporate organizations but also by individuals. The German railway official, Eugen Kreidler, listed in the bibliography of his book, *Die Eisenbahnen im Machtbereich der*

Achsenmaechte waehrend des Zweiten Weltkrieges (Frankfurt am Main, 1975), some high-level documents that were in his personal possession. Not until after his death ten years later was this collection deposited in the German Federal Archives at Koblenz. Another case is that of Benjamin Arditi, a Jewish leader in Bulgaria who was a participant in talks with Bulgarian government officials during the war. Twenty-five

years later, in Holon, Israel, he remained in possession of important documents, particularly reports of the Bulgarian Commissariat of Jewish Affairs. Frederick B. Chary notes in his work. *The Bulgarian Jews and the Final Solution* (Pittsburgh, 1972), that he was able to see some of these records, but that he was then told that he would no longer be able to use others, because Arditi was selling the collection to a private institution.

An entire generation of historians has had to cope with the insurmountability of cavernous archives, the scattering of collections, and the denial of documents. For these researchers the future may be too late. Their works are already in print, and second editions are often enough problematical ventures. Yet, historiography will develop precisely because not everything could be done at once. There are only two problems that will encumber also the younger historians. One is the sheer loss of documents; the other is the silence of written records about crucial decisions and events.

A great many papers were destroyed altogether. Sensitive materials, including all those that dealt with Jews, were to be burned as a matter of priority during the twilight hours of the Nazi regime in 1945. The daily summaries of the Einsatzgruppen reports for the occupied USSR, which were assembled by the Reich Security Main Office in Berlin and distributed in multiple copies ranging from a few to about a hundred, constitute the principal source about the shootings in the east. A single set was found. As for documents dealing directly with the death camps of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, all but a few peripheral items are gone. In these circumstances, our view of the Holocaust, based on the official records of the perpetrators, will never be complete. Before the end of the war, many documents of disbanded Jewish councils were also in German hands. Some are still lodged in archives amid the records of German supervisory organs, but many others were destroyed on the eve of the German surrender.

No major effort has yet been made to retrieve personal papers from people

who may have kept them. Private letters, however, probably no longer exist in large quantities. Insofar as the addressees were Jews, and these Jews were killed, the letters for the most part are lost. If the letter writers were German, the recipients may have hidden or destroyed such correspondence because of its possible use as evidence in court proceedings. Diaries, whether German or Jewish, are less likely to have been discarded, but there were fewer to begin with.

Most important is that which has never been recorded. Any orders by Hitler to annihilate the Jews were only oral, and so were other instructions that somehow spelled out killings. The lack of writing applies, however, also to more mundane subjects: black-market operators made no reports, and neither did bystanders who helped themselves to the property of the dead. Above all, the official directives to subordinates and the prescribed reports to superiors do not necessarily reveal all the thought processes of the participants. When a railroad man signed a time-table order to dispatch a train to a death camp, the intent behind the order is unambiguous, but one may still wonder what the signer was thinking about Treblinka. Sometimes, as in the 1941 Barbarossa directives that launched Heydrich's Einsatzgruppen on their mission to ferret out "Jewish-Bolshevik commissars", even the meaning of the words is not self-evident.

The gaps in institutional documentation and the relative scarcity of private records have underscored the need for testimony. In the war crimes trials at Nuremberg, most witnesses were called to explain documents, not to substitute for them. Gradually, however, testimony has been gathered for lack of any other source of information. The Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen in Ludwigsburg, West Germany, prepared just such oral evidence for the Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka trials. Much of this testimony is plainly unreliable about names, locations, or dates. When former guards, for example, were asked to draw a sketch of the death camp in which they served, their diagrams differed with respect to such details as the placement of the railroad tracks.

Many accounts of survivors, including court testimony and oral history, present similar problems to the researcher. By and large, these recollections are a poor source for identification of persecutors or pursuers, or even of people who helped. Often, the survivors leave out a great deal about themselves. They omit not only painful episodes too private to relate, but also ordinary facts that they may not deem important, such as

particulars about their personal possessions and resources or the overall state of their health before the onset of the Holocaust. What most survivors speak most about is their suffering. Samuel Gringauz, himself a survivor, had a harsh word for these personal histories. In the January 1950 issue of *Jewish Social Studies* he called them "judeocentric, logocentric, and egocentric." For him, most of the memoirs were "full of preposterous verbosity, graphomoric exaggeration, dramatic effects, overestimated self inflation, dilettante philosophizing, would-be lyricism, unchecked rumors, bias, partisan attacks and apologies."

Many thousands of survivors' statements have been gathered in oral history collections since Gringauz wrote these lines, and comparatively few have been utilized by historians. The most ambitious attempt to retrieve some substance from this reservoir is Martin Gilbert's *The Holocaust* (New York, 1985), but Gilbert could not construct a framework for his book save for strict chronology. He simply reports simultaneous occurrences in Krakow and Salonika side by side.

In fact, studies based on recollections of victims, bystanders, or perpetrators have been most potent when the historian himself asked the questions. One such work is John K. Dickinson, *German and Jew* (Chicago, 1967). Dickinson traced the life and death of an obscure victim by asking 172 persons (the majority of them Germans), who had known the man, how he had faced the crisis of Nazism and how he had failed to save himself. In our century of the common man, Dickinson's probe is a singular study of what happened to a single individual in the maelstrom. Another work, Gitta Sereny's *Into That Darkness* (New York, 1974), is a biography of Franz Stangl, commander of Sobibor and Treblinka. Sereny travelled on several continents to question his family, associates, and victims about his life and work. She also interviewed Stangl himself. A third book, Robert Katz's *Black Sabbath* (New York, 1968) is addressed to the October, 1943, Rome transport, which went to Auschwitz. Katz elicited information from Jewish and gentile Italians and from Germans.

Yet another example of a study grounded in interviews is a 1985 Harvard University doctoral dissertation by John Horwitz, "The Mauthausen Concentration Camp Complex and the Civil Populace,

1938-1945." Horwitz concentrated entirely on local Austrian bystanders and he was interested mainly in their reactions. All four of these works

present history in vivid detail; they convey a scene, sometimes of foreboding, sometimes of suspense; and all four are very intensive, casting a bright light on a small stage. Yet they are also a genre of

historiography that is coming to a natural end. In the near future,

all work based on oral history will have to rely on reminiscences already at hand.

There are, of course, memoirs that may be indispensable if only because the authors were in a pivotal position to gather unique

observations. Some obvious examples are Rudolf Hoess, Kommandant in Auschwitz (Munich, 1963); Adolf Eichmann, *Ich, Adolf Eichmann* (Leoni

am Starnberger See, 1980); Oscar Neumann (once a chairman of the Jewish council in Slovakia), *Im Schatten des Todes* (Tel Aviv, 1956); and Filip Mueller, *Sonderbehandlung* (Munich, 1979). All memoirs present problems, but some have to be used with special care.

In a category by itself are the accounts of messengers. For Elie Wiesel, the messenger is a special kind of person altogether, speaking truth, but appearing to be mad. During the Holocaust, the messenger was not believed. He was not and frequently still is not regarded as having been stable. Of course, one must remember that ordinary human beings would not in any case have volunteered to be messengers. The list of these people includes such men as Kurt Gerstein, Joel Brand, and Jan Karski. Gerstein was an SS officer who revealed the existence of death camps to a Swedish diplomat on an express train. After the war, he wrote a statement detailing his visits to Belzec and

Treblinka. Some allegations in this account are incorrect or hearsay. Much is also omitted, particularly Gerstein's role in supplying gas to Auschwitz. Shortly after he made his statement, he was found dead, apparently a suicide. Brand was a member of the Jewish rescue committee in Budapest who was sent by Eichmann to Istanbul with an offer of 1,000,000 Jews for 10,000 Allied trucks. Brand's memoir, *Die*

Geschichte von Joel Brand (Cologne-Berlin, 1956) was written by Alex Weissberg, with conversations replicated in quotes. Again, this book, coupled with Brand's erratic testimony at the Eichmann trial, is not a

historian's ideal source. Jan Karski, a messenger of the Polish government in exile, states in his memoir, *Story of a Secret State* (Boston, 1944) that he entered the Warsaw ghetto after the mass

deportations in 1942, that he visited Belzec disguised in an Estonian

uniform, that Estonians as well as Ukrainians guarded the camp, that the inmates he saw were Warsaw ghetto Jews, and that he witnessed the departure of a train filled with almost all of the camp prisoners. The description of the ghetto is convincing enough, but there were no Estonian guards at Belzec; Warsaw ghetto Jews were not sent to the camp; and no train filled with people left from there.

Finally, by way of contrast, a word should be said about witnesses who wrote not as autobiographers but as commentators about conditions or events they had observed. These authors were professional men who revealed their skills on every page. The historian Ringelblum, who did not survive, included broad observations in his diary, and he even composed lengthy essays, one of which, *Polish-Jewish Relations during the Second World War* (New York, 1976), was retrieved after the war.

Samuel Gringauz published an article, "The Ghetto as an Experiment of Jewish Social Organization," in the January, 1949, issue of *Jewish Social Studies*, which is a conceptual forerunner of Isaiah Trunk's *Judenrat* (New York, 1972). Lucjan Dobroszicki, a survivor of the Lodz ghetto, edited *The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto 1941-1944* (New Haven, 1984). A physician, Elie Cohen, who had been an inmate of Auschwitz, wrote the most detailed description of deprivation and illness under camp conditions: *Human Behavior in the Concentration Camp* (New York, 1956).

In sum, the available sources are unbalanced. German institutional records outnumber those of Jewish offices, and private Jewish diaries and testimony are more abundant than their German counterparts. The official documents by themselves do not reflect proportionality. There are more accessible German materials from the Foreign Office than from the railroads, more of I.G. Farben than Siemens, more about Poland than the occupied USSR. Jewish ghetto collections are similarly tilted, with those of Lodz more prevalent than those of Warsaw, and those of Warsaw exceeding those of Lvov. Because of this asymmetry, the small gaps in our knowledge are filled more easily than the large ones.

Moreover, the German materials differ from the Jewish sources in content. The German perpetrators generally had the wider view. Since they were the initiators of action, they knew more about it, and knew it earlier than the victims. A local German administrator could demand reports from a Jewish council in his jurisdiction, but the ghetto leaders received little information from the Germans. Most often the Jews were in the dark and everything they wrote in contemporary records or from personal recollection reflects this fundamental fact. The opposite contrast, however, emerges when German and Jewish sources are compared for indications of inner thoughts and aims. Unlike the Jews, whose writing is impact oriented, often complete with recorded reactions and hopes, the Germans enveloped their correspondence with a motivational haze. They seldom spoke, let alone wrote, about the meaning of what they did. It is as if their actions were elemental and primordial, beyond rationality or irrationality. Thus they shrouded the roots of the Holocaust in an impenetrable fog.

Interpretation

Holocaust writing has differed from country to country with respect to approaches and themes. It has evolved, notably in the west, through several stages, from the early discoveries of the late 1940's, through the temporary revival attendant to the Eichmann trial in the 1960's, to the present prolonged renaissance, which began in the mid-1970's. Only the subject matter has remained constant. The broad issues are still concentrated on conceptualizations of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders, and it is mostly in this continuing context that one speaks of interpretations.

To begin with the Germans as the object of study, one might say that the analytical work was started outside of Germany with an almost simplistic question: Who could have done such things? In the West, this query gave immediate rise to an SS and Gestapo fixation, with the result that the roles of civil servants, industrialists, and soldiers were largely obscured. In this respect at least, the Soviet and other East European definitions of the perpetrator have been more realistic. The Communists have had no trouble identifying such groups as the judiciary and big business as integral parts of the Nazi regime.

Most significant, however, is the exploration of the perpetration in Western Germany, for there the question is one of identity itself. Not unnaturally, German historians shied from probing the depths of the Nazi

regime for a long time. They began with studies of how Hitler came to power. These investigations, which dealt with 1932, 1933,

1934, and perhaps 1935, conveyed an unmistakable implication of usurpation of a regime that had acted in Germany's name. The Nazi era was thus considered an exception in German history, and the Nazi movement was regarded as an aberration outside of German society. This doctrine, which has had its adherents in other countries as well, promotes the pictorialization of the perpetrator as unadjusted to normal life, sometimes primitive, occasionally opportunistic, and always a misfit. The quintessential perpetrator in this view was in

fact an 55-man, particularly one who served in the cadre of a concentration camp. Eugen Kogon, a non-Jewish inmate of Buchenwald, described the 55 in his *Der SS-Staat* (Frankfurt am Main, 1946) as a

"negative elite", composed of the "dregs of aristocracy, the intelli

gentsia, and the bourgeois", men who had "failed to make a career in

the government, the army, and industry." As yet, however, there was no study of the roles and nature of those elites in which the SS-men had failed to make their careers.

Not until the mid-1960's was this problem partially addressed in a compendium of long essays, still titled *Der SS-Staat* (Freiburg, 1965). One of the co-authors, Helmut Krausnick, wrote a key 120-page segment on "The Persecution of the Jews". In the 1960's, Krausnick was director of the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich; during the war he had been stationed in Paris as a member of the German Foreign Office. His article is a compressed history of the whole German assault on the Jews, decree by decree, decision by decision.

In 1972, a larger work appeared in Germany. It was Uwe Adam's *Judenpolitik im Dritten Reich*, published in Duesseldorf as part of a series, the *Tuebingen Schriften zur Sozial und Zeitgeschichte*. Adam deals with the concept of *Massnahmen* (measures), which he borrowed from the theorist Carl Schmitt, on whom also Fraenkel had relied. Adam's portrayal is a painstaking description of the evolution of decision making in Jewish affairs. Here one can see the mode in which laws gave way to irrelevant "implementation decrees" and how these decrees were supplemented by

announcements, directives, and administrative understandings. For Adam, the apparatus was a thicket of jurisdictions and its anti-Jewish operations were a fluid multiplicity of actions. Above all, the perpetrators were engaged in and driven by a sense of an unlimited onslaught against their victims. The process, says Adam, had an inner logic to which also Hitler was bound. These observations contain important ideas far removed from the old notion of a monolithic dictatorship. But Adam was all but ignored in Germany. He did not obtain a position in a university or institute, and in 1987 he died at the age of 47.

By 1984, an international conference was convened in Stuttgart for the purpose of exploring the most crucial aspect of decision making in the Holocaust: the initiation of the annihilation phase. The papers, with discussions, were published in a conference volume edited by Eberhard Jaeckel and Juergen Rohwehr, *Der Mord an den Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart, 1985). The topic had become somewhat urgent in Germany, because a division of views had surfaced among German historians. Krausnick, among others, felt that Hitler had been indispensable and that he had given the orders, but a radical viewpoint was advanced by Martin Broszat and Hans Mommsen who thought of Hitler only as a symbol and rejected the notion of essential orders, even oral

orders, altogether. The American historian Christopher Browning labeled Krausnick and his followers as "intentionalists", and he called the Broszat-Mommsen school "functionalists".

At the conference, especially in the debate, Broszat insisted that a stoppage of the process would not have been possible, even if Hitler had wanted it. In the wake of the attack on the Soviet Union, he said, there was a philosophy of totalization that made any explicit Hitler orders superfluous for a further escalation of measures against Jews. The automatic functioning of the deadly administrative machine was such that Hitler was needed only for the legitimization of measures already decided by the bureaucracy. Mommsen was even more succinct. Hitler's dictatorship, he said, had been replaced by a Hitler cult. The man Adolf Hitler played no central role anymore and no central directive was needed at all. The prerequisites for the annihilation of the Jews were ambiguity and unclarity, not pronounced directives, and the central question for Mommsen was an absence of protests from within the system. Then he added pointedly.

I reject the notion of approaching the younger generation to tell them:

Look at the period from 1941 to 1945, Hitler was responsible for the Holocaust; he did it and without him it would not have happened.

These were significant arguments. Even if Hitler did order the killing of the European Jews — a point underscored by Browning in the *Vierteljahrshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte*, volume 29 (1981) pages 99-109, when he said that an "annihilation camp is not built accidentally" — Broszat and Mommsen were emphasizing a much broader base for the destruction process than had been customarily acknowledged in postwar Germany.

Scarcely less tortuous than the depiction of the German perpetrator has been the treatment of the Jewish victim. In the non-Jewish world it has taken decades to recognize the Holocaust victims as Jews. The major American encyclopedias provided entries for Dachau and Buchenwald, but not for Auschwitz and Treblinka. General historiography disclosed little about the Jewish fate beyond the pogrom of November 1938 - Kristallnacht. Textbooks and curricula were similarly roundabout or abbreviated in their coverage, and so were works of fiction, films, and performances on television. The Marxist concepts of imperialist war and conflict between classes excluded identifica

tion of Jews in principle. In the Soviet Union to this day, the Jewish victims are officially inscribed on monuments and in statistics as peaceful Soviet citizens.

What then of the reception of the catastrophe in the Jewish community? Here one can see an initial numbness, almost a rejection of the event. The victims were regarded as an undifferentiated mass, and survivors were barely heard. Only gradually did the extent of the catastrophe sink in, and even then many of its ramifications were buried in self-censorship.

In fact, a good deal of recent Jewish historiography has been filled with descriptions of prewar Jewish life. There is an emphasis on the communities in their last stages of freedom, and this story ends automatically with the years 1933 or 1939, much in the way German writing about Germany stopped at these dates. The historiographic literature about Jewish existence in the Holocaust itself is visibly limited to facets and facts, as opposed to summations, analysis, and generalizations. Even Isaiah Trunk's comprehensive study of the ghettos in Poland, *Judenrat* (New York, 1972), contains only short comments in the running

text, and a few separate pages of conclusions.

Three issues did surface in the course of the last forty years. One is the drawing of a psychological profile, or an underlying pattern of Jewish reflexes and reactions. This attempt to characterize Jewish behavior has led to controversies about the relative weights to be placed on compliance and resistance. The second is an examination of the structure of the Jewish community, with particular reference to its leadership. The third is a numerical question: How many victims? It may be noted that all three of these issues have been raised in a contemporary political context that places importance on images. In fact, similar claims and similar questions have arisen in non-Jewish societies. One need look only at the voluminous literature about Soviet resistance, French resistance, and German resistance, or the issue of institutional accommodations of indigenous agencies in occupied countries, or the unsupported statistics of military and civilian losses in the Soviet Union, Poland, and elsewhere, to see that such questions are enveloped in symbols with which nations laboriously construct their historical memories.

The most sensitive discussions in the Jewish community have centered on resistance and compliance. At several conferences, such as one sponsored by Yad Vashem in 1968, there has been a tendency to feature

acts of "spiritual" resistance. In essence, the argument is made, that even in a ghetto or transit camp, Nazi Germany did not crush the Jewish spirit, and that this sense of self-possession manifested itself in religious observances, the teaching of Hebrew, or the performance of Jewish music. But what of the reality outside? The German assault was directed successively at Jewish property, liberty, and life. In the end, everything was lost with dignity.

The rubric of resistance has also been used to cover such lifepreserving activities as self-help programs, the provision of medical services in a ghetto, or the smuggling of goods across ghetto walls. Yet to an extent the Germans had a comparable interest in maintaining the Jewish population in a ghetto or a camp. Even though they could tolerate a high Jewish death rate, they would become uncomfortable with uncontrollable epidemics or unplanned mass-dying.

The most clear-cut act of resistance, and the one that is most ubiquitous in the literature, was open fighting. So much has been written about armed

encounters between Jews and units of Germans or collaborators that one may easily imagine the map of Europe, especially in the east, dotted with such incidents. The effect is achieved by talking about clashes, no matter how small, without relating them to the scale of the overall disaster or to their relative lateness in the ensuing catastrophe. In this regard, however, two recent works have restored a much needed perspective: Yisrael Gutman's *The Warsaw Ghetto 1939-1943* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1984), and Yitzhak Arad's *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, (Bloomington, Indiana 1987). Both of these studies are noteworthy for their proportion. Both show that mass events in 1942 were veritable prerequisites for the revolts in 1943, the one in the Warsaw ghetto as well as the others in Treblinka and Sobibor. Gutman makes clear that after the deportations of 1942, hardly any children or old people remained in the ghetto. Arad indicates that by 1943 transports to Treblinka and Sobibor had thinned out and that the inmates of these camps faced the stark impossibility of survival without the work and the food afforded by a continuing flow of arriving deportees. Thus Gutman shows how the Warsaw rebellion became psychologically possible, and Arad proves that, for the Treblinka and Sobibor inmates, a breakout was a conscious necessity. In this manner, however, Gutman and Arad, who are trained historians as well as veteran fighters themselves, portray armed resistance as a climax and a highlight, rather than as an everyday activity, and they

demonstrate the fact that open fighting was the accomplishment of a few exceptional men and women, not of the multitudes.

It is precisely this restoration of proportionality to the account of last-minute resistance that invites questions about the prior life of the Jewish community as a whole. What did the individual Jewish victim, who was not going to survive, think in his predicament? How did each of these millions cope with deprivations of space, food, fuel, health, and security? Was there any common denominator, specifically rooted in Jewish experience, that accounts for Jewish reactions from west to east? Was there an underlying mechanism of adjustment and compliance? Was there a repression of truth about impending death? These are large issues, and they have been broached, not so much frontally as in the assessment of the role of the Jewish councils.

There is universal agreement about only one trait of the council members: They were not Quislings. They did not want a German victory. What the

Jewish leaders, almost without exception, did hope for was postwar vindication of their strategies of conservation, normalization, and what Trunk has called the "salvation through work". But vindication has eluded them. The issue is basic, because it touches the question, not merely of their insights and wisdom, but of the extent to which they were representative of the Jewish people under their jurisdiction and care. The problem was addressed in the first article of the first issue of *Yad Vashem Studies* in 1957 by Benzion Dinur. After noting that council members were not, by virtue of their responsibility to the Germans, true organs of Jewish self-government, he said:

The councils cannot be considered in isolation. They constitute an expression basically of what remained of the confidence the Jews had in Germany even under the Nazi regime. The Jews obediently carried out the various regulations enacted even when at a certain risk they could evade them; they registered when they were required to do so. The Jews of the Netherlands hurried with their luggage to embark upon the trains carrying them to the East, disbelieving the tales they had been told of death journeys. Even in Warsaw and Vilna, in Bialystok and in Lwow for a long time such reports were discredited.

Thus Dinur concluded that an inquiry into the councils called for close research into "all manifestations of Jewish life" in this

period. All manifestations? Not a simple task. At the moment, we do not even have an adequate description of the Jewish family in the Holocaust: the role of the Jewish father as protector and provider, the special experience of the women, the particular fate of the children. It comes as a surprise, therefore, that in Serge Klarsfeld's recent statistical recapitulations of transports from France and Belgium, *Le memorial de la deportation des juifs de France* (Paris, 1978) and (with Maxime Steinberg) *Memorial de la deportation des juifs de Belgique* (Brussels and New York, 1982), the percentage of child victims in Belgium was significantly higher than in France, despite the French children's transports from Drancy. Could the family itself have been a trap?

Quantification presents a special challenge. Numbers contained in the sources are often fragmentary, and a tabular compilation for one place is not necessarily comparable to a tabulation for another. Hence, it is at best difficult to talk in numerical terms about such fundamental matters as Jewish property, income, employment, illness, and starvation. Yet almost

everyone has a figure for the total Jewish dead. The well established number of six million, however, was adopted very early, and it was based mainly on the hearsay evidence of Sturmbannfuehrer Hoettl, whose affidavit recording a conversation with Eichmann was made at Nuremberg in November, 1945, and more generally on the crude calculations of the Institute of Jewish Affairs and the World Jewish Congress, also going back to 1945 and 1946. Even so, the number of six million has been repeated in speeches, articles, and popular books for forty years.

There are quite a few Holocaust statistics in large and small aggregates, because there were frequent counts of Jews in the segregated and ghetto communities, at shooting sites in the east, and at the time of roundups and deportations. The possible errors in additions and extrapolations are therefore not as great as those that encumber a figure of three million Polish dead, or twenty million Soviet killed in the Great Patriotic War, or whatever number may be cited for the dead of the Gulag Archipelago. The rounded toll of European Jewry is either five million or six million. That there is still no accepted answer to this question is due in large part to the failure of historians to enlist the help of the one professional who might have been expected to enter into the discussion: the demographer. Inasmuch as the greatest difficulty in Holocaust computations is the determination of the Soviet Jewish dead, it would seem that the proper arbitrators

are those specialists, most of them in Israel, who have concerned themselves with postwar Jewish population data of the Soviet Union. A transatlantic debate about the size of the Jewish community in the USSR has been going on for quite a while. Obviously, nothing pertaining to Soviet statistics is considered self-evident. Compounding the difficulty for the Holocaust historian, who would like to know how many Jews were alive in 1945, is the absence of a Soviet census between 1939 and 1959. Nevertheless, some attempt could be made to derive a 1945 figure from the Soviet Jewish population trend disclosed in the census data of 1959, 1970, and 1979. The omission of such calculations raises the suspicion that even historians do not wish to risk a finding of an overall total that would fall below the 5,500,000 threshold.

If a good deal has yet to be written about perpetrators and victims, even more must be explored about bystanders. For this category, a working definition, which specifies more than sheer inactivity, is absolutely

essential. In general, two prerequisites have been recognized for the bystander role. One is a connection between bystanders on the one hand and perpetrators and victims on the other. The second is the supposition that, at some point at least, the bystander's failure to act was deliberate.

Several groups have been nominated as bystanders. The most numerous — if also amorphous — among them were the neighbors of the Jews. When Ringelblum wrote about Poles and Jews during the war, and Philip Friedman described Ukrainian-Jewish relations in a long essay after the Holocaust, they were in fact pioneering the study of the subject. Theirs, however, was a bare beginning, grounded in much observation but relatively few written sources. Forty years later, the progress of investigation was skewed at best. One avenue emphasized the good Samaritans. Friedman himself was the author of such a book, *Their Brothers' Keepers* (New York, 1957), and much later Nechama Tec wrote *When Light Pierced the Darkness* (New York, 1986). At the other end of the scale, attention has been paid to bystanders who were unreceptive to fleeing Jews and who, at times, killed them. Typical of such works is Shmuel Krakowski's *The War of the Doomed* (New York, 1984). In the meantime, the broad spectrum in the middle has remained a research problem. What did non-Jewish residents in the vicinity of the Jewish victims know? How did they react? What about opportunists who profited from the disappearance of the Jews? What anxiety did the Holocaust awaken in the surrounding populace? Some of these questions were asked by Claude Lanzmann in his film *Shoah* (Paris, 1985), but the practitioners of oral history have largely neglected this subject, and

records will prove scarce and difficult to exploit.

The neighbors were bystanders by virtue of their proximity. More distant but equally important were the onlookers who became part of this history because of kinship: the Jews in the free world. Slowly, a few studies are beginning to appear about the responses of the Jewish communities in various countries, particularly in Palestine and in the United States. The sources were not opened with alacrity after the war; hence the topic is late on the scholarly agenda. It is also

controversial, because it invites such questions as "How much is enough?" Did the Jewish leadership outside Axis Europe take genuine steps for rescue or was it going through motions? The foremost sponsor of such

studies, and the author of several of them himself, is Yehuda Bauer. He has shown that help did come, against great odds, from the American Joint Distribution Committee and from elsewhere, but the

question of the significance of this aid remains. Future research will reveal more of the difficulties, but it will not unearth more rescue.

It has long been assumed that the obligation of Jewish communities to help each other is almost contractual. Not so clear are the responsibilities of non-Jewish organizations, including churches and governments. In the early 1960's Rolf Hochhuth wrote a play, *The Deputy*, about Pope Pius XII. In this drama, the pontiff became the principal bystander. More than that, Hochhuth extolled as a hero the SS fumigation officer Kurt Gerstein who had revealed the existence of the gas chambers to no avail. Although several sober works have since been published about the Vatican, notably John F. Morley's *Vatican Diplomacy and the Jews during the Holocaust 1939-1943* (New York, 1980), Hochhuth's depiction persists in the public mind. Hitler may no longer be regarded as the all-knowing, all-powerful center of the German state, but a pope will still be seen as the absolute undefied ruler of the Catholic Church. This church was established in many countries, and there is evidence of considerable variance in the attitudes and actions of bishops and priests throughout Axis Europe. Differentiation is even more pronounced among the Protestants. In their case, one need look no further than to the Lutheran churches in Denmark and in Germany, which reflect the contrast of two political cultures.

Finally, there is an extensive literature about the immobility of the Allied governments. The earliest full-scale monograph was that of

Arthur D. Morse, *While Six Million Died* (New York, 1967). It was followed by David S. Wyman's *Paper Walls* (Amherst, Massachusetts, 1968) and Henry Feingold's *The Politics of Rescue* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1970). These three works were focused mainly on the U.S. State Department. With Bernard Wasserstein's *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (London, 1979) and Martin Gilbert's *Auschwitz and the Allies* (New York, 1981), the theme was extended to the British Foreign Office. Then came David Wyman's *The Abandonment of the Jews* (New York, 1984), which uncovered the U.S. War Department. Monty Penkower's *The Jews were Expendable* (Urbana, Illinois, 1983) and Wyman's *Abandonment* reached into the White House, effectively dethroning

President Roosevelt as the protector of the Jews. At the American Historical Association meeting in New York in 1985, Michael Cohen presented a paper attempting to render the same judgment about Winston Churchill. Cohen drew fire from Wasserstein and Michael Marrus who asserted that a line should be drawn right then and there.

The Future

Genuine Holocaust research has always been the labor of a small group of people. If libraries and bookstores appear to be stocked with Holocaust titles, the reason is not, or not necessarily, an increased output by specialists. The Holocaust label covers a broad spectrum of descriptions and stories, reflections and theories, and no standards have as yet been proclaimed in this profusion of books and booklets now flooding the market. Amateurs have brought out their incomplete or superficial ideas. Copyists, imitators, and summarizers have fashioned simplified duplicates of original monographs. Popularizers, trivializers, and dispensers of "lessons" have offered their wares to satisfy every conceivable demand. Everyone has had his say.

At the core, however, only a handful of individuals trained in history, political science, sociology, psychology, or medicine have seriously wrestled with the source material in all of its complexity. These days, they contribute to Holocaust journals, meet at Holocaust conferences, and teach Holocaust courses. They are also increasingly isolated within their respective disciplines. In the United States one may even see Holocaust experts separated from other specialists in the field of Jewish studies. Thus the *AJS Review*, which is the journal of the Jewish Studies Association, has not contained a single article on

a Holocaust topic to this day, and the Tauber Institute of Brandeis University, which is dedicated to "the memory of victims of Nazi persecution," sponsors lectures and publications in a manner clearly designed to skirt the Holocaust. The historian of the Jewish catastrophe has always wanted to be defined as such; in the future he may be confined as well.

Holocaust historiography may therefore be likened to a limited supply of capital, which theologians, novelists, critics, journalists, and textbook writers expend for their finished products. But the findings in

historiographical publications represent an investment made under difficult conditions a long time ago. Who were these original researchers? First and foremost, they were contemporaries of the events they described. On the Jewish side, the earliest contributors were prewar refugees like Fraenkel and Neumann. Among those who followed were a number of survivors, including Philip Friedman, Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, Jacob Presser, H.G. Adler, Randolph Braham, and Nechama Tec. In Germany, Krausnick had served in the wartime bureaucracy, and Broszat was at least old enough to have fought in the Second World War. All of these investigators brought to their research an understanding of the time. They read the material at hand knowing what the words meant, because they themselves spoke the language of those days, with all of its nuances.

This era is coming to an end. The newer generation will no longer work with the sense of feel for the documents, but neither will it be bound by old censorships, imposed or self-imposed. The younger researchers will not have much more preparation for the task than their predecessors, because there is no systematic training of Holocaust historians anywhere except in Israel, where Yehuda Bauer and his colleagues have built Holocaust programs in universities. Yet those who will begin their work in future years may look forward to better tools such as computer indexes and quick accessibility of sources in machine-readable form. Disadvantages, of course, will not in and of themselves frustrate research, and the advantages of freedom and support will not by themselves yield any work. One must have a quest, a burning desire to know. One must wish to be a voyeur of history and to reconstruct something that had not been seen before. What, then, will Holocaust research be like in the future? What will be discovered and written?

As of now, two trends may be discerned. One points to a narrowing of scope toward local or specific situations; the other involves a

Raul Hilberg

widening of attention to phenomena outside the fate of Jewry. Both of these developments are essential, because without them a deeper probing of the Holocaust cannot be pursued.

The trend toward microhistory has long been in the making. From overarching studies aimed at grasping what had happened, researchers

have gone on to specialize in country studies. From this level, it was but one step to an examination of distinct localities, specific administrative operations, and individual perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. Such studies often produce new insights that may serve as tests of old generalizations.

Equally important is an expansion of research beyond the traditional boundaries of Holocaust historiography. One direction, albeit limitless, is comparative genocide. Here, of course, the investigator will encounter the problem of gathering sufficient relevant material about other groups at other times in other countries. A second exploration is aimed at more immediate antecedents, such as the German euthanasia program of 1939-1941. A third approach would encompass concurrent happenings within the Nazi framework. John Sweets, for example, provides a valuable context for the Jewish experience in ClermontFerrand in his book, *Choices in Vichy France* (Oxford, 1986). Goetz Aly and Karl Heinz Roth deal with the entire system of census taking and identification cards in their penetrating study, *Die Restlose Erfassung* (Berlin, 1984). Robert Lifton constructs a theory of medicalized killing with reference to the background and actions of physicians at Auschwitz in his *The Nazi Doctors* (New York, 1986).

So far, however, not many Holocaust historians have stepped outside the ghetto fence. The next-door neighbors of the Polish Jews were the Poles, but not much has been said in Holocaust books about Polish life under German rule, despite the closeness of the subject. One illustration of what may be missed is provided in the sophisticated book by Jan Tomasz Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation* (Princeton, 1979). In describing Polish perceptions of the Polish predicament, Gross explains how Poles could conclude as late as 1941 that at least in some respects they were worse off than the Jews.

Today there is no longer any question that Holocaust study is a field in its own right. The problem now, as Emil Fackenheim has warned, is the circumstance that the Jewish catastrophe may be perceived as an event standing alone. Already there are indications that Holocaust historians and their subject have been exiled from the mainstream. The new generation will have the task of integration. The

Holocaust has to be brought back to be woven into the seamless web of history.

THE LONG LIFE OF METAPHOR A THEOLOGICAL- METAPHYSICAL APPROACH TO THE SHOAH

George Steiner

In Christian theology, the question as to whether there is a mode of human language in which to speak adequately of God is a classical and perennial motif. It constitutes the linguistic-philosophical sphere of hermeneutic theology. Pray to God does not present a problem; discourse about God, a very nearly insoluble one. It is, precisely, the God-concept which seems to transcend the capacities of language either to define or to analogize truthfully the object of conceptualization and expression. The Wittgensteinian precept that the limits of our language are those of our world simply restates the dilemma. Language cannot go beyond the constraints of the human intellect and imagination; by definition God lies outside such constraints.

In Judaism, this problem of linguistic epistemology or hermeneutic theology has not been prominent. Indeed, the very notion of "theology" in the post-Pauline, post-Johannine and post-Augustinian sense, has no real counterpart in Jewish religiosity. The most authentic and lasting strength in Jewish religiosity is not a reflection or metaphysical discourse on the nature and attributes of God, but rather a "living in His presence". From Abraham onward, there has been a covenant of dialogue between the believing Jew and God. In this dialogue, the problem of language does not really obtrude. As, perhaps, in no other faith, the God of Abraham and Moses, and those whom He has chosen to speak to, individually and as a community, share the same language. We can almost define the language world of Judaism in relation to God as one of idiomatic infinity.

One of the consequences of the Shoah is to have transported (violently,

irreparably) into Judaism, both religious and secular, the hermeneutic dilemma. The problem as to whether there is a human form of language adequate to the conceptualization and understanding of Auschwitz, as to whether the limits of language do not fall short of the limits of the Shoah -experience, is now ineradicably installed in Jewish existence. This is true, first, on the theological level as such: in what conceivable language can a Jew speak to God after Auschwitz, in what conceivable language can he speak about God? The challenge is deeper, more corrosive than that in Christian hermeneutics. In post-Shoah Judaism, the question of the language of prayer — how can it be anything but cynical, accusatory or despairing? — is radically posed. I will come back to it via a text by Paul Celan which, alone I believe, is as profound and encompassing as is the problem itself. As to speech about God: what forms can it take, what plausibility can it enlist, after the death-camps?

But the possible absence of any mode of human expression relevant to the Shoah -experience has consequences which extend beyond the ritual and the religious domain. Even the most secular Jew is the explicit creature of his past, of Jewish history. Even the Jewish atheist or most deliberate assimilationist, orients his identity in reference to the historical destiny of the Jewish people and the enigma of their survival. What categories of intelligibility, what grammar of reason, indeed what vocabulary in the most concrete sense, can incorporate, can articulate, can give interpretation to, the abyss of 1938-1945? But if there can be no such intelligible and significant incorporation, what will befall that lived sense of an unbroken past, that ontological historicity, which has, until now, been the immediate context of Jewish self-recognition, both personally and communally? For a Jew to be silent about any determining part of his own history is self-mutilation.

There are no ready answers to this absolutely crucial dilemma. It is by no means clear that there can be or that there ought to be any form, style, code of articulate, intelligible expression somehow adequate to the facts of the Shoah. Let us consider this point closely, bearing in mind both the existential (the can) and the morally prescriptive (the ought) elements of the situation.

It may be that the Auschwitz-universe, for it was that, precisely marks that realm of potential — now realized — human bestiality, or, rather, abandonment of the human and regression to bestiality, which

both precedes language, as it does in the animal, and comes after language as it does in death. Auschwitz would signify on a collective historical scale, the death of man as a rational, "forward-dreaming" speech-organism (the *zoon phonanta* of Greek philosophy). The languages we are now speaking on this polluted and suicidal planet are "posthuman". They are serving creatures less than man. They are loud with emptiness, a volume made the more evident and barbaric by electronic media. Where the language is still humane, in the root sense of that word, it is being spoken by survivors, remembrancers and ghosts. Its haunted music is that of the embers which continue to crackle in the

cooling ash of a dead fire. Eloquence after Auschwitz would be a kind

of obscenity (this is the meaning of Adorno's so often misunderstood call for "no poetry after Auschwitz"). But I ask further: it is not eloquence which is at issue; what kind of rationality, what kind of ordered logic of the human social and psychological circumstance, what processes of rational analysis and causal explanation, are available to language after the cancer of reason, the travesty of all meaningfulness, enacted in the Shoah? It is doubts of this order which have generated my own (provisional) feeling that silence is the only,

though in its way, suicidal option; that to try to speak or write

intelligibly, interpretatively, about Auschwitz is to misconceive totally the nature of that event and to misconceive totally the necessary constraints of humanity within language.

What is more: it may be that after the Shoah, those metaphors, those projections and sublimations, which made it possible for human words and human syntax to speak about God, are no longer available to us. (It could, quite precisely, be this non-availability which now sickens, which now condemns to erosion or quarrelsome gossip the discourse-worlds, the speech-acts of Christianity and of Christian theologies). It may be that after the gassing, starvation, live burial, slow torture, burning of millions of men, women and children in the heartlands of so-called civilization, we no longer have cause or need to speak to or about a God whose overwhelming attribute became that of absence, of nothingness. Words fail us, as we have failed them. And it is this dialectic of reciprocal failing — O Wort, du Wort das mir Fehlt!, in Moses' despairing cry at the unfinished close of Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* ~ which would come nearest to

justifying the concept of the "death of God" or, as I prefer to think of it, of the "exit of God" from language, which is to say, from the bounds of human experience.

But there are other possibilities worth noting.

It may be that the only language in which anything intelligible, anything responsible, about the Shoah can be attempted is German. It is in German at the very source of its modern genius and linguistic conventions, i.e., in Luther's pamphlets of the early 1540's, that the elimination, the Ausrottung of the Jew from Europe, that the burning alive of the Jew, is clearly enunciated. It is in the seminal call to German nationhood, in Fichte's Letters to the German Nation, that Jew-hatred is given the sanction of a major philosophy. It is in German that Heine, as early as 1820, voices the plain warning that where certain books are being burned, human beings will be. It is Nietzsche who, with almost somnambular clarity, identifies murderous antisemitism as being the defining dynamism of the German spirit. It is Franz Kafka's parables, notably The Metamorphosis and In a Penal Colony which exactly pre-vision the vocabulary, the technocracy, the politics and psychology of the sub-human, as these are fulfilled in the concentration-camp state. It is Karl Kraus who concretely dates "the last days of humanity", who gives the apocalypse of the inhuman its calendar. The literally unspeakable words which are used to plan, to prescribe, to record, to justify the Shoah, the words which entail and set down the burning alive of children in front of their parents' eyes, the slow drowning of old men and women in excrement, the eradication of millions in a verbose bureaucracy of murder, are German words. They are words to which the hallucinatory fantastications, the death-Ajtsch/i of Nazi oratory gave a force, a consequence which few other words have possessed in human history. It may be, therefore, that if there is to be a re-humanization of language after the Shoah, a restoration to language of its lost capacities to speak to and about God, to speak to and about man in any answerable (verantwortlich) sense, such reparation and restoration can come only from within the death-idiom itself. It is in German that we do find the only poet — dare I say the only writer — on the level, and I use that eroded phrase with extreme, literal intent, with Auschwitz.

It would follow (and here I speak with little competence) that the attitudes towards the Shoah in the earlier years of the State of Israel and of the new

Israeli literature, represent a counterpart to the destined singularity of German. For quite a long time, Israeli sensibility sought to look away from the European and east-European catastrophe. Israeli poets and novelists wrote of other themes. This has changed, I know. But even today, the relations between modern

Hebrew and the realities of Auschwitz are problematic (as is, within Israel, the vestigial, spectral presence of Yiddish). How could the rebirth of Israel, how could the modulation of Hebrew into a future tense ~ one, precisely, lacking in the intemporal presentness of Biblical Hebrew — incorporate the Shoah without risking self-destruction, without relinquishing the life-giving grammar of hope? Even as there is an urgent sense in which Auschwitz is the problem not of the Jew but of the Christian, in which it is now the terminal sickness both of Enlightenment rationalism and Christian belief, so there is an urgent sense in which the language-dilemma brought on by the Shoah is, above all, the problem of German and the non-problem of Hebrew. I do not believe this to be the case, but register the logic and force of the proposition.

The questions I have posed and the way in which I have posed them, postulate the uniqueness of the Shoah. They imply that the massacre of European and east-European Jewry under National Socialism is an event unlike any other in the long history of massacres and mass-extirpation. The Shoah is seen to be what modern physics calls a "singularity", a phenomenon and event outside the rules or patterns of the general system of reality. Is this so? I find the question deeply unsettling, even repellent. But it must be considered.

Quantitatively — and this is, by itself, something of an obscene criterion — there have been worse killings. Responsible historians put at ten to twelve million the number of human beings done to death by the Stalinist regime during the crises of the Kulaks and the subsequent purges and deportations. We have, over these past two decades, witnessed massacres in Indonesia, in Africa which run into the hundred-thousands, perhaps millions. The insane blood-lust which erupted in Cambodia under Pol Pot massacred an estimated two or two and a half million men, women and children in a much shorter time than that of the Shoah. With the very brief, inherently fragile exception of that armistice with history which benefited the middle and upper classes in western Europe during the century from 1815 to 1914, massacre, torture, deportation, the persecution of minorities,

the exploitation of race-hatreds, have been the customary fabric of history. Men are murderous and murdering primates. See the Book of Joshua.

Is there a qualitative uniqueness in the Shoah? The argument that there is a bestial innovation in the Nazi decision to kill all Jews purely and simply on ethnic-racial grounds does not hold. Ask the

Armenians, ask the Gypsies, ask the members — men, women, children — of those diverse African tribes hounded to death in Uganda or Burundi. In ancient history, whole peoples, cultures, languages were eradicated by deliberate political acts of homicide, vengeance or enslavement. A number of Jewish thinkers and historians have argued that the Shoah differs from any other massacre in its application of a specifically designed bureaucracy and technology. I do not find this argument persuasive. In their own military-political terms, the mass-exterminations carried out by the Vandals, by the Huns, by Islamic conquerors of Byzantium, represent appalling feats of purposed and organized bestiality. Arrows and fire kill no less surely than gas ovens. If there are qualitative differences between the Shoah and the innumerable examples of mass-murder which punctuate history both before and since, they must be very deep: in that symbolic and metaphysical-theological realm which I want to point towards.

But whatever the "objective" case, and here "objectivity" is near to being inconceivable, the presumed uniqueness of the Shoah has become vital to Judaism now. In numerous, complex ways it underlies and underwrites certain essential aspects of the re-creation of nationhood in Israel, a re-creation whose uniqueness, whose transcendence of normal probability even in secular perceptions subtly counter-balances that of the world of Auschwitz, of Bergen-Belsen. Climaxing, but also overshadowing all previous persecutions in the history of Jewish exclusion and suffering, the Shoah has given to that history a particularity of darkness, a seeming logic in which the sole categorical imperative is that of survival. (How fascinating, how disconcerting would be a history of modern Judaism with no reference to the Shoah: a history of the immense successes of Jews in the sciences, in Marxism, in psychoanalysis, in the modern philosophies of language from Mauthner and Wittgenstein to Chomsky and Saul Kripke; which would recount the success-story of Jews in America; which would chronicle the often dominant role of Jews and of Jewish sensibility in twentieth-century finance, in the mass media, in humor and in certain areas of literature. But there is no such book, and we could not bear it if there

was).

This unbearableness is the point. The Shoah, the remembrance of Auschwitz, the haunting apprehension that, somewhere, somehow, the massacres could begin anew, is today the cement of Jewish identity. It is the one and only bond which unites the Orthodox Jew and the atheist, the practising Jew and the total secularist, the people of

Israel and the Diaspora, the Zionist and the anti-Zionist, the extreme conservative Jew (so prominent in the United States today) and the Jewish Trotskyite or Communist. Above all else, to be a Jew in the second half of this century is to be a survivor, and one who knows that his survival can, again, be put in question.

This bond is at once inevitable and psychologically ambiguous. It serves to mask the profound differences within current Judaism. Israel has too often invoked the Shoah as an apologia, as a justification for the more extreme gestures of its policies, both inside its borders and beyond them. The horror of the Shoah and of its recall, in books, in pictures, in the media, has provided the non-practising, the largely assimilated Jew in the west, notably in the United States, with a subtly self-flattering, self-dramatizing aura of tragic "belonging". A disturbingly commercialized pathos of horror has arisen around certain survivors and their all-too-eloquent and sometimes even theatrical witness. In other instances, the remembrance of the Shoah and the agonizing question of the absence or inadequacy of Jewish resistance, has induced self-contempt and a compensating fascination with violence. We are, in certain respects, a traumatized, a crazed people. How could we not be? Especially where it is that trauma which keeps us from final dispersal.

Unavoidably, the idiom of singularity, the assumption that the Shoah must be thought about and studied, if at all, as extraterritorial to normal human history, have become intermixed with the usual modes of historical, sociological, economic discourse. The instruments and disciplines of rational inquiry which apply, say, even to the apocalyptic massacres, starvation, manhunts and lies of the decades of the Gulag, or which are currently being brought to bear on the utter horror of recent Cambodian history, are felt to be both relevant and, in the final analysis, irrelevant to the understanding of the Shoah. To normalize that understanding would, very precisely, signify an abandonment of the appalling yet also ennobling, justifying mystery of our Jewish identity. My own reflections on and

questions about Auschwitz, in my fiction and non-fiction, my own attempts to say something of the nature of human language after the Shoah (I now try to avoid that ritual, elevated and, therefore, radically inappropriate Greek word, "holocaust"), directly reflect this intermingling of different, perhaps irreconcilable levels of analysis and of method.

The major fact does seem to me clear. So far, the empirical, the positivist (wissenschaftlich) techniques and methodologies have failed

to explain not only the sources of the Shoah in high European civilization; they have also failed to explain certain crucial elements in Nazi policy and in the aftermath of that policy. I would not deny for a moment the value of economic-sociological investigations of European Jew-hatred from the beginnings of modern mercantilism and market competition to the present. I fully recognize the endeavors of political theorists and political historians to analyze, to quantify the class-conflicts, the demographic shifts, the voting-patterns which underlay the Dreyfus Affair and the rise of Nazism. Psychologists of the so-called "totalitarian personality", of race-relations under economic stress, have made stimulating suggestions. By simple virtue of their publication of the documentary records of the death-camps, of the massacres at large, of Jewish resistance, the historians of the Shoah have performed an absolutely essential act of truthful remembrance, of resurrection. Theirs has been the kaddish against lies and that greatest lie which is forgetting. Pragmatical, systematic studies of the Shoah are vital.

To my mind they have not, however, illumined the deeper-lying roots of the inhuman. They have, quite markedly, failed to explain — except on the rather trivial level of Hitler's private pathology — the Nazi decision to press on with the Final Solution when even a brief suspension of the death-transport, round-ups and extermination industry would have freed desperately-needed resources for the defense and survival of the Reich. Nor do "rationalistic" and immanently-grounded explanations explain the continuation of virulent Jew-hatred in countries, in societies where there are virtually no Jews left (such as in Poland, in Austria, in the Ukraine). The seeds of Auschwitz: the Nazi sense of victory over the Jews as outweighing the ruin of Germany; Jew-hatred where only phantoms are left. These are the questions which demand an attempt at an answer. And it is this attempt which leads me to test a different order or framework of thought and speech.

"Regardless of what anyone may personally think or believe about him ,

Jesus of Nazareth has been the dominant figure in the history of Western culture for almost twenty centuries" (Jaroslav Pelikan). At their peril, the Jews in the long ghetto of their waiting ignored this fact, as did those Jews who, after the later eighteenth century, played so forceful a role in the history of the European Enlightenment and of the secularization (probably superficial) of our modern sensibility. Nor did many Jews read and ponder that early and perhaps most

inspired of all documents in the history of Jewish self-hatred, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 9-12. It is in that fantastically charged, opaque, at moments schizophrenic text, and in the immense volume of development and interpretation to which it has given rise, that we find the dark font of the interminable tragedy of Jewish-Christian co-existence or, rather, of Christianity's destined, logical attempt to terminate that co-existence.

Embryonic or fully spelled out, several scenarios spring from the Pauline source. Christ was the long-awaited Messiah, the Davidic liberator and savior so accurately prefigured in the Psalms and in Isaiah's vision of the suffering servant and representative of God. It is this Messiah, foretold in their own Torah, prayers and prophecy, whom the Jewish people handed over to abominable torment and death. In so doing, Judaism eradicated from within itself not only the act of divine election, the "chosenness" by and for God's unique purpose; it tore up from within its own flesh and spirit the very right to hope. Israel passed into the limbo of theological sterility and despair (and certain cardinal traditions in Christian doctrine define precisely such despair as the unforgivable sin). A second scenario is no less ominous. By refusing to recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the foretold Messiah, the Jews have postponed the day of man's salvation, the apocalyptic enfranchisement of suffering humanity and the eternal justice and peace which are to attend the Second Coming. Israel's refusal of Christ has, literally, condemned mankind to the treadmill of history. The Jews therefore hold the Ecclesia in particular, and humanity in general, hostage. There can be no liberation, no salvation from the agonies, bloodshed and injustice of history until Judaism recognizes the authentic messianic truth of Jesus' ministry and incarnation.

This second scenario can lead to one of two logical consequences. The first is that of the elimination of Israel from the otherwise captive community of man. The possible program for such elimination either by violent destruction or forced conversion is, as we know, all too clearly set

out in the writings and preaching of certain Church Fathers. It runs through early and medieval Christianity as a perennial black thread. The second alternative, fashionable since Auschwitz, is that of Christian patience and self-questioning. The messianic purposes of Christ the son of God were not accomplished either in his earthly sojourn nor in his resurrection. They are a continuous, incomplete process which will find fulfillment only when

Judaism enters freely into the Ecclesia, only when synagogue and church are united in a common tabernacle. Till that day, Christianity itself is a fragmentary, often self-contradictory and culpable institution. The Jew is sacred, he must be preserved from harm, just because the potentiality of the truly ecumenical contains within itself the only access to the genuine realization of God's promise in and through Christ. This, for example, seems to be the reading of history in the later work of Karl Barth. It is emphatically present in such contemporary ecumenical theologians of hope as Juergen Moltmann.

These several scenarios — call them metaphoric constructs, symbolic dramatizations, doctrinal mythologies or what you will — are enormous in their implications. Or to enforce the connotations of that word: they are charged with enormity. Even the present-day proposals of patience and conciliation, are overladen with social and psychological tension. Barth's famous formula: *Israel leidet an Gott*, is ambiguous and carries with it a burden of terror. Israel's "God-sickness" infects not only itself, in a way which can be construed as that of a metaphysical-transcendent privilege (God, through Abraham and Moses, chose the Jewish people to be the particular carriers of His "virus"); it can also be held to infect other men, to render the human condition in some central respect, incurable.

It is this latter imagining which I have tried to explore in my own work.

So far as our evidence goes, and in a historical development which remains largely enigmatic, the Jewish people invented monotheism. In radical hostility to all surrounding creeds and cultures, Judaism originated, identified its own destiny with, the concept of an infinite, intangible, invisible, ethically imperative God. And of a God inseparable not only from every moment of the individual human being's day, but from the meaning and purpose of political and social history. In the Sermon on the Mount, in his parables, Jesus the Jew reiterated, sharpened to apocalyptic extremity, the moral demands, the uncompromising imperative of altruism, of self-sacrifice, present in the Mosaic Law and in the visionary rigor of

the Prophets. This summons to abnegation, to the abolition of the ego and of private property and privilege, this annunciation of the inevitable, sacrificially-prepared coming of the kingdom of justice on earth, constitutes the core of that utterly Judaic secular messianism which we call Marxism. When Marx demands that man "exchange love for love, and justice for

justice", he is speaking the exact language of Isaiah, of Amos, of the anarchist from Nazareth and Galilee.

Three times, Judaism has confronted western man with the merciless claims and exactions of the ideal. Three times — in its invention of monotheism, in the message of the radical Jesus, in Marxism and messianic-socialism, Israel has asked of ordinary men and women more than human nature wishes to give, more, it may be, than it is organically and psychically able to give. Nothing is crueller than the blackmail of perfection. We come to hate, to fear most those who demand of us a self-transcendence, a surpassing of our natural and common limits of being. Our hate and fear are the more intense precisely because we know that absolute rightness, the ultimate desirability of the demand. In failing to respond adequately, we fail ourselves. And it is of deep-lying self-hatreds that hatreds spring. It is not, I believe, as Deicide, as "God-killer" that the Jew has been loathed and feared in the Christian civilization of the west (though that hideous attribution does play its part): it is as inventor of God, it is as spokesman for and remembrancer of an almighty, all-seeing, all-demanding Deity. It is because Judaism has kept man awake, as do the Prophets in the sleeping city (Sigmund Freud would even take away from us the innocence of our dreams). It is because he has said to man, thrice over, "be better than you are lest God curse you for your weakness and backsliding"; "love your neighbor as yourself even if every instinct in you bids otherwise"; "lose your life so that you may gain it in the kingdom of justice"; "empty creation of those manifold, intelligible supernatural presences with which polytheism and the Greek imagination had peopled the earth; worship instead a desert god, inaccessible to understanding, a god of whom you may not even make a mental image." Reportedly, Hitler said in his table-talk: "The Jew invented conscience." Which is simply another way of saying "the Jew invented God." For this crime, what forgiveness?

Minds trained to rationalism, to an empirical view of evidence, find it

difficult to grasp the possessive force of doctrine, even where or especially where, such doctrine seems irrational and foreign to rational and evidential proof. The force, the obsessive depth of a doctrine become greater as this doctrine passes into the individual and collective unconscious in the guise of symbol and metaphor. Such symbolic and metaphoric obsessions within the psyche become virulent when the doctrine which they represent has lost or begun to lose its

own plausibility and intellectual coherence. This is only an apparent paradox; it is when they are exhausted or degenerating, that organs and muscle tissue secrete contagious and maleficent substances into the human body. So it was that the original, Pauline and Patristic theology of Jew-hatred, together with the more general and even deeper-lying resentment of monotheism and sacrificial morality, took on their terrible, festering virulence precisely as Christianity and a belief in God as such began receding from the spiritual habits and intellectual-political adherence of western civilization. There is a perfect logic in the antisemitism of a Voltaire. There is a clear pattern in the fact that the Auschwitz-world erupts out of the subconscious, collective obsessions of an increasingly agnostic, even antior post-Christian society. Long-buried, and freed of doctrinal inhibitions and abstractions, the symbols and metaphors which cluster around the Judaic invention and "killing" of God (the two are, psychologically, twinned) turned murderous.

This hypothesis cannot be "proved"; the evidence for it is not of an empirical or quantifiable kind. What it does, I believe, is to provide a framework of reference, a measure of depth in some sense corresponding to the phenomenology of the Shoah. Only a theological-metaphysical scale of values, only an acute awareness of the life-force of theological-metaphysical metaphor and symbolism (even vestigial) in western collective consciousness and subconsciousness, can hope to throw some light ~ I do not lay claim to more - on the aetiology, on the causal dynamics of Jew-hatred and of the Auschwitz experiment as these arose from inside the core of European history and culture. No other approach gives intelligible access to the National Socialist axiom that the eradication of the Jew and of Judaism from Europe was a goal worth achieving even at the cost of the (temporary) destruction of the German nation-state; no other hypothesis will help us understand the widespread, the almost total, indifference or support with which this homicidal policy met throughout Europe, eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In regard to the "Jewish

problem", Nazism spoke out loud and enacted what Christian and post-Christian Europe had long harbored as an obsessive, half-avowed dream and fantasy. And it is, I suggest, only a theological-metaphysical category of analysis which provides any possibility of understanding the survival, the flourishing of Jew-hatred where there are no Jews left. Ghosts are of particular menace when they emerge from within oneself.

It is, therefore, no accident that the theological-metaphysical levels of language, of metaphor, of symbolism should be the foundation and constant resource of the one writer who, to my knowledge (obviously limited) has taken us not only to the unspeakable centre of the Shoah - experience, but — and this is far more difficult and important — has located the sense of that experience within the definition of man, of history and of human speech. Only a Jew compelling himself to write in German could have brought this about, as, before him, only a Jew writing in German could be Kafka the prophet. That Paul Celan is also among the greatest poets in the German tongue, perhaps in modern European literature (being, I think, an even more necessary poet than was Rilke); that Celan alone can stand beside Hoelderlin in both his poetry and his prose ~ is almost an extraneous wonder. The necessary and sufficient condition for Celan's poems is the situation of all human saying after the Shoah, a situation which Celan lived and articulated in the absent face of God. In this one supreme witness — "Wer" he asks "zeugt fuer den Zeugen" — the fate of the Jew, the night-charged genius of the German language, of the idiom of Auschwitz and Belsen, a profound intimacy with the Hebraic and the Yiddish legacy, coalesced; and they coalesced around the central criteria of the theological and the metaphysical orders of questioning.

There is hardly a poem or parable or address by Paul Celan which would not serve to illustrate this point. If I cite the famous "Psalm", it is because of its unsurpassed immensity of implication and nakedness of expression.

Niemand Knetet uns wieder aus Erde und Lehm, niemand bespricht unsern Staub.

Niemand.

Gelobt seist du, Niemand.

Dir zulieb wollen wir bluehnen.

Dir

entgegen.

Ein Nichts

waren wir, sind wir, werden wir bleiben, bluehend:

die Nichts-, die Niemandrose.

Mit

dem Griffel seelenhell, dem Staubfaden himmelswuest, der Krone rot

vom Purpurwort, das wir sangen ueber, o ueber dem Dorn.

It is not my aim to add yet another to the manifold commentaries and exercises in paraphrase which Celan's famous text has elicited. The very word Niemandrose has passed into the German language and into the inward history of Jewish consciousness. All I wish to do is to underline what is evident: the radically theological and metaphysical (in the etymological sense of the transcendent) character of Celan's idiom and field of referral ~ here a stricter term than "reference". The identification of the Creator with "No-one" and "nothingness" reaches into the ambiguous heart of both ascetic piety and kabbalistic speculation. It bears simultaneous witness to the inconceivable, unimaginable, unspeakable, anti-metaphoric tenor of the God of Israel, and to the enigma of His withdrawal from that making of man, that shedding of Adam - aus Erde und Lehm ~ which, according to certain kabbalistic theories represented a tragic self-division within God Himself. The liturgic-formulaic praise of the Lord — Gelobt seist du, Niemand ~ is at once of exemplary piety and resignation and of ultimate rebellion. The Jew in the Aschenglorie (another key Celan word) of the death-camps, "blooms" both towards God — in that place, at that hour ~ and blooms "against" God. Entgegen signifies "towardness" and "opposition". The "nothingness" of the Jew at Auschwitz is, in a sense, the nothingness of man before God created him; it is the nothingness which constitutes every individual extinction; it is the nothingness, the zero-point of history for the Jewish people in the hand of its killers. Yet it is a nothingness "in bloom", a terrible flowering towards and against the "No-oneness" of God's absence. It is this accusation out of ash, this blossoming indictment which, alone, tells against the finality of

annihilation. It is not only, counter to Ezekiel, that there shall be no resurrection for the slain Jews; it is, more hideously, that there will be no "be-speaking of their dust".

George Steiner

That tremendous phrase carries a twofold charge. *Bespricht unsem Staub* refers to God's breathing of life into the clay of Adam, to God's "saying of being" in the precise sense in which Hellenistic Judaism will develop the concepts of *pneuma* and of *Logos*. But *besprechen* also means "to talk about", "to talk to" (as one "addresses oneself to" a topic). No one, not, above all, God Himself, will speak the condition of Auschwitz, will speak about it in adequate witness or commemoration. The absence of God from the Shoah is also His silence in the face of the unremembered dead, an unremembrance which makes of their death a double annihilation.

It is only the victims themselves, in the red flowering of their anonymous, unspeakable deaths, who can rescue God from the void of His silence. Theirs is the "purple word" — blood-soaked and royal — , theirs is the "song over the thorn", the living mystery of the *Niemandsrose* above the lacerating murderousness of "the thorn". The Song of Solomon is present here, as is also, in a tragic, distancing discretion of allusion, that crown of thorns worn by the Nazarene. Celan has written a psalm out of Auschwitz which is simultaneously an "anti-psalm", exactly as matter postulates, collides with, antimatter. The Jew in the Shoah speaks to and against the non-speaking, the unspeaking of God. So long as the Jew addresses God, God must listen. It may be that that compelled listening has, in the Auschwitzworld, become the fragile thread — *der Staubfaden* — whereby hangs the existence, the survival of God in a heaven, in a cosmos, laid waste (*himmelswuest*). If, in the Christ-passion, a divine being, a Son of God and of Man is held to have died for man, so in the Shoah, the Jewish people —

(Wurzel

Wurzel Abrahams. Wurzel Jesse. Niemandes

Wurzel — o

unser.)

"Radix, Matrix"

— can be seen, understood to have died for God, to have taken upon itself the inconceivable guilt of God's indifference, or absence, or impotence.

Such concepts are not amenable to rational analysis, even as Celan's Shoah -poems are not amenable to critical paraphrase or equalizing interpretation. We move here in the sphere of lived metaphor, of

language beside itself: which is one of the (wholly insufficient) images or tropes whereby we can come nearer the question with which I began: that of the very possibilities of human discourse in regard to God and to the Shook ~ a duality which has, for the Jew, been made an irreparable unison. To ask what, if any, are such possibilities, is to ask metaphysically and theologically. It is to recognize the essential inadequacy of pragmatic-positivist levels of argument.

This does not mean that any viable answer will be forthcoming. In Paul Celan's suicide, at the height of his powers, lies more than a hint of overwhelming desolation. How can a Jew speak of the Shoah in the language of his murderers? How can he speak of it in any other language? How can he speak of it at all? Under stress of ultimate need, but of a need which batters in vain against the outermost confines of the human word, Celan's late poems enter a vocabulary, a syntax, a semantic mode, inaccessible to most of us. They are written in a tongue "north of the future". It may be that the Shoah has eradicated the saving grace, the life-giving mystery of meaningful metaphor in western speech and, correlatively, in that highest organization of speech which we call poetry and philosophic thought. There would be a just logic and a logic of justice in such eradication. Or it may be that the compulsion to articulacy within Judaism, the commandment of dialogue even within, even against a mute God, will persist.

It is my belief that such persistence, with all that it implies not only for the precarious survived of Judaism, but for that, no less precarious, of our civilization as a whole, depends on the seminal force, on the haunting tenacity of the metaphysical and the theological presences in our psyche. The question of Auschwitz is far greater than that of the pathology of politics or of economic and sociaethnic conflicts (important as these were). It is that of the conceivable existence or non-existence of God, of the "No-one" who made us, who did not speak out of the death-wind, and

who is now on trial. In that court, which is the court of man in history, how can the language spoken in indictment or defense, in witness or denial, be one from which His absence is absent, be one in which no psalm can be spoken against Him?

REVISIONISM: HISTORICAL, POLITICAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Randolph L. Braham

For a short while after the end of World War II, the religious and the secular-racial forms of antisemitism appeared to have been discredited under the impact of the Holocaust. During the past few decades, however, these traditional forms of antisemitism, though not as pervasive as during the prewar era, have been reinforced — and in some cases partially displaced — by new and potentially more dangerous ideological-political strains.

Ironically, the two major factors that brought these strains to the fore were the very ones many people originally believed would put an end to the age-old scourge of antisemitism: the Holocaust and the subsequent establishment of the State of Israel. These hopes proved largely illusory. The world has in recent years witnessed the emergence of a great variety of politically and ideologically motivated forces feeding on the religious-racist prejudices of the past. Collectively, these represent a new and potentially grave threat to the Jewish people. While the ultimate objectives vary, they are all engaged in a pernicious campaign to denigrate, distort, or actually deny the Holocaust and in a multifaceted, sinister drive to delegitimize the State of Israel.

These twin objectives are being pursued by a variety of forces extending from the extreme right to the extreme left. They involve individuals, private and public organizations, religious and secular institutions, political parties, and sovereign states. Their tactics and strategies vary in terms of their ultimate political-ideological objectives. In some cases these objectives coalesce; in others they are diametrically opposed. While most of these forces are openly

antisemitic, others disguise their antisemitism under the cloak of the anti-Zionism to which all subscribe.

The objectives pursued by these forces are often crystallized by professionals, above all historians and pseudo-historians. The old aphorism — "Behind every tyrant with a sword, there's a historian with a sponge" — has to be updated, for "historians" are to be found in the service of all forms of government. The sponging of the historical record has gained momentum in recent years in all the countries formerly dominated by the Third Reich. In connection with the Holocaust, the most discernible trend has been to absolve their particular peoples of all responsibility. In most popular and scholarly works (let alone antisemitic tracts), the issues of passivity, collaboration, and looting by the Christian neighbors of the Jewish victims are simply ignored, and the pro-German positions of the state leaders are often depicted as having been in the best interests of their nations at that juncture of history. In the formerly Nazi-controlled countries, the tendency is to place primary, if not exclusive, blame on the Third Reich. In the successor states of the Reich, the prevailing interpretations reflect the differences in their systems: In East Germany, the blame is placed along Marxist lines on the capitalist system; in West Germany — a country that has made considerable progress in coming to grips with the Holocaust — a number of politicians and historians have been providing new explanations for the Holocaust. Some, failing to differentiate between aggressors and victims, consider the Holocaust a tragic consequence of a war in which all parties suffered; others point a finger at the precedent provided by Stalinist totalitarianism. Among those who admit to particular crimes committed against the Jews, the tendency is to place exclusive blame on the Nazis. The surviving Nazis and their sympathizers, in turn, claim that they merely obeyed orders, and shift the blame on the leaders of the Reich, above all Hitler. The Fuehrer has acquired his

own defense-historians. Some now claim that he was not even aware of 2 the Final Solution.

The most pernicious and intellectually dishonest drive to whitewash the Nazi past, absolve the Third Reich, and deny the Holocaust is spearheaded by the representatives of the neo-Nazi school of "historical revisionism". Similar positions are advanced by a great variety of aryan supremacist and Arab-Islamic groups dedicated to the suppression of the Jews and the destruction of the State of Israel.

Randolph L. Braham

On the left, the drive is spearheaded by Soviet ideologues and their colleagues in the Communist world, and some Trotskyites in the free world. While the representatives of the extreme left do not deny the atrocities committed by the Nazis, they are involved in another historical obscenity: they place much of the blame for the Holocaust on the Zionists, who are accused not only of collaboration with the Nazis during the pre- and wartime periods, but also of pursuing — through Israel — a racist-imperialist policy after the war. In several socialist countries, above all the Soviet Union, the Holocaust is sunk in the memory hole of history. The Jews as particular targets of the Nazis are hardly, if ever, mentioned, and the losses incurred by the Jews are subsumed under the losses suffered by their nations. These historical perversities acquired gradual recognition after September, 1948, when the Soviet Union launched its anti-Israel campaign. Ostensibly designed to root out Zionism and cosmopolitanism, the campaign frequently acquired an antisemitic connotation with dire consequences for Jewish life in the Soviet bloc. The campaign varied in intensity in the course of time in accordance with the interests of the Soviet regime, reaching a level of frenzy after the Six-Day War.

This study will focus on only one of the five major strands in the campaign to distort or deny the Holocaust and destabilize the State of Israel: the historical revisionist.

The neo-Nazi propagandists constituting the school of "historical revisionism", which this writer prefers to call "historical charlatanism", are engaged in an obscene campaign to deny the Holocaust. The seeds of this "school" were sown during the war, at the very time the Nazis and their accomplices were busily involved in the destruction of European Jewry. In fact, it was with this primary objective in mind that those involved in the decision-making process relied almost exclusively on oral instructions. Those entrusted with the implementation of the Final Solution program, in turn, used a special language code in all their written communications on this subject. The same objective was pursued during the last two years of the war when — in light of the increasingly precarious military position of the Axis — a special SS unit was assigned to eradicate all traces of the massacres in the East.

The Nazis pursued the same objective during the war when they consistently rejected the Allies' periodic revelations about the Final Solution as sheer anti-German horror propaganda. This position was also

echoed by the Nazis' supporters in the free world.

No sooner did the war end than the campaign was resumed by hardline fascist intellectuals. It acquired momentum after the conclusion of the trial of major Nazi war criminals in Nuremberg. Among the first to question the authority and findings of the International Military Tribunal was Maurice Bardiche, one of the best-known French fascists and apologists for the Vichy collaborationist regime, who crystallized the essential themes that later revisionists were to assimilate and expand. These included the condemnation of Allied war propaganda against Germany, alleging that the evidence about Nazi atrocities had been fabricated, and the questioning of the authority and conclusions of the war crimes tribunals.

Historical revisionism received added impetus through the publications of Paul Rassinier, a French socialist and former parliamentarian, who had been a prisoner in Buchenwald for his involvement in the Resistance. Because he was among the first to question many aspects of the Holocaust, he is often identified as the European godfather of this neo-Nazi school of historical revisionism.

Rassinier's American counterpart — and protege — was Harry E. Barnes, a Germanophile historian. A vociferous isolationist who condemned America's participation in the two world wars, Barnes emerged as the Reich's earliest apologist in the United States. He expressed his doubts about the crimes attributed to the Nazis and claimed that those perpetrated by the Allies, including the bombings of Dresden and Hiroshima, and the Soviet massacres at Katyn, were "more brutal and painful than the alleged extermination in gas ovens." He dismissed the Holocaust, arguing that the suffering of the Germans expelled from the eastern territories after the war were far more hideous and prolonged than those endured by the Jews. Barnes also acted as mentor to several revisionist "scholars", including David L. Hoggan, whose Third Reich apologia on the antecedents of the Second World War originated as a 1948 Harvard doctoral dissertation. Hoggan subsequently emerged as a pioneer in revisionist literature by publishing, anonymously, the first book-length Holocaust-denying work in English. 12

These pioneers of revisionism found a political-ideological underpinning of their positions in the publications of the many pro-Nazi activists from Eastern Europe who gained refuge in the West. The ideological tracts, polemical historical overviews, and subjective memoirs by the former right

radical leaders and collaborators, especially those associated with the Arrow Cross (Hungary), Iron Guard

(Romania) and Hlinka (Slovakia) movements, were successfully exploited by the revisionists. They provided not only basic "documentary substantiation" for the revisionists' anti-Jewish positions, but also ideological justifications for their political agenda.

By the early 1960's, the neo-Nazi historical revisionists had a well-established network in many parts of the free world, especially in the United States and Western Europe. Their absurd assertions, goals, and methods are by now well known and have been the subject of many surveys and analytical studies. A summary overview will therefore suffice.

The neo-Nazi revisionists claim, among other things, that

- The Holocaust was an invention of the Allies for use in their wartime anti-German propaganda and, above all, of the Jews, who exploited the myth to get reparation funds from West Germany, and to establish the State of Israel;
- There were no extermination camps or gas chambers, but only labor camps and crematoria for those who died of natural causes and for the prevention of contagious diseases;
- The Jews were merely relocated during the war to provide, instead of military service, useful labor in agricultural and industrial enterprises; in addition, those from Western Europe were only returned to their lands of origin in Eastern Europe;
- The losses claimed by the Jews are a myth, for most of the Jews survived the war and found haven in the countries of the Grand Alliance. Their casualties did not exceed 200,000, far fewer than those suffered by most European nations, and these, too, were due exclusively to disease and other natural causes.

The historical methods employed by the neo-Nazi revisionists are as questionable as their claims. They aim to undermine the credibility of the

vast historiography on the Third Reich in general, and the Holocaust in particular, by claiming that

- The national and international war crimes trials had no legal validity, for they were held in victors' courts;
- The evidence used in those courts emanated primarily from Soviet-held territories and as such was unreliable or forged;
- The testimonies provided by German witnesses were coerced through torture, and those given by Jews were inventions and lies;
- The wartime diaries and testimonies, including those by Emanuel Ringelblum and Anne Frank, were forgeries or doctored after the war as were the other wartime materials used for the documentation of the Holocaust.

When confronted with evidence such as, for example, that relating to the activities of the Einsatzgruppen in the occupied parts of the Soviet Union, the neo-Nazi revisionists either simply ignore it or dismiss it as spurious. Frequently, they exploit that same evidence in an Orwellian fashion by claiming that it depicted mass murders committed by the Jews against their Christian neighbors.

What are the objectives of these neo-Nazi revisionists? Aside from the two major goals identified earlier — the denial of the Holocaust and the delegitimization of Israel — the revisionists are engaged in an orchestrated drive to

- Lay the ground for the eventual rehabilitation and rejuvenation of neo-Nazi ideologies and movements;
- Rewrite the history of the Nazi era (1933-1945) by exculpating Nazism and fascism from all blame and by shifting the onus of responsibility for the outbreak and consequences of the war onto the Allies and the Jews;
- Restore the legitimacy of the Third Reich and of its leaders;
- Prepare the ideological ground for white supremacist drives against non-aryans;

- Stoke the fires of antisemitism and deprive the Jewish community of its historic memory.

Particularly interested in influencing the younger generations in the free world who are devoid of any knowledge of the Holocaust, the

right-wing extremists appear to have intensified their onslaught against the Jews after every major event that placed the Jews — or the Holocaust — in the limelight. The Sinai Campaign of 1956, the Six Day War of 1967, and the Yom Kippur War of 1973, which evoked a positive image of the new Israeli Jew, and the worldwide screening of "The Holocaust", the TV series which, despite the trivialization of Auschwitz, made the European Jewish catastrophe more meaningful to the postwar generations — each triggered an avalanche of anti-Jewish propaganda by the historical revisionists.

Although revisionists are found in most parts of the free world, they are particularly active in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe, especially Britain, France, and West Germany — countries that are beset with racial and national problems.

The United States and Canada. America has emerged as the main center for the publication and distribution of neo-Nazi literature. Taking advantage of a well-established network of racist and aryan supremacist organizations and of the First Amendment provisions of the Constitution, the historical revisionists, some of them associated with reputable institutions of higher learning, became particularly active after the Six Day War. The style and historical approach used in their publications vary. Some are crudely propagandists; others are quite sophisticated, embodying a scholarly facade. By far the most influential work in this category is *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, by Arthur Butz, a professor of electrical engineering at Northwestern University. It is as obscenely distorted as the more crudely propagandist works, but potentially more damaging because it clothes itself in an aura of scholarship. To the uninitiated, it may appear objective, reasonable, and even persuasive. It takes issue with the evidence used by "exterminationists" and some fellow revisionists, and supplies footnotes and bibliographic references.

The movement to deny the Holocaust received a major boost in 1979, when the Institute of Historical Review (IHR) was established in Torrance, California. The Institute was founded by Willis A. Carto, a director of

Noontide Press, Sausalito, California, a publishing house specializing in revisionist literature which is closely associated with the antisemitic quarterly, *American Mercury*. Together with his wife, Elizabeth, Carto also heads the Liberty Lobby of Washington, a viciously antisemitic organization that was established in 1957. Its organ, *The Spotlight*, reportedly has a paid circulation of over

300,000, and is a major purveyor of revisionist propaganda. IHR serves as a magnet for historical revisionists the world over. Operating in the style of a scholarly establishment, the IHR organizes annual conventions; 22 publishes and distributes antisemitic, Holocaustdenying, and anti-Israel books and pamphlets; promotes audio cassettes and videotapes; and issues two pretentious periodicals, the *Journal of Historical Review* and the *IHR Newsletter*. 24 Until 1982, IHR was directed by William David McCalden, alias Lewis Brandon, the British neo-fascist who had previously played a leading role in both the racist British National Party and the neo-Nazi National Front. McCalden left the IHR following a rift with Willis Carto, his former mentor. 25 After McCalden's departure, IHR came under the leadership of Tom Marcellus.

IHR's "scientific" work is conducted under the leadership of an Editorial Advisory Committee, which includes historical revisionists with academic affiliations and scholastic credentials that deceived — and continue to deceive — even some reputable liberal academics. The following have been its members since 1979: John Bennett; Arthur R. Butz; Robert Faurisson, a former associate professor in contemporary literature at the University of Lyon, France; Ditlieb Felderer; Dr. Martin A. Larson; Dr. James J. Martin, a Liberty Lobby activist; Dr. Walter Beveraggi Allende, a professor of economics and the Argentina correspondent of *The Spotlight*; Dr. George Ashley, a former California high school teacher; Dr. Wilhelm Staglich, a retired West German judge and author of *Der Auschwitz Mythus* (*The Auschwitz Myth*); and Revilo P. Oliver, a professor of classics at the University of Illinois.

IHR has emerged as a major center for the production and distribution of neo-Nazi Holocaust-denying literature, working closely with a variety of virulently racist, domestic aryan supremacist groups as well as with numerous like-minded organizations and individuals in Canada and Western Europe.

Historical revisionism in Canada has been intertwined for the last two

decades with the pro-Nazi, anti-Zionist, and Holocaust-denying activities of Ernst Zundel, of Toronto. The principal outlet for Zundel's neo-Nazi writings and "educational" activities, championing the cause of Hitler and of the Third Reich, has been Samisdat Publishers, Ltd. Until 1978, when he was unmasked by a Canadian radio reporter, Zundel hid under the pseudonym of Ernst Christof. It was under this name that he published *The Hitler We Loved and Why* in which he referred to the Fuehrer as "this humble, totally dedicated

savior... We love him still." His other outlets for the propagation of antisemitic views and hate literature included the German-Jewish Historical Commission and the Concerned Parents of German Descent.

In 1981, Zundel was identified by the West German authorities as a major supplier of banned Nazi propaganda materials. That same year, the Canadian postal authorities suspended Samisdat Publishers' mailing privileges for the dissemination of anti-Jewish materials. (The ban was rescinded two years later.)

In 1985, Zundel was indicted for having violated the "false news" section of the Canadian Criminal Code, which prohibits the dissemination of untrue information apt "to cause injury or mischief to a public interest." He was found guilty of disseminating, among other things, the "revisionist" pamphlet titled *Did Six Million Really Die?*. He was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment and deportation from Canada. His trial, like that of James Keegstra, a former high school teacher in Eckville, Alberta, a few weeks later, evoked considerable concern among Jewish communal and human rights groups that — win or lose — he might gain from a legal confrontation. Regardless of the outcome, they feared that Zundel and the other "revisionists" would reap a propaganda windfall by acquiring a platform for the dissemination of their demonic ideas. In addition, an acquittal would be construed as a vindication of their bizarre views; a loss based on criminal prosecution would not only arouse the ire of civil libertarians concerned for the stifling of freedom of expression, but also provide free publicity for the hatemongers. The issue came to the fore again in February, 1987, when the Ontario Court of Appeals reversed Zundel's conviction on technical grounds. The district attorney appealed the lower court decision much to the relief of many Jewish leaders and civil libertarians, who feared that the dropping of the charges or ordering of a new trial — the two other available options — would only have

provided Zundel additional publicity for his obnoxious views.

It was the same line of reasoning that induced the Canadian authorities not to prosecute still another hatermonger in 1986. The case involved Malcolm Ross, a Moncton, New Brunswick, teacher and East Coast Director of the Christian Defense League of Canada, who authored a few pamphlets (*The Real Holocaust*; *Christianity vs. Judeo-Christianity*; and *Web of Deceit*) in the revisionist vein.

Although the influence of the Holocaust-denying neo-Nazis appears to have abated with the conviction of Zundel and Keegstra, the catastrophe that befell the Jews of Europe has remained in the limelight

through the public debates over the presence of a large number of Nazi war criminals in the country. Canada, unlike the United States, has failed to act vigorously against German and other Nazis now in Canada who had been actively involved in war crimes. The Canadian authorities have been handicapped in this sphere by the current laws that make the use of evidence gathered abroad impermissible. Despite the vigorous campaign of many survivors' groups, the Canadians have thus far acted against only one war criminal, relying on their extradition treaty with West Germany. However, during that very period, hundreds of thousands of official documents relating to war criminals were reportedly destroyed, seriously impairing the ability of the Canadian authorities to proceed against the approximately 700 war criminals allegedly living in the country. The files, which were in the possession of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, consisted of immigration forms used after World War II and the results of security screenings of immigrants.

The legal and related issues pertaining to the presence of war criminals in Canada were the subject of a 22-month study conducted by a special commission headed by Justice Jules Deschenes of the Quebec Supreme Court. Delivered to the Ottawa authorities late in December, 1986, the Deschenes Commission report recommended, among other things, that the government take steps for the possible extradition of war criminals to Israel and the Soviet Union, following appropriate proceedings in Canadian courts, and to make possible the holding of war crimes trials relying on evidence gathered abroad. The Commission also recommended that 644 of the 882 individual cases it had been asked to investigate be closed, and that only 238 be investigated further. In its view, urgent action was warranted only in 20 cases.

In response to the Commission's recommendations, the Canadian government decided on March 12, 1987, to amend the criminal code to allow for the prosecution in Canadian courts of people charged with Nazi war crimes. This is in sharp contrast with the practice followed in the United States, where court proceedings are used to deprive war crimes suspects of their citizenship or legal residency and deport them to face prosecution elsewhere. The Commission recommended against the establishment of a special governmental investigating unit analogous to the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, fearing that it would cause friction between Canadian Jews and other ethnic groups. As expected, the Commission's recommenda

tions, like the governmental decisions, were received with mixed reactions.

Western Europe. The historical revisionists and their ultra-rightist supporters in North America work closely with their counterparts in Western Europe. The Western European revisionists are politically quite active, for together with their ideological allies, the "newright" intellectuals, they are intimately linked with a variety of right radical parties and movements. The political linkage embraces an agenda that includes not only the struggle against Jews, but also against "other foreigners", i.e., the non-aryan immigrants. This linkage is particularly pronounced in France, Britain, and West Germany, countries that have relatively large numbers of immigrants and guest workers from North Africa, the Indian-subcontinent and the Caribbean, and Turkey, respectively. With their professed commitment to chauvinistic nationalism, anti-communism, antisemitism, and racial purity, the neo-Nazis direct their appeal to the young and the disenfranchised segments of the postwar democratic societies, using the immigrants and the Jews as scapegoats. The immigrants are blamed for most social ills including unemployment, crime and drug addiction, and are accused of bringing about the "mongrelization" of the aryan host communities.

The thrust of the ultra-rightist campaign is directed against the Jews. The traditional Nazi accusation that the Jews are involved in a conspiracy to rule the world through their manipulation of both capitalism and communism is updated by a new, more timely dimension. In the neo-Nazi campaign, the Jews are made responsible for the presence of the immigrants in Western Europe and for all the "evils" associated with them. They are further accused of using the immigrants as instruments in their

conspiracy for world domination — an objective to be achieved by the destruction of the racial basis of Western civilization through miscegenation.

Although all ultra-rightists are preoccupied with the notion of the Jewish conspiracy, political tactics often require the camouflaging of their virulently antisemitic position. This is especially true of those at the helm of political parties interested in broadening their appeal to the electorate. Emulating their ultra-leftist counterparts, they often find it prudent to mask their antisemitism by using coded references to "cosmopolitan elements" or "Zionist influences".

Exploiting the frustrations caused by unemployment and social unrest, some of the West European ultra-rightist organizations and parties have experienced considerable popularity in recent years. However, only one of them, Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front Nationale (National Front) could translate this popularity into political power. In the April, 1986, French parliamentary elections, Le Pen's party gained 34 seats in the National Assembly. Its British counterpart, however, lost its momentum in the elections of May 3, 1979. Nevertheless, together with the several other ultra-rightist and neo-Nazi organizations, the British National Front continues to loom as a threat to British

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democracy. The rightist parties of West Germany and Italy linger like those of Britain.

The neo-Nazis, like their Hitlerite predecessors, use xenophobic racism and antisemitism as tools in their drive to destroy the Western democratic system. The West European hardline activists, eager to achieve their objectives by violent, extra-parliamentary means, appear to coordinate their efforts through the New European Order, the postwar neo-Nazi international organization based in Lausanne, Switzerland. They also maintain contact through Notre Europe (Our Europe), the organ of the Faisceaux Nationalistes Europeens — FNE (European Fascist Nationalists), and the National Review, the organ of the League of St. George of Britain. The ultra-right activists entered the limelight in the early 1980's by engaging in a series of murderous terrorist activities, rivaling those undertaken by their ultra-leftist counterparts.

The legitimizing and mobilizing ideology of these ultra-rightist groups is provided by the historical revisionists acting in concert with many "new-right" intellectual groups. Following the death of Paul Rassinier in 1967, the leadership of the French school of historical revisionism was assumed by Robert Faurisson, the author of *The Rumor of Auschwitz*, a work on which he staked his reputation, claiming that "there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz or anywhere else in wartime Europe." A frequent contributor to Holocaust-denying publications, Faurisson is a sought-after speaker in revisionist conventions and a prized "expert witness" in trials involving the whitewashes of the Third Reich. He himself became the subject of several trials in the early 1980's, following libelous statements on French radio and the publication of his obscene tract on the question of the gas chambers.

Faurisson was the subject of two trials in 1981. The first was brought against him by Professor Leon Poliakov, the noted historian, under the Fight Against Racism Law of July 1, 1972, for defamation and incitement of hatred against the Jews. He was convicted on July 3, 1981, by the 17th Correctional Court (Chambre Correctionnelle) of Paris, which declared among other things: 5

In accusing the Jews publicly of being guilty through cupidity of a particularly odious lie and of a gigantic swindle.... Robert Faurisson could not be unaware that his words would arouse in his very large audience feelings of contempt, of hatred and of violence toward the Jews in France....

Taking advantage of the provision of the French law that enables individuals and human rights organizations to initiate suits, the International League Against Racism and Antisemitism (Ligue Internationale contre le racisme et l'antisemitisme — LICRA) and the Movement Against Racism, Antisemitism, and for Peace (Mouvement contre le racisme, l'antisemitisme et pour la paix ~ MRAP), acting in concert with six other organizations representing members of the resistance and survivors of the Holocaust, sued Faurisson for having failed, in a felonious manner, "to discharge the responsibility incumbent upon him as a historian, to provide objective information and not to omit essential facts."

The controversy over Faurisson came into focus in 1979, when Mark Weber, a leading American historical revisionist, initiated a petition on his

behalf. Ostensibly designed to defend Faurisson's rights to freedom of speech and expression, the petition was signed by some 500 individuals, including Professor Noam Chomsky, the noted expert on linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Perhaps nothing symbolizes the Holocaust-distorting anti-Israel and anti-Zionist cooperation between the extreme right and the extreme left as the alliance that was formed in Faurisson's defense. Besides the predictable support from the ultra-right forces, Faurisson's major defense came from the La Vieille Taupe, the traditionally extreme left publishing house owned by Pierre Guillaume, a long-time member of the French New Left. Guillaume's enterprise, presumably motivated by an ideologically defined Marxist, anti-Zionist, pro-Palestinian political objective, has issued a number of revisionist works in recent years, including some by Paul Rassinier. Perhaps its most controversial

publication is the purportedly "balanced" study by Serge Thion, a controversial leftist sociologist. To show his "impartiality", Thion included among the appendices selections from Faurisson's diatribes as well as a study by George Wellers, the Director of the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation) and the author of several studies on the Holocaust. This clearly tendentious, left-reactionary, anti-Jewish work is portrayed as an attempt to objectively juxtapose two distinct schools of history, differing over such issues as whether the gas chambers existed.

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Faurisson's self-defending diatribe of 1980 acquired notoriety only because its preface was written by Professor Chomsky. Deploring the pressure that he felt had been brought on Faurisson, Professor Chomsky stated that he could see no proof that Faurisson was actually antisemitic and that his sole concern was to support an author's right to maintain an unpopular thesis. While it is safe to assume that Professor Chomsky disagreed with Faurisson's Holocaust-denying thesis, he unwittingly provided publicity and perhaps even legitimacy to a piece of historical charlatanism.

In the mid-1980's, another historical-academic scandal rocked France. It revolved around a doctoral degree granted by the University of Nantes to a historical revisionist. The recipient of the degree was Henri Roques, a 65-year-old retired agronomist and former leader (under the name of Henri

Jalin) of the extreme right Phalange Francaise, which was outlawed in 1958. His revisionist views were aired in July, 1981, when he appeared as a witness for Faurisson. In a 371-page dissertation titled *Les "Confessions" de Kurt Gerstein — Etude comparative des differentes versions ~ Edition critique* (The "Confessions" of Kurt Gerstein: A Comparative Study of Different Versions. A Critique), he purported to prove that the evidence offered at Nuremberg by Gerstein, an SS officer who witnessed the gassing of Jews at Belzec and Treblinka, was unreliable, and that the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau were not used to murder Jews. His thesis and the irregular way in which Roques earned his doctorate came to light in May, 1986, when several other students at Nantes chose to pursue their own studies along Roques' line of reasoning. These revelations evoked an uproar in many parts of the world, especially France, where a large number of educational and human rights organizations raised their voices against this academic usurpation. An investigation was initiated by Alain Devaquet, the Minister of Higher

Education and Scientific Research, almost immediately after the awarding of the degree came to light. A number of irregularities were found in Roques' transfer from the University of Paris, where Professor Jacques Rougeot had refused to preside at the thesis presentation. At Nantes that role was enthusiastically assumed by Jean-Claude Riviere, a professor of medieval literature, and one of the most radical intellectuals associated with various ultra-rightist movements. The examining jury Riviere headed was composed of other white supremacists and new-right faculty members. Besides the irregularities relating to the transfer, the Minister's investigation also discovered a number of other administrative and academic violations, which induced the French authorities to revoke Roques' degree and to discharge Professor Riviere (July, 1986).

Roques and his mentors of course had their own defenders both within and outside France. Among the first to come to Roques' defense was Mariette Paschoud, a teacher of history and French at the Gymnase de la Cit6 in Lausanne, Switzerland, who holds the rank of captain in the women's auxiliary of the Swiss Army and is a Swiss military judge. She supported Roques' allegations regarding the lack of evidence for the Nazis' use of gas to kill Jews in *Le Pamphlet*, a rightist organ published by her husband, Claude Paschoud. Her views received additional publicity on November 6, 1986, when Roques and Guillaume held an illegal news conference in Geneva, much to the chagrin of the Swiss authorities. In their attempt to

stifle a possible exacerbation of right-wing activities, the Swiss moved quickly and barred both Roques and Guillaume from the country for three years, under a 1948 Swiss law which prohibits political statements by non-residents without permission. Mrs. Paschoud was barred from teaching history by the school authorities in Lausanne, who also launched an inquiry into her statements.

It is not an accident that some of the most vicious Holocaust-denying neo-Nazis should be active in West Germany. Although this country made enormous progress in coming to grips with the Holocaust and in establishing a solid democratic system, it is plagued by a relatively small number of neo-Nazi elements eager to whitewash the Hitlerite regime and to reestablish the status quo ante. In pursuit of these objectives, these neo-Nazis are particularly vocal in the Holocaust-denying campaign. Because of the West German legal restraints imposed upon them, they depend for much of their propaganda materials on imports. Their main sources of "revisionist" publications

are the United States and Great Britain. For the supply of hardline pro-Hitler propaganda literature and Nazi paraphernalia they depend primarily on the National Socialist Workers Party-Ausland (NSDAP-AO), the Nebraska-based organization headed by Gary Laucke.

While such revisionist standard texts as those by App, Butz, Faurisson, Harwood, and Rassinier are available in German translation, the West German neo-Nazis also have access to indigenous products that match, if not actually surpass, the revisionist imports in their vicious distortions. Chief among the indigenous Holocaust-denying revisionists are Thies Christophersen, Heinrich Haertle, Heinz Roth, 61 Friedrich Schlegel, 62 Wilhelm Staeglich, 63 gg Helmut Sundermann, Udo Valendy, and Bernhard C. Wintzek. Until a few years ago, one of the most active participants in the campaign to whitewash Hitler and deny the existence of gas chambers was Manfred Roeder. 67

The revisionists' Holocaust-denying position is supported in varying frequency by a number of relatively widely-read publications, including the neo-Nazi Nation Europa, and the nationalist-conservative Criticon. Particularly active in the historical revisionist campaign is the weekly Deutsche Nationalzeitung (German National Journal). The German neo-Nazis act in collusion with their compatriots abroad, above all with those in Latin America. Some of these go beyond the standard reasons given for

the Jews' "invention" of the Holocaust. For example, Wolf Sievers, one of the neo-Nazis living in Argentina, went as far as to assume that the Zionists were in fact responsible for the Nazis' policies. In a twisted line of reasoning, he asserted that since "only Jews had benefited from the war" it had to be assumed that the Zionists had "infiltrated all German authorities, perverted the Gestapo" and consequently were "true authors of the attempted genocide". The Holocaust-denying message is also given credence by such organizations as the Gesellschaft fuer freie Publizistik (Society for the Freedom of Publication), which was formed in 1960 with neo-Nazi connections.

Although the West Germans by and large reject Nazism as a viable political force and the Federal government has proscribed neo-Nazi and ultra-rightist groups to a greater degree than any other Western democracy, anti-Jewish sentiments continue to surface periodically on the national scene. Concern over residual and newly developed Nazi influence in contemporary German life has been highlighted by a widespread resurgence of curiosity about the Third Reich and the Fuehrer

a phenomenon described by sociologists as constituting a veritable "Hitler wave" (Hitler Welle). The rise of nationalism, coupled with the gradual erasure of guilt, and with pride over the essential role the Federal Republic plays in the NATO Alliance, emboldened many Germans not only to adopt xenophobic attitudes toward the "guest workers" ⁷ but also to publicly express increasingly bold anti-Jewish positions.

In Great Britain, the historical revisionists distinguished themselves through the issuance of a number of "historical fact" reports. The first appeared in 1974 under the authorship of Richard E. Harwood, who turned out to be none other than Richard Verrall, editor of the National Front's monthly Spearhead.

The second "historical fact sheet", Nuremberg and Other War Crimes Trials. A New Look, was also written by Harwood. Reflecting the position taken in the first pamphlet, the author perceives the war crimes trials as manifestations of Jewish revenge, facetiously referring to them as "trials by Jewry". The third pamphlet, For Those Who Cannot Speak, was written by Michael McLaughlin, a leader of the rightradical British Movement that was founded by Colin Jordan in 1965.

In this purported history of National Socialism, the author claims that the

reed victims of the Holocaust were the Allied soldiers who died during the two world wars.

In their endeavor to undermine the advances made by democracy in Western Europe, the historical revisionists work in harmony with the so-called New Right intellectuals. Their common objective is to rehabilitate the Third Reich and National Socialism and to create a new ultra-right intellectual and cultural climate in Europe that would once again assure the predominance of white supremacists. Perhaps the most prominent among these New Right intellectual groups is the Groupement de Recherche et d'Etude pour la Civilisation Européenne — GRECE (Research and Study Group for European Civilization). Founded in France in 1969, GRECE is led by Alain Benoist, an articulate spokesman for the cause of "aryan European culture". For the propagation of its views, GRECE relies on two major journals, the Nouvelle Ecole (New School) and Elements, and on periodic seminars and conferences.

In Britain the major outlet for the New Right intellectuals is Scorpion, published and edited by Michael Walker, a former National Front organizer. One of the best known British right-wing intellectuals is David Irving, author of the controversial Hitler's War. Irving works closely with the historical revisionists, participates in

their conventions, and is active in rightist politics. In 1980 he organized the Focus Policy Study Group, composed of an amalgam of Nazis and ultra-conservatives, in an effort to advance the cause of the ultra-right in cooperation with similar organizations elsewhere in Europe. The organization, along with its journal, Focal Point, suffered serious reversals by 1984.

Before the demise of his organization, and reportedly of his own personal fortunes, Irving worked closely with the Deutsche

Volksunion (German Folk Union) headed by Dr. Gerhard Frey. However, Frey is more concerned with prewar and wartime issues and is primarily involved with the rehabilitation of the Third Reich and the reassertion of German nationalism.

Legal Implications. Although the many right radical groups in Western Europe are still relatively weak in terms of membership and following, their actual and potential threat to democracy must not be underestimated.

As the many acts of violence and terrorism of the past few years clearly indicate, they represent a potentially grave danger not only to non-aryan minorities, Third World immigrants and Jews, but also to the survival of Western democratic systems of government. The historical revisionists and their New Right intellectual colleagues are in the forefront of the neo-Nazi ideological propaganda campaign, taking full advantage of the basic liberties of the free democracies.

Should the enemies of democracy be prevented from abusing these liberties? Should democracies make a special effort to protect targeted citizens from racial vilification by adopting special protective laws, including group libel laws? If adopted, how effective can group libel laws be in protecting ethnic-national interests? These are but a few of the many complex and controversial legal and political questions that escape simple answers. Civil libertarians and spokesmen for the ethnic-national groups in the free world have been divided over these issues. Even within the same country, representatives of the Jewish community have adopted different positions at various times, reflecting the varying political realities.

It is generally agreed that contemporary open societies with no deep-rooted traditions of democracy, and especially those that were in the forefront of the anti-Jewish drive during the Second World War, must take special legal measures to protect their vulnerable minorities from abuses by both rightist and leftist extremists. In the case of the Jews this protection must be extended to upholding the historical record of the Holocaust against scurrilous attacks by neo-Nazis

and other charlatans, including the historical revisionists. The denial of the Holocaust must be viewed as a crime not only in the moral sense ~ as abhorrent to all decent people and particularly offensive to the victims of Nazism — but also in the political and legal sense. The historical revisionists are engaged in a pernicious and intellectually dishonest campaign, relying on falsehood and fabrication to advance a politically obnoxious objective — the destruction of democracy and the establishment of a new Nazi order.

The Federal Republic of Germany was the first country to outlaw the denial of the Holocaust and adopted an amendment to the Criminal Code that makes the denial or denigration of the crime of genocide a punishable offense. However, it is hampered by internal politics and the requirements of the civil libertarian system from acting vigorously against incitement to

racial hatred. The Austrian penal code was amended early in 1986 to make it easier for the authorities to enforce laws against the dissemination of neo-Nazi and antisemitic propaganda. The amendment was supported by a November, 1985, ruling of Austria's Supreme Constitutional Court, which stipulated that all public officials must take the anti-Nazi laws into account in reaching decisions.

The issues relating to group libel, including the denial of the Holocaust, are particularly acute in countries with long traditions of democracy and toleration. Perhaps nowhere have these issues been as sharply debated as in the United States. Americans, and American Jews in particular, have been divided over the desirability of group libel laws as a means to protect minority interests. The differences of opinion have been reflected even within the established institutions, including the major Jewish organizations. The position of these organizations varied in the course of time. During the prewar and wartime periods, when antisemitism was quite widespread, these organizations were in support of such laws against hatemongers. A bill drafted by the World Jewish Congress was in fact introduced in the United States Congress in 1949, but never enacted. The bill, sponsored by Senator Jacob Javits and Congressman Arthur Klein, would have made it a Federal crime for any person "with intent to create ill-will against a racial or religious group to mail, import or distribute in interstate commerce any printed or mimeographed material which exposes an individual or group of individuals to hatred, contempt, obloquy, aversion or injury because of his or their race or religion."

The supporters of such laws argue, among other things, that the Bill of Rights provisions, which were adopted during the eighteenth century to protect individual rights, must be expanded in the twentieth century, the age of ideologically oriented extremist movements, to cover minority group interests as well. This is particularly important because in the American pluralistic system each ethnic-national group makes a special contribution to the overall culture. This has been recognized by some of the states in the Union whose group libel laws have been upheld as constitutional. Racial defamation, they further argue, cannot be adequately combated by counterpropaganda, and effective measures must be adopted to curtail the activities of extremist groups while they are still relatively weak. One cannot dismiss the danger represented by these groups; to delay countermeasures until they represent a clear and present danger might be suicidal. This was historically demonstrated during the 1920's in Weimar

Germany where few, if any, responsible politicians considered Hitler a threat to democracy.

Persuasive as these arguments are, they are generally rejected by most civil libertarians. Since the 1950's, the major Jewish organizations have also taken the position that group libel laws are basically counterproductive in long-established democratic and pluralistic societies. Several historical factors played an important role in reaching this position. The Holocaust and the subsequent establishment of the State of Israel created a new climate that made antisemitism generally less popular. The serious curtailment of civil liberties during the McCarthy era induced those committed to American constitutional values not to contribute to further restrictive interpretations of the Bill of Rights. The determining factor, however, was the realization that group libel laws were both ineffective and counterproductive. They proved ineffective in the few American states that had enacted them and were certainly useless in the Weimar Republic. The German group libel laws had no effect in stemming the rising tide of National Socialism. The Nazis, in fact, welcomed prosecution under those laws as opportunities for popularizing their views and undermining the fledgling democracy.

The neo-Nazis, including the Holocaust-denying historical revisionists, also look with favor at the opportunities presented by group libel laws in the contemporary open societies of the Western world. They look upon the courts as nationwide forums for the propagation of their libels under the guise of court testimony. This was clearly

proved in France during the trials of Robert Faurisson and Mark Frederiksen, in West Germany during the many trials involving neoNazis and other extremists, in Canada during the trials of Ernst Zundel and James Keegstra, and in the United States during the controversial Skokie case. The expectations for publicity of the accused neo-Nazis were fully met by the trial coverage in the mass media. Journalists and reporters, with little knowledge of the realities of the Third Reich, Nazism, and the Holocaust, naively provided a vehicle for the propagation of the historically obscene views of the accused and their "expert" witnesses.

In the wake of these trials and much to the chagrin of many Holocaust survivors, many establishment Jewish leaders concluded, as do civil libertarians, that group defamation laws were more likely to prove tools of the oppressors than shields for the oppressed. The criminal prosecution of

hatemongers, as long as they do not actually incite to action, may not only lead to the curtailment of basic civil liberties, but also abuse the very laws under which they were indicted for harming those the laws were designed to protect. The best way to fight these charlatans, these leaders have concluded, is to unmask their pernicious and intellectually dishonest views in the free marketplace of ideas. Obnoxious as they are, these views, like the excesses of anti-Zionism and antisemitism, must be tolerated. In the words of Professor Alan Dershowitz, the noted legal expert at Harvard Law School, this is "the price we must pay to guarantee that our own liberties will never be abused."

Appendix

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Notes

1. This position is articulated by Ernst Nolte of the Free University of Berlin, best known for his Three Faces of Fascism, in an article published in the June 6, 1986, issue of Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. Another controversial position is taken by Andreas Hillgruber, of the University of Cologne, the author of numerous works, including the recently published *Zweierlei Untergang: Die Zerschlagung des Deutschen Reiches and das Ende des Europaeischen Judentums* (Two Kinds of Downfall: The Destruction of the German Reich

Randolph L. Braham

and the End of European Jewry), Berlin: Corso bei Siedler, 112 p. Nolte and Hillgruber were accused early in 1986 by Professor Jurgen Habermas of Frankfurt ("A Kind of Damage Control: Apologetic Tendencies in Current German Historical Writing." *Die Zeit*), of seeking "to trivialize the National Socialist experience and to deny the singularity of its crime against the Jews." For a perceptive overview of this controversy, see Gordon A. Craig, "The War of the German Historians." *The New York Review of Books*, Jan. 15, 1987, pp. 16-19.

2. This view is emphasized by David Irving, an active participant in many "intellectual" endeavors of the historical revisionists, in his *Hitler's War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977). A separate controversy revolves around the Hitler order relating to the Final Solution. Some of the most respected German - and other - scholars of the Third Reich, representing the so-called functionalist school of the Holocaust, argue that the Holocaust evolved not as the consequence of a Fuehrer order, but as a result of initiatives taken by the SS in occupied Soviet territory during the summer and fall of 1941. Once launched, these initiatives were subsequently tacitly approved by the Nazi leadership in Berlin. There is no intention of classifying these historians among the so-called "historical revisionists".

3. George Orwell correctly observed that Soviet historians are involved in a "process of continuous alteration to fit changing Party lines."

4. The others are the 1. Aryan supremacist; 2. Soviet; 3. Trotskyite; and 4. Arab-Islamic. There are, in addition, a number of less important strands championing the same causes, including those associated with Rev. Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam and several organizations of immigrants in the United States. These are described in another study.

5. This task was entrusted to SS-Standartenfuehrer Paul Blobel, the Commander of Einsatzgruppe 4a and the special Kommando 1005. For further details, see Yisrael Gutman, *Denying the Holocaust*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1985, pp. 14-15.

6. In Britain, for example, the notorious Jew-baiter, Alexander Ratcliffe, was in the forefront of this campaign. In an article ("The Truth About the Jews"), to cite but one instance, Ratcliffe reminded his compatriots in 1943 that "all this talk about the persecution of the Jews in Germany is mostly Jewish invention.... There is not a single authentic case to record of a single Jew having been massacred

or unlawfully put to death under the Hitler regime." *Jewish Chronicle*, London, Apr. 9, 1943, as quoted by C. C. Aronsfeld, *After the Murders — the Lies*. London: Institute of Jewish Affairs, Research Report, Mar., 1979.

7. See his *Lettre a Francois Mauriac* (Letter to Francois Mauriac), Paris: La Pensée Libre, 1947; *Nuremberg ou la terre promise* (Nuremberg or the Promised Land). Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1950; and *Nuremberg II ou les faux-monnayeurs* (Nuremberg II or the Counterfeiters). Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1950.

8. His first tract on this subject was *Les mensonges d'Ulysse* (The Lies of Ulysses). Paris: Bressane, 1950. This was followed by *Ulysse trahi par les siens* (Ulysses Betrayed by His Own). Paris: La Librairie Française, 1961; *Le véritable proces Eichmann ou les vainqueurs incorrigibles* (The Real Eichmann Trial or the Incurable Victors). Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1962; and *Le drame des juifs europeens* (The Drama of European Jews). Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1964; *Debunking the Genocide Myth: a Study of the Nazi Concentration Camps and the Alleged Extermination of European Jewry*. Los Angeles: Noontide, 1978.

9. Barnes was responsible, among other things, for the translation of Rassinier's *Le drame des Juifs europeens* into English (1975).

10. See his *Blasting the Historical Blackout*, 1962, and *Revisionism: A Key to Peace and Other Essays*. San Francisco: Cato Institute, 1980. His controversial article bearing the same title was originally published in 1966.

11. *Der erzwungene Krieg: Die Ursachen und Urheber des 2 Weltkriegs* (The Imposed War: The Origins and Originators of World War II), 1961.

12. Anonymous, *The Myth of the Six Million*. Los Angeles: Noontide Press, 1969.

13. These publications included both reproductions of tracts by former right radical leaders and new pro-Nazi antisemitic works. See, for example, Ldszlo Endre's *A zsidkrdl. A bemi per tanulsdgai* (About the Jews. The Lessons of the Berne Trial). Np., n.d., 68 p.; Ferenc Szdlasi, *Ut es cel* (Road and Aim). N.p.: Mercur, 1954, 61 p.; Lajos Marschalkb, *VHaghoditok. Az igazi haborus bunosok* (World Conquerors. The Real War Criminals). Munich: Oliver Ledermueller, 1957, 254 p.

14. See appendix. Though extremely critical of the revisionists, some of the authors found it necessary, mistakenly in this author's view, to provide an introductory linkage with genuine revisionist historians and social scientists of the past, including Eduard Bernstein, Charles Beard, and A. J. P. Taylor. In its genuine sense, revisionism is the

hallmark of a true scholar, indeed of a free person. It implies an eagerness to revise positions in light of new evidence. Those claiming the label of "historical revisionism", however, are historical charlatans, peddling intellectually dishonest and ideologically pernicious views that must be exposed as such. They ought not to be given any recognition or legitimacy by debating with them or linking them to genuine revisionists.

15. While many respected scholars and public figures deplored the series for the trivialization of the Holocaust and the transformation of Auschwitz into merchandise, it was this series rather than the more objective" film portrayals that made the deepest impact about the suffering of the Jews under the Nazis. In West Germany, for example, the series not only affected the decision to extend the statute of limitations pertaining to Nazi

crimes, but also led to a major revision in textbooks.

16. For references to revisionist-supported ultra-rightist organizations in free Europe, including Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and Turkey, see Andrew Bell, *Against Racism and Fascism in Europe*. Brussels: Socialist Group of the European Parliament, Oct., 1986, pp. 44-47. The revisionists appear to have established bases in many other parts of the world, including Australia and Japan. In Australia, the chief revisionist spokesman is John Bennett, the former secretary of the Victoria Council for Civil Liberties. Influenced by the American revisionist, Arthur Butz, Bennett claims that the support of Israel and upholding of the Holocaust myth harms the West both economically and politically. In Japan, Masami Uno, the head of the Osaka-based Middle East Problems Research Center, emerged as the main spokesman for the "world Jewish conspiracy" theory. One of Japan's most popular writers, Uno claims in two of his recent works (*If You Understand Judea, You Can Understand Japan*) that "America is a Jewish nation" and that the Jews constitute a "behind-the-scenes nation" controlling such major corporations as IBM, General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, Exxon, and A.T.&T. Uno, like a number of other Japanese writers, blames the Jews for Japan's economic problems and for the many scandals that rocked Japan, including the Lockheed Aircraft bribery and the conviction of Kakuei Tanaka, the former Prime Minister. The Jewish conspiracy theory is also highlighted in titles like *The Jewish Plan for Conquest of the World* and *How to Read the Hidden Meaning of Jewish Protocol*. One of the authors, Eisaburo Saito,

is a member of the Upper House of the Japanese Parliament. His book titled *The Secret of Jewish Power to Control the World* appeared in 1984. Clyde Haberman, "Japanese Writers Critical of Jews". *The New York Times*, Mar. 12, 1987.

17. See, for example, *The Myth of the Six Million* cited above and Austin J. App, *The Six Million Swindle*. Takoma Park, MD: Boniface Press, 1975.

18. For a partial bibliography of "revisionist" books and pamphlets, see S. J. Roth, *Making the Denial of the Holocaust a Crime in Law*. London: Institute of Jewish Affairs, Mar., 1982, pp. 10-12. 19. Originally published in May, 1976 by the Historical Review Press of Surrey, England, the work has been reproduced in many editions and translations and serves as the

major source for "substantiating" the Holocaust-denial thesis.

20. This is the term used by the revisionists to characterize the scholars specializing in the history of the Holocaust.

21. Legally, IHR is associated with the Legion for the Survival of Freedom, a holding company that has the same post office box address as The American Mercury.

22. The first, organizing convention was held at Northrop University, Los Angeles, (Aug. 31-Sept. 2, 1979), and the second at Pomona College, Claremont, California, (Aug. 1-3, 1980). After the character of the IHR became public knowledge, the organizers had to find nonacademic institutions for their annual gatherings.

23. In addition to the contemporary revisionist tracts, IHR's Noontide Press also advertises and distributes the viciously antisemitic forgery concocted and exploited by the Tsarist secret police that was a major tool in the hands of the leaders of the Third Reich, The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

24. The Journal of Historical Review is edited by Keith Stimely. The IHR Newsletter is edited by Bradley Smith, the publisher of the now defunct Holocaust-denying gutter papers, Prima Facie and Smith's Journal.

25. The rift was due largely over the Mermelstein affair. Mel Mermelstein, a survivor of the Holocaust in Hungary who settled in California after the war, had successfully sued the IHR for its failure to pay the \$50,000 reward it had promised at its first convention of 1980 to anyone providing proof that the Nazis had gassed Jews. Under a settlement approved by a Superior Court judge in Los

Angeles in July, 1985, IHR undertook not only to pay the \$50,000 reward, but also, \$40,000 more for the pain and suffering that offer caused. IHR was also compelled to issue a formal written apology to Mr. Mermelstein and to acknowledge the fact that Jews were gassed in Auschwitz. Mr. Mermelstein won a second suit in Los Angeles against Ditlieb Felderer, the Swedish Holocaust-denying charlatan, in January, 1986. The jury awarded Mermelstein \$500,000 in compensatory damages and \$4.75 million in punitive damages. Much of the physical, historical, and financial burden of the trials was carried by Mr. Mermelstein alone. Many Jewish

communal organizations and human rights groups feared that his confrontation with IHR might only place the neo-Nazis in the limelight and provide them publicity, and perhaps even legitimacy in case they won. For the account of his wartime experiences and the initial phase of his legal ordeal, see *By Bread Alone. The Story of A-4685*. Huntington Beach, CA: The Author, 1981, 290 p.

26. McCalden established his own "revisionist" enterprise, the Truth Missions, in Manhattan Beach, CA., and keeps himself in the limelight by publishing two Holocaust-denying papers, the Holocaust News and the David McCalden Revisionist Newsletter.

27. See note 63.

28. For succinct biographical accounts on these, see *Holocaust "Revisionism": A Denial of History. An Update*. New York: AntiDefamation League of B'nai B'rith, Winter, 1986, pp. 9-10.

29. A commercial artist and photographer, Zundel came to Canada from West Germany in 1957, when he was 18.

30. In addition to West Germany, Zundel exported his pro-Nazi Holocaust-denying materials to 41 other countries.

31. Until his dismissal in January, 1984, for unprofessional conduct, Keegstra indoctrinated his students for twelve years with Jewish conspiracy explanations of history. He was charged under the "hate propaganda" section of the Criminal Code (Art. 281.2), convicted, and fined \$5,000.

32. Following his conviction, Zundel declared: The trial "cost me \$40,000 in lost work, but I got a million dollars worth of publicity for my cause. It was well worth it." The headlines of some of the major Canadian newspapers during the trial, including those of the Toronto Globe & Mail and the Toronto Sun, fully corroborate Zundel's declaration. In their naivete or perhaps ignorance of the Holocaust, they highlighted the positions of the defendants and their "expert" witnesses, including Robert Faurisson, France's most notorious

revisionist, by featuring such headlines as "Science 'Has Not Proved' Gas Use" and "View of Belsen Was Propaganda, Trial Told. Camp Conditions

Called Good." For a thorough evaluation of the trials' impact on Canadian public opinion, see Gabriel Weimann and Conrad Winn, *Hate on Trial: The Zundel Affair, the Media, and Public Opinion in Canada*. Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1986, p. 201.

33. While upholding Section 177 of the Criminal Code under which Zundel was convicted, the Court of Appeals ruled that Zundel had been deprived of an impartial jury and that the lower court judge had erred when he intimated to jurors that Zundel could be convicted if they decided he did not honestly believe his publications.

34. Dr. Julius Israeli, a retired chemistry professor and survivor of the Holocaust, filed a private citizen's complaint against Ross under Section 281 of Canada's Criminal Code. David Clark, the Attorney General of New Brunswick, decided against the prosecution of the case, arguing that the first two pamphlets were "at best borderline examples of hate propaganda" and the *Web of Deceit* was no longer available to the public.

35. Albert Helmut Rauca, a German-born former SS sergeant, was extradited from Toronto in 1983. Rauca, who was involved in the murder of close to 12,000 Jews in Kaunas (Kovno), Lithuania, died in a German jail shortly before his trial was to begin.

36. Some reports have put the number of former Nazis in Canada as high as 3,000.

37. *The Jewish Week*, New York, Nov. 1, 1985.

38. *The New York Times*, Feb. 7, 1987.

39. *Ibid.*, Mar. 13, 1987.

40. In Britain, for example, the neo-Nazi British Movement produces *Fact Finders* for school children, denying the Holocaust. The same objective is pursued in Sweden by Dietlieb Felderer, the author of *Anne Frank's Diary — A Hoax* (Torrance, CA: Institute for Historical Review, 1979) through his antisemitic organs, *Bible Researcher*, *Jewish Information*, and *Arab News*.

41. This is illustrated by the position of Jean-Marie Le Pen, the head of the National Front in France. Although he was several times found guilty of

libelous statements, he makes a point of vigorously rejecting accusations of racism and antisemitism. For further details, see David A. Harris, "French Right-Wing Extremism: The National Front". *The Forward*, New York, June 13, 1986.

42. The National Front of Britain polled 191,267 votes, representing 0.6 percent of all votes cast and 0.5 percent of the total electorate.

43. Its major vehicle of propaganda is *Bulldog*, edited by Joseph Pierce. In addition to the National Front, the following are the most visible racist and neo-Nazi organizations in Britain: the National Party; Democratic Nationalist Party; British Movement; British National Party; Action Party; British League of Rights; League of St. George; Racial Preservation Society; Column 88; National Socialist Party UK; and The Eleventh Hour Brigade. See Peter Shipley, *The National Front: Racism and Neo-Fascism in Britain*. London: Conflict Studies, July 1978. 16 p. See also S. T., "Race, Extremism, and Violence in Contemporary British Politics). *New Community*, London, Winter, 1978/79, pp. 56-66.

44. The National Democratic Party of Germany (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands) is in decline, never equalling its 4.9 percent vote in 1969, and the Italian Social Movement (Movimento Sociale Italiano) continues to receive only about five percent of the electoral vote. For further details, see Andrew Bell, *Against Racism and Fascism in Europe*.

45. An offshoot of the European Social Movement which was established in 1950 in Malmo, Sweden, the New European Order began its activities in 1951 and is led by Guy Armadruz, a Swiss who was an honorary member of the SS. It serves as a source of contact with networks of former German Nazis who fled to South America.

46. This ultra-rightist French organization succeeded the terrorist Federation d'Action Nationale Europeenne — FANE (Federation of European National Action) in 1980. FANE was led by Mark Frederiksen, who was indicted for vindicating crimes by means of publications and recordings and for incitement to race hatred. Like many neo-Nazis before and after his trial, Frederiksen used the courts for the curing of his political views.

47. With a small but dedicated following, the League stands in Oswald Mosley's pan-European tradition. It plays a particularly important role in

organizing the yearly gathering of neo-Nazis in Diksmuide, Belgium.

48. By far the most dramatic and horrific terrorist attack took place in Bologna in 1980, when 85 people were killed by the Armed Revolutionary Nuclei (Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari). This was followed by the explosions at the Munich Oktoberfest by the Hoffman Group, and the

bombing of the synagogue at Rue Copernic in Paris in 1980 by elements associated with FANE.

49. He made the following statement, among others, on French radio on December 17, 1980: "...the alleged Holocaust and the alleged gas chambers are a part of the same historical lie which was the basis of a gigantic political and financial swindle of which the main beneficiaries are international Zionism and the State of Israel, and the principle victims are the German and Palestinian people." Ian Barnes, "Revisionism and the Right." Contemporary Affairs Briefing, London. Jan., 1982, p. 5.

50. Faurisson was fined \$900 and given a 90-day suspended sentence. Following his appeal, the case dragged on to April 26, 1983, when the First Chamber of the Court of Appeals in Paris upheld the lower court decision, using a different line of reasoning. Faurisson reviewed his own account of this and of his subsequent trials in the Summer, 1985 issue of the Journal of Historical Review. See also S. J. Roth, Making the Denial of the Holocaust a Crime in Law, p. 3.

51. The suit was based on Art. 1382 of the French Civil Code. In its judgment of July 8, 1981, the Tribunal of High Instance (Tribunal de Grande Instance) of Paris upheld the plaintiffs.

52. See his *Veriti historique ou veriti politique? (Historical Truth or Political Truth?)* Paris: La Vieille Taupe, 1980.

53. Many leftists and misguided liberals fall into the trap of recognizing the "revisionists" as representing a particular historical school of thought worthy of scholarly evaluation. It is questionable whether the same self-appointed champions of academic freedom would enter into a serious scholarly debate with "revisionist historians" whose views or writings were based on the assumption that slavery in America was but the invention of Blacks concocted for the exploitation of the aryan races and the acquisition of preferential treatment, or with "revisionist

sovietologists" claiming that serfdom in Russia was but a propagandists device used by the Bolsheviks to overthrow Tsarism. It was gratifying to learn that 34 of the most prominent French historians, horrified by the Faurisson affair, had a letter published in *Le Monde* stressing the following fundamental facts: "There is no, there cannot be any, debate on the existence of gas chambers."

54. *Memoire en defense contre ceux qui m'accusent de falsifier Thistoire. La question des chambres & gas (Memoir in Defense Against Those Who Accuse Me of Falsifying History. The Question of the Gas*

Chambers). Paris: La Vieille Taupe, 1980. This is basically a collection of Faurisson's scattered writings and clippings.

55. For a perceptive evaluation of Professor Chomsky's and the New Left's role in the Faurisson affair, see Paul L. Berman, "Gas Chamber Games. Crackpot History and the Right to Lie." *The Village Voice*, New York, June 10-16, 1981. See also the following well-documented studies by Pierre Vidal-Naquet: "Theses sur le rditionnisme" (Theses on Revisionism) in *L'Allemagne nazie et le genocide Juif (Nazi Germany and the Jewish Genocide)*. Paris: Gallimard, 1985, pp. 496-516, and "A Paper Eichmann?" *Democracy*, New York, Apr. 2, 1981, pp. 70-95. An expanded version of this article was originally published in *Esprit*, Paris, Sept. 1980.

56. At the University of Nantes itself, more than 200 members of the faculty signed a declaration deploring the episode and stating that the scientific reputation of the institution had been gravely tarnished as a result.

57. A Swiss rightist party called *Vigilance* gained considerable prominence in Geneva in 1985.

58. In its 1985 Report on the Defense of the Constitution (*Verfassungsschutzbericht 1985*), the West German Interior Ministry reported that the country's 78 neo-Nazi organizations had a combined membership of about 22,500. Of these, the largest were the German Peoples Union and the National Democratic Party with 12,000 and 6,100 members, respectively. It also reported that several of these were prone to violence and that they shared several positions with the extreme left, including a virulent anti-Americanism. See also "Neo-Nazism Thrives in

W. Germany." *The Jewish Week*, New York, June 27, 1986.

59. See his *Die Auschwitz-Luege* (The Auschwitz Lie). Mohrkirch: Kritik-Verlag, n.d., and *Der Auschwitz-Betrug: Der Kampf des Rechtsanwaltes Roeder und Zusammenstellung einiger Zuschriften von Lesern der Schrift die Auschwitz Luege* (The Auschwitz Swindle: The Struggle of Attorney Roeder and Compilation of Some Readers' Letters of the Auschwitz Lie). Mohrkirch: Kritik-Verlag, n.d.

60. *Was ' Holocaust ' verschweigt: Deutsche Verteidigung gegen Kollektivschuld-Luege* (What 'Holocaust' Keeps Silent About: German Defense Against the Lie of Collective Guilt). Leoni am Starnberger See: Druffel Verlag, 1970.

61. *Warum werden wir Deutschen belogen?* (Why Are We Germans Lied To?) Witten: Refo Druck, 1973, and *Wieso waren wir Vater Verbrecher?* (In What Way Were We Fathers Criminals?) Kassel: G. Dietz, n.d.

62. *Das Unrecht am deutschen Volk* (The Injustice to the German People). Kassel: G. Dietz, n.d.

63. *Der Auschwitz-Mythos — Legende oder Wirklichkeit? Eine Kritische Bestandsaufnahme* (The Auschwitz Myth — Legend or Truth? A Critical Assessment). Tuebingen: Grabert Verlag, 1979. The University of Goettingen reportedly withdrew in 1983 the doctoral degree it conferred on Staeglich in 1951.

64. *Mut zur Wahrheit: Beitrage zur Geschichte unserer Zeit* (Courage for Truth: Contributions to the History of Our Times). Leoni am Starnberger. See: Druffel Verlag, 1981.

65. *Bild "Dokumente" fur die Geschichteschreibung* (Picture "Documents" for the Writing of History). Vlotho, 1973.

66. *Unsere Vater waren keine Verbrecher: Wie es damals wirklich war* (Our Fathers Were No Criminals: How It Really Was Then). Asendorf: Mut-Verlag, 1975.

67. Roeder wrote, among other things, the preface to Thies Cristophersen's *The Auschwitz Lie*. He was also active in the organization of military training programs for young German neo-Nazis in PLO camps. Accused of

heading a terrorist group and of incitement against the Jews, Roeder was sentenced by a West German court to 13 years' imprisonment in June, 1982. While in prison, Roeder, possibly to assure an early parole, issued a disclaimer of his Holocaust-denying position, stating "Today I do know that in Auschwitz a large number of Jews were killed only because they were Jewish." JTA Daily News Bulletin, New York, Nov. 15, 1982.

68. *Der Weg* (The Route), Buenos Aires, no. 4, 1957, as cited by CA. Aronsfeld, *After the Murders — The Lies*, p. 3.

69. The organization's pro-revisionist position was revealed at its Kassel meeting of August 31- September 2, 1979. For details on this conference, see C. C. Aronsfeld, "Whitewashing Hitler." *Patterns of Prejudice*, London, Jan., 1980, pp. 16-25.

70. These sentiments came to the fore in 1986, when the Municipal Theater of Frankfurt attempted to stage Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Garbage, the City and Death*, a play containing numerous virulently antisemitic and pro-fascist references. They were also revealed in the dispute over the remarks made by Count Wilderich von Spee, the Christian Democratic Mayor of Korschenbroich, near Duesseldorf, in January, 1986. The descendant of a German naval hero, the Mayor spoke of killing "a few rich Jews" to balance his town's budget. A public outcry following his remarks compelled him to resign.

71. *His Did Six Million Really Die?*, published in Richmond by the Historical Review Press, is the most widespread and most notorious Holocaust-denying publication in the country. The Historical Review Press belongs to Robin Beauclair, an associate of many right-wing organizations championing the cause of racial purity.

72. Both fact sheets were published by the Historical Review Press, Richmond, in 1979.

73. See note 2.

74. Andrew Bell, *Against Racism and Fascism in Europe*, p. 33.

75. For an erudite overview of this problem, see S. J. Roth, "Making the Denial of the Holocaust a Crime in Law." Research Report, No. 1. London: Institute of Jewish Affairs, Mar., 1982, p. 12., S. J. Roth, "West

Germany Waters Down 'Denial of the Holocaust' Bill." *Patterns of Prejudice*, London, Apr., 1985, pp. 41-43. The first article also contains succinct descriptions of the legal measures adopted by several other democratic countries, including Denmark, France, and Norway.

76. "Austria Strengthens Neo-Nazi Penalties." *The Jewish Week*, New York, Mar. 7, 1986. See also S. J. Roth, "All Administrative Acts in Austria Must Comply with the Prohibition of Nazism." *Patterns of Prejudice*, London, Apr., 1986, pp. 33-34.

77. *Beahamais v. Illinois*, 1952.

78. For further details on the impact of these cases, see David Bercuson and Douglas Wertheimer, *A Trust Betrayed: The Keegstra Affair*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1985, and Steve Mertl and John Ward, *Keegstra: The Issues, the Trial, the Consequences*. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1985.

79. The case involved the planned demonstration by a group of swastika-toting American Nazis in Skokie, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago inhabited by hundreds of Holocaust survivors. For details on the case, see Donald Alexander Downs, *Nazis in Skokie: Freedom, Community and the First Amendment*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985, and James L. Gibson and Richard Bingham, *Civil Liberties and Nazis: The Skokie Free-Speech Controversy*. New York: The Authors, 1985.

80. The conflict between the establishment Jewish organizations and the survivors came to the fore in Canada during the Zundel and Keegstra trials, and in the United States during the Mermelstein-IHR trials. The spokesmen for the Canadian Holocaust Remembrance Association were as bitter about the Canadian Jewish leaders' position as was

Mermelstein about the position of the major Jewish organizations in the United States. For details on Mermelstein's views, see Rosalie Zalis, "Mermelstein, Hailed as a Hero, Stood Virtually Alone During Holocaust Trial." *Israel Today*, Aug. 2, 1985.

81. *The Jewish Week*, Nov. 29, 1985.

I WAS NOT THERE

Aharon Megged

For years I've been an obsessive reader of Holocaust literature: anything that falls into my hands ~ diaries, memoirs, testimonies, documents. When I ask myself what is behind this sickly passion to read or listen to things related to horror, calamity, atrocities, death, my only answer is: the craving to understand. I delude myself that the more I read, the nearer I shall get to that core of human nature which I cannot fathom, which is beyond my perception, the Heart of Darkness, to use Conrad's expression. I delude myself, since the expansive reading from which I gather more and more information, pile up facts, does not bring me nearer to understanding. Perhaps on the contrary, the mystery becomes more despairing.

The aftermath of the Holocaust has generated many deformities and abnormalities, comparable in a way to those scars and scorchings revealed in bodies of Japanese victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki many years after it had occurred. One of them is the unpredicted phenomenon, that the passage of time since the end of the War has not diminished the flow of memoirs and evidences about the Holocaust, but has greatly increased it. The last ten or fifteen years have produced a great deal more literature on the subject than the previous years; as if, for very many people, a long inhibiting silence has been broken, that silence of which Paul Celan wrote in the early sixties:

Over all this grief of

Yours, no second heaven.

To a mouth,

for which it was a myriad-word

I lost “

lost a word

left over for me:

sister

To many-godded-ness I lost a word that sought me:

Kaddish.

Through

the sluice I had to go I save the word back into, and across, and beyond the brine:

Yiskor.

It took many years for this sluice, this barrier that left people "who were there" aghast, at a loss for words — to break down, gradually. It took them many years to overcome the shame and the guilt of survival, until they were able to talk sensibly to themselves and to others.

So I, who was not there, keep reading what they write, become more and more involved emotionally, feel more and more empathy with their sufferings, gather more and more shattering knowledge, but less and less do I understand.

The things I do not understand are on both brinks of the chasm: the bestial, senseless cruelty on the one hand, and the incredible ability of endurance on the other. The ability to live on in that inferno, days, months, even years. By "not understanding" I mean not being able to identify myself with those mental situations, whereas we assume that since all human being are created in the image of God, nothing human should be alien to any of us.

But in spite of this, to that very chasm I am bewitchingly drawn.

Four years ago I was approached by a group of Israelis, representing a kind of alumni of a few hundred people, with the request to write their story. These are survivors of the Holocaust who, at the time of the war, were children between the ages of five and sixteen. Most of them lived through the horrors of Auschwitz and other concentration camps; others were wandering in forests, seeking refuge in villages, or living among the partisans, or hiding in monasteries. At the end of the war, on their way south to approach the Mediterranean shores, they gathered in Milan. At

that time units of the Palestinian Jewish

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Brigade were camping in Milan, and a few soldiers of those units took it upon themselves to look after the orphaned children, sick, and broken, just out of the gates of hell. They got hold of a large and lavish house near the village of Selvino, north of Milan, previously a resort place of the Fascist south, and made it a home for the children.

For three years this home was under the management and guidance of the soldiers, who ran it on the principles of a kibbutz children's society. About nine hundred children passed through it, living there for periods between six months and a year, until the day they were able to go to Palestine by what was then called "illegal immigration". In that home occurred the wondrous, speedy transformation of these children from "walking shadows" to "normal" beings, retrieving faith in life and in men. It was there that they "regained their lost childhood", as they expressed it.

My first reaction to that request, to write the story of the Selvino Children, was — refusal. I am a fiction writer; I have never written a documentary book, have no experience in it, and recoil from commissioned writing.

But later on, when I heard more about the wonders of that home in Selvino, an endeavor that could be described as a "pedagogical saga of rebirth", I was gradually drawn to accept the proposition.

And, in retrospect, there was something else to my acceptance: the weighing down feeling that I was in great debt to those people, to that period.

Where was I in those dark years when the children of the ghettos were in the concentration camps, face-to-face with death every second of their existence? I was here, in the Land of Israel. Life here was "normal" then, even gay, as I can remember. The cafes were full, theaters were playing comedies, the economy prospered on war production, political parties were quibbling about their hair-splitting differences of ideologies. True, we were engaged in hard struggle against British rule and against the White Paper laws. A few thousands were in underground organizations, thousands of others volunteered to join the Jewish Brigade and other units in the British army, but on the whole, within the borders of this country,

business was as usual.

I interviewed more than seventy of these "children", who are in their fifties today. For most of them, it was the first time — after about 40 years! ~ that they told what befell them during the war; and it was the first time that their children, in their teens, who sat

around and listened, came to know what their parents had gone through. The sequence of all their stories make up an Odyssey, almost in the mythological sense: a long and tortuous journey from hell to a new life, from darkness to light. For me, hearing them, it was a journey back.

I wrote three drafts. The first was kind of an arrangement into a chronological and coherent form, of the material I had collected. In the second, I tried to follow a few individuals from this large group, and let my imagination take part in their experiences, first in the camps and in their wanderings, and then after their liberation. In the third and final version, I went back to the documentary, factual form, after being aware of the failure of the second.

The failure of the second attempt, that which was to be closer to the fictional form, more suited to my own inclinations, and which could have been perhaps much more significant, was a result of my inability to identify myself with the state of mind of persons, the more so children, living as they had lived for years, facing extermination.

Writing fiction in general, does not necessarily imply first hand cognizance of the subject matter. Writers have written historical novels about life and people of centuries ago, or novels about distant lands they had never been to. The possibility of dealing with such material stems from the faculty a writer possesses that enables him to identify himself with different, various, characters and states of mind, as "nothing human is alien to him."

In the case we refer to here, the question arises, whether a person who has not experienced those situations can at all perceive them. Whether imagination, creative as it may be, can truly and genuinely grasp and describe them. Furthermore, can even those who were there use their experience in a fictional way? Is it by accident, or from lack of talent, that writers like Jerzy Kusinsky, in his *The Painted Bird*, or Aharon Appelfeld, in his several novels, walked on tiptoe around those hellfires, keeping a

distance from them, circumventing them, careful not to touch them? And is it not obvious that almost all those novels about the Holocaust which gained great popularity, such as Styron's *Sophie's Choice*, for instance, have the stamp of falsity and kitsch?

What do I mean by "not being able" to identify oneself?

We have all learned the famous soliloquy of Hamlet in which he asks "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer/the slings and arrows of

outrageous fortune/Or to take arms against a sea of troubles/And by opposing end them," etc.

Many of us, in our youth, read Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, in which Werther, in his last, moving-to-tears letter to his beloved lady, before shooting himself to death, says: "Now, Lotte! My bones will not tremble when I shall be holding the cold, terrible glass from which I shall drink the death-potion! You had given it to me and I feel no fear in my heart! Everything! Everything! And thus would all my wishes and hopes be fulfilled! To knock on the iron-gate of death, cold and frozen!"

And then, many years later, you hear the story of Helinka.

Helinka, one of the "Selvino Children", was fifteen when she was taken, with her parents, to Maidanek, after the burning of the Warsaw ghetto. Immediately after entering the camp, her sick father, who could not stand on his feet, was beaten to death by the S.S. men, in front of her. Two days later, in the early morning parade, all the women were ordered to march toward the crematorium. Standing before the gate, they were ordered to strip themselves naked. Helinka was standing side by side with her mother. One of the guards told her to get out of the line. So her mother went to death and she was sent to Auschwitz. There, in one of the morning parades, not knowing where they were led to, her aunt swallowed a cyanide pill she carried with her, and died on the spot. Helinka was sent to hard labor and thus survived.

In Auschwitz she wrote a poem, in Yiddish, which contains these lines:

When my time will come To leave this world The forest will sing to me A death-song,

And the redeeming angel Will appear before my eyes.

No one would cry over my death,

In the far world my memory will rest, No one would wait for my return,
Only the wind will carry my name.

Reflecting on this story, remembering what you know from classical literature, you think, of course: what is the "outrageous fortune" of Hamlet that makes him contemplate putting an end to his life? What are the sorrows of Werther that make him "knock on the iron-gate of death"? What are they, you ask with bitter irony, in comparison to what Helinka went through?

Nevertheless, you can easily "identify yourself, equally, with Hamlet, Werther, and with the woman who swallowed the cyanide pill. That is understandable. What is beyond your perception is not the human meekness, the "frailty", to use Hamlet's language, the succumbness to death, but the unbelievable strength of the fifteen-year-old girl who could carry on and struggle for her life! Furthermore, how could that Helinka, after having been in Selvino for a few months, regain the joy of life, sing Hebrew songs, dance, study, and write an essay, expressing her optimistic dream of building a new, just society, in the Land of Israel!

Is it an atavistic, para-historical, "Jewish" strength, that could explain this unique history of survival?

In November of last year I went to Poland, the country where I was born and which I left with my parents at the age of five, many years before the war. I made the shuddering tour: Auschwitz, Birkenau, Treblinka, Maidanek. It was snowing, cold, minus 10 degrees C. In Maidanek there was a lone, stray dog walking in the snow, among the long lines of black, empty, barracks that looked like endless rows of ravens that had landed on the white earth. Nothing in this world, not the scores of books, nor the listening to numberless factual stories, resembles the sensation of actually being there, even for a few hours. When you pass through the gate to the Auschwitz enclosure under the infamous inscription, Arbeit Macht Frei, the synonym to "Abandon All Hope Ye who Enter Here", or perhaps to "This Is the Gate of the Lord, Into Which the Righteous Shall Enter", and then walk from one block to another, and then enter the concrete chamber with the gas showers above and the ovens where the bodies were turned

into ash, you can see yourself as if you, you are the one among the thousands that were hurled out of the cattle cars into that barbed wire enclosure, beaten, stripped of your clothes and of your dignity, and trapped into all the awaiting unspeakable horrors.

From the Haggada of Passover we learn the imperative: One has to see himself as if he were there; this should apply not only to the exodus

from Egypt thousands of years ago, but equally to being there and then, forty years ago! You!

And while being there, one thought kept boring incessantly through my head: what would I have done if I had been there with all the others? I, namely, the one who is not a "Jew of Galut", a "Ghetto Jew", but one who grew up in a free country, was a member of Haganah, served in the Israeli army, was educated from childhood on such uplifting values as self-defense, national pride, uprightness, no yielding to force; one who scorned those who "go like sheep to slaughter", and learned by heart the verses of Tchernikhovski:

Who are you, the blood boiling inside me?

The blood of the martyrs of the pogroms?

No, I shall not stretch my neck to the knife!

In battle I shall die, not by slaughter!

No, No! I have a sword and my fist is hot,

If a bestial man hits me — blood for blood will be spilled!

But, having grown up on all this poetry, and prose, and slogans — when I was standing there, I had no other answers to the crucial question of survival than of those helpless "Jews of Galut" who "went like sheep to slaughter", namely, no answers at all!

And in this context I would like to say something about our concept of "heroism". Heroism has always meant to us active resistance, revolt, the courage not to yield to oppression, torture, humiliation; to fight against them, or spiritually, to hold to your own and not bow your head. No doubt,

all these noble qualities signify heroism. But, when you hear or read the stories of those who lived through that cataclysm, day by day, minute by minute — like the accounts of the "Selvino Children" mentioned before, like that of the fifteen-yearold girl who went on the Death March, one thousand kilometers, with her mother and five little sisters, and when her mother fell on the side of the road and was left there dying, she became the mother, carrying in her arms the three-year-old infant, and so starving, freezing, kept marching all the way; or the story of the thirteen-year-old boy in Auschwitz who tied bricks to his shoes in order to look taller and evade the Dr. Mengele selection, and later four times escaped the lines to the crematorium — when you hear all this, you come to understand that there is a heroism of a different kind than

COMPREHENDING THE HOLOCAUST

that which we have been taught to worship, perhaps more admirable than that in battle and revolt, since it is spread over a period of months and years, when every minute is a struggle with the grips of cruelty and death; a heroism to which we should humbly bow in silence.

What lesson has been drawn from that darkest period in the history of mankind? The tragic answer is: No lesson at all.

Immediately after the war we cherished the hope, the consolation, that in the wake of those apocalyptic events, and as a lesson drawn from them, a change of heart, of spirit, of morals, would come over the world; a change in relationships between man and man, nation and nation, race and race. No change has occurred, not on the side of those responsible for the crimes, nor on the side of their victims. The first, including those who were brought to trial, did not repent. No self-reckoning, no guilty conscience. Racism, antisemitism, live on, as deep-rooted and as widespread as before, even where no Jews have remained. And among the latter, the same beliefs, the same convictions. Those who had been Orthodox have not lost their faith in God; those who had been Communists, Socialists, Bundists, Zionists, etc., have continued, on the whole, to adhere to their old dogmas; most of them have even stuck, quite grotesquely, to the hardly discernible differences between factions and fractions of parties. In this light the whole story of the Holocaust looks like "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

Culture implies a transmittance of experience from one human being to

another, from generation to generation. The experience of the Holocaust seems to be untransmittable; as if it happened beyond the frontiers of culture, outside of history; a nightmare to be forgotten or driven out of consciousness. No wonder there is a strong current now, streaming through the world, to minimize its dimensions, to erase its memory, even to deny its very past existence.

What is to become of it in the future? Perhaps a mythology, and in that sphere only God and devils reign. Would God triumph over the devils?

In a diary written by Ettie Hilssom, a young, assimilated, Dutch Jewess who was later exterminated in Auschwitz, which was published only a few years ago, we find these lines:

"God, I shall help you to stand firm within me. One thing becomes clearer and clearer to me: You cannot help us. We must help you and thus we shall be able to help ourselves - Yes, my God, it does not seem to me that you can change anything in these circumstances. And I

am not asking for explanations from you. On the contrary, you have the right to ask us for explanations. But believe me, God, I shall continue to work for you and shall be faithful to you and will never expel you from my boundary."

The God of Ettie Hilssom, as we can see, is the God of Job, the same God whose only answer to Job's De Profundis was - there is no answer.

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**MORALIST AND REALISTIC
APPROACHES IN THE STUDY
OF THE ALLIES' ATTITUDE
TO THE HOLOCAUST**

Yoav Gelber

My subject is our understanding of the role played during the Holocaust by the "witnesses", those who sometimes have been called the "Bystanders". The latter term is used to define the attitude of the free world, that is, the Allies, the neutral states, international agencies such as the Church or the International Red Cross, and the Jews outside occupied Europe. Although the Soviet Union was an ally, one cannot portray it as part of the free world. I apologize in advance for the frequent use of generalizations, which is unavoidable in discussing so vast a problem in the framework of a short paper. I shall relate only to the Western Allies, Western Jewry and the Yishuv in Eretz Yisrael. Yet it seems to me that the expression should have been attributed first and foremost to the peoples of the occupied countries. The very word Bystanders, implies negative judgment, hinting at the potential but not utilized capability to rescue, and signifies an indifferent attitude to the horrific events that were taking place before their eyes.

Disapproval of the Bystanders emerged in the midst of the war, both inside and outside occupied Europe. It was particularly explicit and painful in statements of desperate Jews under the Nazi yoke, who turned their eyes to the free world as their last hope of deliverance. It was tragically symbolized by Zygelboim's suicide in London in April, 1943. The main points of contemporary criticism were:

- 1) The refusal of the Allies to grant asylum to refugees, or to encourage the neutral states to admit them by guaranteeing their eventual transfer to Allied territory.
- 2) The lack of pressure by the Allies on the Germans and their satellites to stop the deportations and the mass-murder.
- 3) The linkage made by the British Government between the rescue and the Palestine problems, and by the Americans concerning rescue versus immigration laws and policies.
- 4) The reluctance to pay in hard currency or commodities for rescue opportunities through bribery or barter transactions, and the refusal to

provide for the maintenance of refugees in temporary havens such as partisan territory.

5) The discarding of proposals to take direct military steps.

6) A major contention against the Zionist leadership was its order of priorities — the preference given to Zionist interests and considerations over rescue undertakings.

7) The Zionist leadership was also criticized for its unwillingness to cooperate with other Jewish groups, such as the Bergson group or the rescue committee of the Orthodox rabbis in the United States.

8) The Jewish leaders in Eretz Yisrael, Britain and the USA were criticized for their insistence on acting within the word and the spirit of the law even when the latter obstructed rescue efforts.

Criticism of the Bystanders' attitude and inaction did not cease after the war. Rather it has increased in recent years, usually based upon the same arguments that had been raised during the war period and sometimes similarly aimed at political or ideological ends. The Zionist leadership's conduct throughout the war has become a principal weapon in the hands of the ideological rivals of Zionism. Their allegations may persuade the naive reader that the Zionists bear the prime guilt for the Holocaust. Traditional opposition of Agudat Israel to Zionism reached its extremity in accusations of deliberate abandonment

of the Diaspora Jews. 1 Its propaganda has molded within growing circles of young Orthodox Jews a comprehension of the Holocaust as an outcome of a Nazi-Zionist alliance. Similarly, members of the Bergson group and their Revisionist comrades, including the latecomer Arik Sharon, have in the same manner persisted in their campaign against the American-Jewish and Zionist establishments of those days and their successors. The Bergsonites condemn their opponents for having neglected severed rescue opportunities and claim part of the credit for the foundation of the War Refugee Board, with some justification, yet they exaggerate the latter's role and importance.

A parallel to the Bergsonites' approach to American-Jewish handling of the Holocaust is Shmuel Tamir's campaign, repeated once and again ever since the Kastner trial, against the Yishuv leadership's approach in 1944.

But while documentary evidence which has recently been revealed corroborates at least some of the Bergsonites' claims regarding the United States, the opposite is the case for Tamir's accusations. They lose ground with every new scholarly work published on the topic and constitute a typical example of how a narrow legalistic approach, combined with political rivalry, can for many years obscure comprehension of the historical context.

Concurrent with Orthodox and Revisionist allegations, the Soviet anti-Zionist propaganda has sharply accused Zionism of "collaboration" with the Nazis. The Transfer Agreement, the handling of refugee problems in the late 1930's, and some limited and selective rescue operations during the war are utilized to discredit Zionism for surrendering the Jewish masses out of its desire to save the rich or politically loyal Jews. These accusations have also been repeated in recent publications in the West, which are no more than a new manifestation of the competition between Zionism and universalist ideologies of the left that prevailed in the 1930's.

Zionist criticism, for its part, strove to attach a portion of the blame to the British. The main argument has been that opening the gates of Palestine might have saved many lives. Moreover, the British have been held directly responsible for the death of those who perished on their way to Eretz Yisrael. They have also been accused of purposefully obstructing rescue opportunities owing to their apprehensions that those rescued would have to be brought to Palestine or otherwise become a British liability. Similarly they have been reproached for the prolonged delays in rescue-missions such as the despatch of Palestinian Jewish parachutists, for tampering with the

distribution of immigration certificates, and for deliberately blocking the overtures made on behalf of several Nazi officials.

Twenty years and more elapsed until historians commenced the systematic reconstruction of the free world's attitude to the Holocaust. Historical research has since made considerable progress in uncovering and authenticating the factual data about Allied and Jewish responses, and several attempts have been made to interpret the conduct of the Americans, the British and the Jews. Nonetheless, there is still a shortage of comparative studies analyzing the Allies' policies concerning Jewish matters against the background of their general war policies, or contrasting them with their position vis-a-vis other aspects of Nazi atrocities which

affected, for example, the governments-in-exile. Likewise there is a lack of studies that deal with the Holocaust in terms of historical continuity, attempting to place it in the context of the preceding period and the aftermath.

Historians of the Holocaust usually do not attach too much importance to the military background. Whilst the murderers were hardly affected by developments on the battlefield, the effect of the war on the witnesses was of foremost importance. The Second World War should therefore be a principal parameter for the examination of the Allies' responses. The contemporary military situation and its implications ought to be analyzed prior to any discussion of the reaction to the news from Nazi-dominated Europe and the action or inaction that followed.

Generally speaking, one might say that the Allies were in no position to react, except verbally (and verbal protests or admonitions could have carried little weight at that time), until the tide of the war turned in their favor. It is customary to indicate the turning point in the fall of 1942, with the opening of the battles of ElAlamein and Stalingrad. But this periodization is the outcome of retrospective knowledge; contemporaries could not be confident that the course of the war had permanently changed until several months later.

The progress of the war during 1942 was the main factor in determining the slow pace of popular response to the preliminary news and the early accounts of the systematic killing of Jews. Public opinion was stimulated only by later reports in the autumn of that year, even though the intelligence contained little information that had not been published earlier. The transformation may be attributed to the victory

in the desert and the landing in North Africa, that relieved the impact of the military set-backs in the previous summer.

The response to the famous "Bund Report" in Eretz Yisrael might serve as a typical illustration of the role that military moves played in determining the reaction to the news. On June 27-28, 1942, the British press extensively cited a "Black Book" on the Nazi atrocities in Poland, published by the Polish government-in-exile, whose Jewish chapter was based on the "Bund Report". The Hebrew press in Eretz Yisrael repeated the gist of the British reports on June 30. The headlines mentioned the figure of 700,000 Jewish victims who had perished in Poland since the

beginning of the war. It was the greatest number of casualties ever published since news of the mass-murder had begun to emerge in early 1942, but nothing followed, and the publication passed almost unnoticed. The disregard may be related to the impact of Rommel's advent at El-Alamein on the same day, June 30. In the following week attention was focused on the desert campaign and its possible implications for the defense of Palestine and the fate of the Yishuv. Though the immediate fears calmed down considerably in the second week of July, the potential threat of invasion continued to worry the Yishuv for several weeks longer. The publication of news about deportations, mass executions, actions and large numbers of victims persisted through the summer of 1942, but no reference was made to the earlier shocking publication at the end of June. It seems to have been completely repressed from the Yishuv (s consciousness by the simultaneous emergence of the military threat to the country.

Not only the course of the war, but also some of the basics of Allied war strategy, ruled out certain suggestions of rescue projects. Until the landing in western Europe, the total blockade of the Continent constituted a major component of Allied strategy. In the absence of the capability to undertake large scale military operations on land after Dunkirk, a substitute was conceived in the form of economic warfare, combined with encouragement of local resistance, and later reinforced by massive bombings. This strategy was intended to undermine the Third Reich from within. Then, when Germany was sufficiently weakened, the final blow would be dealt by the invading Allied armies. Although that concept largely failed to achieve its ends, we should appreciate in its light the negative Allied responses to suggestions to aid Jews by sending parcels, ransom or bribery, in either hard cash or commodities. The blockade at that time was not a secondary component of the war effort that could be easily discarded,

but rather one of the three fundamentals of Allied strategy. The issue was not necessarily the small amount of money or goods that would have been released to Jews in the occupied area, but rather a matter of precedent; the governments-in-exile too wished to aid their subjects, and consent to Jewish appeals would have made it difficult to oppose their pressures. Responding to their requests would have entailed an infringement of the blockade on a much larger scale, and might have had strategic consequences.

The relative weight of economic warfare diminished after the landings in Europe, and at that stage the Allies acquiesced in the delivery of food and clothes parcels, but larger barter transactions remained impossible owing to other considerations. A new factor of major importance was the Allies' resolution to defend the ideologically sensitive anti-Nazi coalition against any maneuver of political warfare intending to breach it. German offers to exchange Hungarian Jews for commodities were viewed as overtures aimed at negotiating a separate peace with the Western Allies, hence they were rejected forthwith, leaving no room for further talks which might have delayed the deportations. Despite the deeper interest displayed by Jewish organizations in the situation of the Jews in Hungary, they could not influence the course of events. The Brand mission was seen by the Allies as an act of political warfare. Decisions were then taken by the highest echelons of the Allied governments on the ground that the rescue of Hungarian Jewry was not just a minor issue that could be handled through the Protecting Power (Switzerland). On the other hand, it could in no way be negotiated directly with the Germans, for there should not be any contact with the enemy until his unconditional surrender. It was Churchill's personal insistence that no talks with the Germans take place, rather than Russian opposition, that took the wind out of the sails of Brand's mission.

Considerable effort was expended in the second half of the war in the despatch of rescue emissaries to the occupied countries, but the missions came too late and produced meager results. One of the famous examples is that of the parachutists from Eretz Yisrael. The British have been criticized on the grounds that for reasons deriving from their Palestine policy, they rejected Jewish offers to send hundreds of volunteers, organized in Jewish commando units, to operate behind enemy lines and generate a Jewish resistance movement. Political considerations were indeed taken into account in overruling the more ambitious plans proposed by the Jewish Agency, but since the modest

schemes of dispatching a few individuals encountered so many technical and operational obstacles, the accomplishment of larger projects could not have been put to test at all. The practical difficulties that had delayed the setting out of the parachutists on their missions had nothing to do with Jewish matters. Thus, for example, in May-June, 1944, the British tried to infiltrate into Hungary six teams of agents, without any Jewish affiliation; three groups did not manage to cross the border, and the others were

captured soon after their penetration, precisely as happened to the Jewish team of Chana Senesh. The fate of the British agents who were infiltrated into Romania was similar; they either failed to cross the border or were immediately arrested. The conclusion might well be that in the absence of local underground infra-structure, the Allies had no capability of operating in those countries, even on the limited scale which the mission of the 12 parachutists entailed.

The infiltration of emissaries into enemy-occupied territories and their freedom of action were totally dependent upon the cooperation of the local underground movements, which was not always forthcoming. For a long time the Allies were apprehensive lest too close identification with the Jews harm their own cause in the eyes of the local population. This argument was raised by senior Special Operations Executive officers while discussing the Jewish Agency proposals, and its validity is confirmed in the reports of several parachutists, who describe the disappointment of their partisan hosts when they learned that their guests were Jews and not British. This should not be related to antisemitism, but rather to their aspiration to prove to the local population that they enjoyed the support of the British. Furthermore, the partisans struggled first and foremost for their own survival, and disliked any suggestion that would have increased their burden — like the requests to escort British agents from Yugoslavia to the bordering countries. Admittance of additional non-fighting refugees was almost ruled out in those circumstances, especially if they were foreign.

Alternative rescue projects entailed the transfer of Jews from occupied to non-occupied territory and were hardly feasible as long as the war went on. Such ideas as the Transnistria plan in late 1942, or the Horthy offer in the summer of 1944, were not actually put to trial. It would be quite speculative to appraise their prospects, and judge whether they might come under the definition of "missed opportunities" or not. Nevertheless, they may be compared with a quite analogous

problem that confronted the Allies and concerned their own people in the hands of the Germans.

From early 1943 to early 1945, several attempts were made through the mediation of the International Red Cross and the Swiss Government to reach ad hoc agreements between the belligerents on early exchanges of

sick and wounded POW's. These attempts brought about the interchange of a few groups, numbering 500-1500 Allied POW's at a time. Yet, prior to the execution of each accord the Imperial POW Committee (representing the Americans also) pondered long and hard whether it should consent to the German conditions, or else abolish the agreement. The Germans were no fools, and each time drew lines over the whole map of Europe marking the planned routes for the transportation of the exchangees, and warning that they could not guarantee their lives if Allied bombings continued in those areas during a specified period preceding the exchange. The intention was obvious; meanwhile they would be able to repair the damage that had been inflicted on those regions by previous bombings, the whole bombing effort would have been wasted, and the German capability to resist would have been improved. The accumulative outcome would necessarily have meant a prolongation of the war.

In one case the committee decided, in spite of all the too wellknown considerations of family hardships and public opinion agitation that were rather seriously discussed, to cancel the agreement, since its price in terms of prolonging the war did not seem to justify its implementation. In several other cases accords were put off for weeks or months, until certain operational objectives were achieved. All those cases concerned British, American, Dominion or JewishPalestinian soldiers, for whom the Allies had direct liability. There may be little doubt as to how the Germans would have taken advantage of offers to liberate Jews and for what purposes. There may also be little doubt as to the reply of the Allies, based on purely military grounds, when they would have realized the meaning of the German demands.

Unlike Allied POW's and interned citizens, Jews did not enjoy protection based on the principle of reciprocity. Nobody would have approved the idea of retaliating against civilians in Allied hands just because they were of German origin or citizenship. The British made it clear to the Germans as early as 1941 that they would not acquiesce to any discrimination against their Jewish soldiers in German captivity. The warning carried weight, and the Germans usually

treated British, American or Palestinian Jewish POW's in the same manner as they treated the Gentile prisoners. Moreover, the Allied prisoners themselves firmly opposed attempts to segregate or otherwise discriminate against their Jewish comrades. The Germans were forced to renounce the

idea and restrain themselves as few - as Jewish POW's were concerned, out of fear of retaliation against their own prisoners in the hands of the Allies. But the principle of reciprocity did not apply to local Jews. The Germans were by no means restricted in their treatment of the latter, and feared no revenge

Allied operational capability to rescue was, until the final German collapse in spring, 1945, limited on land to the operation of individual agents or small special units behind the lines, whose significance from the rescue viewpoint was marginal. The Allies' main potentiality emanated from their enormous superiority in the air, and that capacity could apparently be used to destroy the installations of the death-camps and the transportation network leading to them. The problem was initially one of feasibility, but the acquisition of airfields on the Continent, following the Allied armies' advance in Italy, eliminated previous limitations of flight-range, so the principal question remained the priority given to that kind of targets. In spring, 1944, the Slovak group of Jewish activists begged that the pace of the murders be stopped, or at least slowed down by a preventive bombing of the railways leading to Auschwitz and the installation itself. The Jewish organizations hesitated a while, but finally decided to ask the Allies to bomb the death-camp. The suggestion was turned down by Allied officers and officials in spite of political directives to examine it favorably. The reason for refusal was probably the soldiers' unawareness of the peculiarity and meaning of that mission, since their technical and military arguments for rejecting the proposal were not valid, as David Wyman has proved. Nevertheless, one may wonder whether the bombing, if approved, would have really been "preventive". Continuous strategic bombings on a much larger scale had not succeeded in stopping the German war production, nor in shaking the German morale, or breaking the Nazi will to go on fighting. The results of previous attempts to hit at point-targets by ordinary long-range bombing had not been impressive thus far. German ingenuity would probably have discovered a quick solution to enable them to persist with the implementation of a task so ideologically important; they had proved themselves capable of solving more complicated problems. On the other hand, the idea of retaliatory, as opposed

to preventive, bombing had not been raised at all, so that measure was not tried. Although threats of reprisal and punishment were now and then proclaimed by Allied leaders and propaganda broadcasts, they proved

fruitless as far as the Germans were concerned. Repetition may have further reduced their effect, and the Germans would barely have minded retaliatory bombing since in any case they had been heavily bombed. Nonetheless, it is possible that threats of retaliatory bombing might have carried some weight in the case of the satellites, especially in the final stages of the war. Horthy's decision to stop the deportations in July, 1944, should also be viewed against the background of the bombing of Budapest several weeks earlier and the fear of further bombings of his capital.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Allies had apparently missed an opportunity to impede the murder process in its latest phase by a preventive bombing, their overall contribution to rescue in the circumstances of the war could only be very limited. The period of the lowest ebb of the Allies — from summer, 1941, to the beginning of the recovery in autumn, 1942, and further, until summer, 1943, when they could rely on their ultimate victory — was crucial to the conduct of the war and fatal to European Jewry. When it was still possible to save the Jews the Allies did not possess the essential capability, and when they regained that capacity it was too late for most of the victims.

So it was not the Allies' practical actions or inaction in rescue matters, but rather their mental attitude to the horrendous oppression that should be the crux of the discussion. Similarly, the contribution of free Jewry to operational rescue projects was naturally of secondary importance, though the Joint Distribution Committee raised the bulk of the funds that financed those projects. The Jews' main function was to make the world aware of the situation and stimulate its reaction. American and British Jews were accordingly expected to mobilize for the sake of their brethren in the occupied countries and to be the prime driving power behind public response. They should have been the first to sound the alarm, to call for action, to arouse public opinion and to be on their guard against any dwindling in the popular interest in the plight of the Jews. But the final outcome depended on the response of the Gentile world to Jewish agitation. The attitude of World Jewry and the Allies alike has consequently

attracted the attention of a growing number of scholars in recent years, and has been the main target for their criticism. 17

The retrospective perception, which is simultaneously the advantage and handicap of the historian, has a distinct significance in our case. The vigor

of the Holocaust is an unparalleled phenomenon. The contradiction between the horrors taking place under Nazi rule on the one hand, and the bureaucratic handling of the information in Washington, London or Jerusalem on the other, cannot fail to impress the reader, even impress too much. What would you expect, for example, of a student who reviews the actions and deportations of summer, 1942, when he later reads the minutes of the Jewish Agency Executive meeting on October 25, 1942, and notes the context in which they were discussed:

- 1) The situation of the Jews in occupied Europe.
- 2) Compensating the employees of the Jewish Agency for the index-rise.
- 3) The Government committee for wages.
- 4) A new constitution for the employment-bureaus ... etc.

The appalling disparity between the two distinct worlds needs no elaboration. It is difficult to avoid its impact, yet we have to keep in mind that daily life did go on outside Europe, and while the Jewish Agency did not consider itself responsible or capable of affecting conditions in the occupied countries, it was still pledged to the multitude of particulars which formed the everyday routine of the Yishuv. The same is true of Jewish leadership in the West, and even more so of the Allies' bureaucracies.

Not only was the Holocaust unmatched in its vigor, it was also a phenomenon without precedent. Contemporaries often thought in terms of the previous world war and interpreted current events accordingly. The recollections of the atrocity rumors that had been disseminated during the First World War, as well as reminiscences of the pogroms that had followed it in eastern Europe and the low credibility of "Bolshevik propaganda", all helped to confuse the real significance of the information about the mass murder. Initially the information was interpreted in terms of rumors, propaganda and pogroms. News that had no precedent or could not be explained in terms of the previous war were then dismissed as "unbelievable". The historian, on the other hand, has all the advantages of hindsight when he analyzes the reactions to that very news. His knowledge does not make it any easier for his

empathy for the objects of his research — those who should have

responded on the basis of that information.

The retrospective perception sometimes brings about definitive judgments on the persons involved and their performance. It is rather easier in the case of the Bystanders than in the case of the victims for, after all, the former acted under relatively normal conditions. Quite often our judgment derives from a comparison between what was actually done to rescue Jews and what should have been done for that goal. But the recognition of the duty depended upon comprehension of the overall picture, and while that understanding did develop, slowly, it was only accomplished with the liberation of the camps in 1945. Several years ago Yehuda Bauer rightly emphasized the importance of the distinction between informative knowledge of facts and perceiving their full meaning. The gap breaching information and comprehension was but gradually filled.

Various persons and institutions, Jewish and Gentile, have been held responsible for the rescue, or non-rescue, of European Jews. Yet there is a preliminary need to inspect their terms of reference, in order to learn if and how they regarded themselves accountable or were capable of bearing that obligation. The Allied governments considered themselves responsible first and foremost for winning the war, and everything else was subject to that responsibility. Regretfully, the rescue of Jews was not regarded as a contribution to victory; rather the contrary, victory alone was considered the proper way to stop the atrocities. Only in the later phase of the war did it become evident that victory might come too late to be of any meaning to the victims, and that other counsel should be sought. The establishment of the War Refugee Board has been regarded as an outcome of this search and an equivalent to American recognition of rescue as one of the war aims. Nevertheless, in practice it did not amount to the undertaking of full obligation by the Administration, otherwise the Board would not have had to ask for Jewish funding through the Joint Distribution Committee, and other official agencies would have been more cooperative.

The Jewish Agency considered itself responsible primarily for the future of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael; for dealing with the aggravating situation of the Jewish Diaspora the Zionists had initiated the establishment of the World Jewish Congress, precisely to relieve the Agency from engaging in those questions. But the World

Jewish Congress, in spite of its good will, did not possess any substantial capability to fulfill the role assigned to it.

As for the Zionist top leaders, Weizmann hardly expressed himself on the Holocaust. Ben-Gurion was indeed active in discussions of practical possibilities, but definitely objected to setting the Holocaust in the focus of the Zionist campaign. ²¹ He was probably convinced at an early stage that the Yishuv could not have any real effect on the course of events in Europe, while the consequent despair would hinder the struggle ² for its own war aims, that is to say, the striving for a Jewish State. The Yishuv endeavored to be recognized as an ally of the anti-Nazi coalition, so rescue opportunities that were not in harmony with being an ally — like having independent contacts with the Germans and their satellites behind the back of the British, or violating the blockade — were promptly dismissed by its leaders.

Outside Eretz Yisrael, the very use of the term "Jewish Leadership" might be questioned; the real leader of American Jews was President Roosevelt, as Churchill was the leader of British Jews. What is usually termed "Jewish Leaders" were essentially intermediaries, lobbyists, communal workers and activists, bosses of organizations or factions, but not chiefs. Besides being all similarly shocked by the catastrophe, they represented a variety of conflicting and competitive interests, hence they could hardly be expected to exercise leadership over the entire Jewish community or substantial parts of it.

One may wonder whether any exertion of leadership was necessary at all as far as the Jewish communities were concerned. At least in the case of the Yishuv in Eretz Yisrael, though it should also be true for many Jews in other countries, the victims about whom everybody could read in the daily papers were not members of some remote society but, rather, their own flesh and blood whom they had left behind not long ago. In those circumstances the lack of pressure from below is no less astonishing than the absence of inspiration from above. On the other hand, precisely as the Yishuv considered itself an ally and refrained from any violation of that self-imposed restriction, so the activity of American and British Jews was limited by the principle of being first and foremost loyal citizens of their countries and their fear of being accused of double loyalty. This anxiety was consistent with their apologetic stance in the face of growing antisemitism in the pre-war years. As an outcome of these hesitations the Jews of the free world, in spite of their sincere concern and efforts, could not and

did not stand up to what would have been expected of them in the circumstances of the Second World War.

Historical criticism of the Gentile free world's attitude to the Holocaust concerns the postures and self-expressions of many statesmen, officials and army officers, as well as other public figures like churchmen, intellectuals, journalists etc. Usually their conduct has been morally evaluated, the criteria being their sensitivity, sympathy or indifference to the plight of the Jews and their readiness to express them by words or deeds. While this might be the proper way to judge the positions of intellectuals, churchmen, and occasionally journalists, it is hardly appropriate in the case of officials or statesmen, whose terms of reference and political education do not necessarily give first priority to moral principles or sympathies. Furthermore, it is doubtful whether the conduct of all these persons can be attributed to anti- or pro-Jewish sentiments. I wonder how many of them had such sensitivity at all, and, in case they had, whether it was pertinent to their functioning in office. Though there might be a few exceptions, most of them were just loyal civil or public servants who did their best to serve the interests of their countries as they understood them. Regretfully, nobody had ever taught them that rescuing foreign Jews in the midst of a total war came within the terms of that service or those interests. Quite often they avoided any special reference to Jews, believing or claiming that singling out the Jews would play right into the Germans' hands. The Jews and their fate were not relevant to their performance unless they served in agencies specifically designed to deal with Jewish or refugee questions, such as the War Refugee Board or the inter- governmental committee for refugees.

The principal issue in the eyes of all these persons, both temporal and spiritual, was, of course, the war. In its early years it was a war for survival, and in its later stages, too, it was still everywhere the greatest national effort that had ever been mobilized to achieve national goals. Against this huge background, there is little wonder that Jewish matters seemed to be of minor importance. Furthermore, for various internal and external reasons there was a clear tendency on the part of the Allies to prevent any possible identification of the war with relieving the Jewish plight. Only when the war was transformed from a struggle for survival to a fight for victory, while simultaneously the indications of the uniqueness of the massmurder of the Jews increased, could a modification of that attitude

have been expected, but altogether it was too slow and too gradual to have any immediate effect.

All the above-mentioned explanations notwithstanding, those scholars who disapprove of the Allies' attitude are probably right in their final moral judgment. Yet the "guilty" verdict in itself does not offer a sufficient historical explication of the impotence and indifference that surrounded the mass-murder. Several scholarly works have been undertaken to discover the social roots and ideological sources of Nazism in early modern German history, seeking explanations there for the murderers' conduct in the Holocaust. On the other hand, the connection between processes and undercurrents in the social and intellectual history of western societies, and the latter's role as passive bystanders, has not been fully investigated. The outcome of such inquiries may be astounding, as the issue at stake is the contribution of Western liberal tradition to the development of an extremely egotistic society that perverted its fundamental principles. Tolerance, for example, has been a basic liberal value, but tolerating brutal persecution in the name of non interference, as in the late 1930's, is quite another matter. Who could have predicted that the liberal "live and let five" approach would mutate into liberal acquiescence to oppression? Yet, that is exactly what happened in the early war years. Who could have dreamt that liberal Western society would reach the extremity of the laissez faire principle: the laissez faire of mass-murder? Yet, it actually happened later on in the war. One wonders, of course, whether the values which lent themselves to such an interpretation were false, or perhaps the problem resided in the manner in which people regarded themselves committed to those fundamentals. Hopefully, no such connection will be found, so the conclusion should unavoidably be that the peculiar circumstances of the war were the decisive factor in establishing the Allies' behavior. But, indeed, equipped with all the additional historical experience and hindsight, would the comprehension and performance of post-Holocaust generations, in similar circumstances of total major war, differ?

Notes

1. (Anonymous), *Srufei Ha-kivshanim Maashimim* (Those who were burned in the crematoria accuse). Jerusalem: 1965.

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3. Y. Bauer, "Shlichuto shel Yoel Brand" (The Mission of Yoel Brand), *Yalkut Moreshet*, XXVI, November 1978, pp. 23-60; Y. Gelber, "Zionist Policy and the Fate of European Jewry 1943-1944", *Studies in Zionism*, 7, Spring 1983, pp. 133-167; D. Porat, *Hanhaga Bemilkud (A Leadership in Catch)*. Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1986.

4. Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*. London: Croom Helm, 1983.

5. A. Morse, *While Six Millions Died*. New York: Random House, 1968; D. Wyman, *Paper Walls; America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941*. Amherst: University of Mass. Press, 1968, and: *The Abandonment of the Jews*. New York: 1984; A. Sherman, *Island Refuge; British & Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939*. London: P. Elek, 1973; B. Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*. London: Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1979; M. Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies*. American ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981; London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982.

6. W. Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980.

7. A. Sharf, *The British Press and the Jews under the Nazi Rule*. London: Oxford University Press, 1964.

8. Y. Gelber, "Haitonut Haivrit Beeretz-Israel al Hashmadat Yehudei Eropa" (The Early News of the Holocaust in the Palestine Hebrew Press 1941-1942), *Dapim Leheker Hashoah Vehamered*, (New Series), I, 1970, pp. 30-58.

9. Y. Gelber, "Zionist Policy and the Fate of European Jewry 1939-1942", *Yad Vashem Studies*, XIII, 1979, pp. 169-210

10. M. Howard, *Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War*.

London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968.

11. Gelber, "Zionist Policy", and compare Wasserstein, op.cit. and Bauer: "The Mission of Yoel Brand", and B. Wago: "Intelligence Operations in connection with Yoel Brand's Mission", Yad Vashem Studies, X, 1974, pp. 111-128.

12. Y. Bauer, "Tochnit Hahitnagdut Ushlichut Hatzananim" (The Plan of Resistance and the Mission of the Parachutists), Yalkut Moreshet,

Yoav Gelber

I, 1963, pp. 86-94; Y. Gelber, "The Mission of the Jewish Parachutists from Palestine in Europe in World War II", Studies in Zionism, XIII, Spring 1986, pp. 51-76.

13. See minutes and correspondence in P.R.O. W.0.193/346-348.

14. Y. Gelber, "Palestinian Prisoners of War in German Captivity", Yad Vashem Studies, XIV, 1981, pp. 89-137.

15. D. Wyman, "Why Auschwitz was never Bombed?", Commentary, LXV, 5, May 1978, pp. 37-46.

16. Y. Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust; The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee 1939-1945. Jerusalem-Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981.

17. H. Feingold, The Politics of Rescue; The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust 1938-1945. New Brunswick: Hipporence Books 1970; S. Friedman, No Haven for the Oppressed; U.S. Policy toward Jewish Refugees 1938-1945. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973; M. Penkower, The Jews Were Expendable. Illinois: Urbana University Press, 1983; Porat, op.cit.

18. Minutes of the Jewish Agency Executive meeting, 25/10/1942, Central Zionist Archives.

19. Y. Bauer, The Holocaust in Historical Perspective. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978.

20. M. Kedem, Chaim Weizmann BemilchemetHaolam Hashniah:

Weizmann Vehamediniut Hatzionit Beshanim 1939-1945 (Chaim Weizmann in the Second World War; Weizmann and Zionist Policy in the Years 1939-1945). Tel Aviv: Sifriat Maariv, 1983.

21. Porat, op.cit.

22. Two articles have recently been published about Ben-Gurion's attitude to the Holocaust. See T. Friling, "Ben-Gurion and the Holocaust of European Jewry 1939-1945; A Stereotype Reexamined", *Yad Vashem Studies*, XVIII, 1987, and D. Porat, "Ben-Gurion Veshoat Yehudei Eropa" (Ben-Gurion and the Holocaust of the European Jews), *Hazionut*, XII, 1987, pp. 293-314.

23. Ben-Gurion to Menachem Bader (Istanbul), 2/7/1944, Ben-Gurion's Archives.



THE CHURCHES AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE: ACTIONS, INACTIONS AND REACTIONS DURING THE NAZI ERA

John S. Conway

It is now customary to arrange the historiography of the Holocaust in three categories: first, the descriptions of the sufferings of the victims; second, the investigations of the policies of the perpetrators; third, the actions or reactions of the bystanders. In this group particular attention has been given in recent years to the attitudes of the Christian churches. This paper will seek to evaluate their policies and responses during the Holocaust, in the light of recent research.

The term "bystanders" is subject to differing interpretations. It may refer to those whose direct involvement in the Holocaust, for reasons of geography, was necessarily distant, and whose role in the unfolding of events must be regarded as marginal. But more significant were those bystanders who were more closely associated, but who chose, for one reason or another, not to recognize any responsibility for themselves or their institutions, nor to seek to prevent or alleviate the murderous policies of the Nazis. Clearly the churches in Germany must, in the main, be included in this latter group. As the Nazi aggressions spread, so too other European churches became involved.

Considerable debate has ensued as to what factors were principally responsible for this observed passivity, or at any rate lack of adequately active response, both at the institutional and at the personal levels. The role of the Vatican during the Holocaust has been a focus-point of such controversy for the past twenty years. There is still no consensus about the legacy of Christian anti-Judaism, which provided the seed-bed out of which grew by incremental stages the more

radical anti-Christian doctrines of Nazi antisemitism. More recently,

increased emphasis has been placed on the anti-alien, as opposed to the antisemitic attitudes of these bystanders. It is clear that further research and differentiation is called for in distinguishing the various national situations, and seeking to clarify the theological from the non-theological factors involved in each community, and at different stages throughout the period.

But "bystanding" can also be used to describe the historiographical developments. It is a notable fact that for the first twenty years after 1945, little attention was paid to the actions or reactions of the Christian churches during the Holocaust. Concerned with their own institutional regrouping, and with the overwhelming pastoral tasks caused by the war's destructions, the clergy were preoccupied with their own affairs. The prevailing mood in the mind of most churchmen was how to rebuild a shattered Europe, and to take measures to repair the fabric of their buildings and beliefs, after what they readily believed was a horrendous but passing episode of Nazi barbarism. In Germany, both the Protestants and Catholics sought to return to the more comfortable world-view before 1933. The few voices raised in opposition, such as that of Pastor Martin Niemöller, found little understanding or support in trying to come to terms with the Germans' own responsibility for the establishment or the crimes of the Nazi regime. The widespread amnesia of the early post-war years in the general population only encouraged the tendency to forget those victims of Nazi totalitarianism whose exclusion from the circle of obligation was to have such fateful results. This trend was only strengthened by the efforts of the churches' historians to depict their own institutions as sufferers at the hands of the vindictive Nazis, and to portray the churches as the upholders of the "true Germany" which had resisted the regime all along. The effect was, however, to distract attention from the complicity of the churches in the persecution of the Jewish people. Only in more recent years have the one-sidedness and omissions of this Kirchengeschichtsschreibung come to be rectified.

This situation began to change in the 1960's. In Germany, the revelations of the Eichmann trial prompted a re-evaluation on the part of the Protestant churches about their part during the Holocaust. At the same time, in the United States and Canada, new initiatives were taken by theologians to undertake a more intensive examination of both the German Church Struggle and the Holocaust, and the significance of

these events in the life of the Christian communities. This led to more scholarly and less apologetic treatment of the churches' role in the Nazi era, and to a re-thinking of both their past and future attitudes towards the Jewish people. The conclusion was reached, if reluctantly, that the Holocaust could no longer be seen just as a tragedy for the Jewish people, but that it also raised crucial questions about the actions and reactions of Christians, and even about the credibility of Christianity itself.

The results have been accumulating throughout the last twenty years, and have led to a series of notable pronouncements, such as that of the Rhineland Synod of the German Evangelical Church in 1980. At the same time, church historians have become much more prepared to admit the shortcomings of the churches' attitudes towards the Jewish people during the Nazi period, and less ready to accept the purely defensive tone of their predecessors. Particular attention has therefore been paid to the legacy of anti-Judaic prejudices, and to the particular blending of these with the Nazi ideology in the 1920's and 1930's in Germany. Robert Ericksen's new book, *Theologians under Hitler*, for example, gives a forceful account of the career of Gerhard Kittel, one of Germany's foremost New Testament scholars, whose insidious mixture of political and theological ideas certainly lent respectability to the prevalent discrimination against the Jews. On the whole, however, even among the so-called "German Christians" or Nazi supporters, it would be inappropriate to see them as primarily motivated by Nazi racist prejudices, but certainly many shared what Erich Bloch rightly called "metaphysical antisemitism", regarding Judaism as a bygone relic. On the other hand, new studies of such staunch opponents of the Nazi regime as Otto Dibelius and Martin Niemoeller also show that these men were still, at this time, unable to free themselves from traditional anti-Judaic perspectives. Their theology, it is now evident, did not provide them with an adequate prophylactic against the defamations of Nazi propaganda, or more significantly, arm them with a strong enough sense of identification with the Jewish people. Their regrettable passivity as bystanders is now recognized by church historians, and receives frequent mention. The situation among Protestants in other countries is more complex and still needs a full evaluation. We should note that in some churches, such as in France and Holland, a much more sympathetic stance towards Judaism was already found before the war, while in others the Jewish question was still only a peripheral concern.

In the Catholic church, enormous controversy was first aroused by the

publication in 1963 of Rolf Hochhuth's sensational play, *The Representative*.² His attack on the so-called silence of Pope Pius XII in face of the sufferings of the Jews clearly represented the Pontiff as an uncaring and unfeeling bystander. His criticisms of the alleged diplomatic and political shortcomings of Vatican policy would have been more forceful if he had not indulged the urge to draw a caricature of the Pope's intentions, or focussed attention solely on this one church leader instead of examining more closely the theological presuppositions of Vatican policy. One beneficial result, however, was the publication of eleven large volumes of Vatican papers for the period of the Second World War. These serve to give a much more accurate picture of the Catholic position in world affairs, and in particular its response to the Holocaust. But since these volumes are mainly written in Italian, they have yet to be sufficiently examined and evaluated by historians. A brief overview of the Catholic reactions to the Holocaust was given by this author in the collected papers entitled *Judaism and Christianity under the Impact of National Socialism 1919-1945*. In addition we have extra evidence such as provided in Peter Hebblethwaite's biography of Pope John XXIII, which adds new material on the situation in the Balkans during the crucial years 1942-1944.

In the light of this more complete evidence, we are better aware of the historical and political setting in which the bystanders had to operate. We have also gained added perspectives on the controversy as to how much more could have been done to assist the Nazis' victims. We can now place in a more scholarly-based context the expectations placed on the churches' possible interventions, as also the evasions and silence about the churches' complicity.

In the longer historical perspective, we should first stress the notable fact that the situation of the churches in Europe during the years 1939-1945 was markedly different from their stance during the First World War. In the earlier conflict, the churches' institutional position had been secure, even though their following among the working classes had been notably falling away. Their ideological leadership, though challenged by many of the intelligentsia, was acknowledged by the populace at large. Their legally-anchored place in society was supported by the allegiance of the faithful. National needs, institutional inclinations, and popular sentiment all encouraged the churches to play a dominant role in the mobilization of public

opinion behind the war effort. Although most churchmen had a regrettably limited view of foreign political realities, they were swept away by the tide of enthusiasm in August, 1914, which has been so ably analyzed by R. Stromberg in his book, *Redemption by War*. Accusations of British deceitfulness by the Germans, or of German hypocrisy by the Allies, were not at first seen as crucial to the cause of Christianity as a whole. All the churches readily enough lent their support to the war effort, and legitimized the national cause.

But within months, the war became more than a traditional clash of rival military forces, and was increasingly stalemated in the murderous but seemingly insoluble trench warfare of Flanders. For the first time, the civilians were more directly affected not merely by the horrendous losses, but also by food shortages and the mobilization of new segments of the whole population. From 1915 there was an ideological escalation, when the enemy became portrayed in devilish terms, and Christianity as a whole identified with one's own side. Only a few prophetic voices, such as Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze in Germany, or W.E. Orchard in England, recognized the likely consequences:

Christianity has blessed and discovered sanctions to every war that Christians have ever waged, and... this war is fundamentally no different from the rest. Christianity will therefore stand forth as a system of thought which blinds the mind, intensifies hate, pours oil on a conflagration and provides beautiful ideas to lure whole peoples to destruction.

In the aftermath, the more percipient church leaders began to realize the serious effects of this unqualified support of political slaughter. In the following years, the widespread disillusionment with traditional Christianity, the repudiation of Christian ethical teachings, and the large scale abandonment of Christian practice by all classes of society, were to cause a serious crisis of credibility from which the churches never recovered.

In the English-speaking world, the result was to induce a sense of cultural pessimism, or at least a resolve to avoid this kind of enthusiastic endorsement of political ideologies. During the second war, western church leaders were much more muted in their support of the national causes and more guarded against the misuse of their positions for political ends. In Germany, however, after 1918 this process did not take place. Instead, the churches willingly enough

continued to give support to German nationalism, and lent their moral authority to efforts to attack the so-called "crime" of the Versailles Treaty. To this extent, they were especially susceptible to the Nazi claims to be the bastion against atheistic bolshevism, against the national dishonor of the 1919 settlement, and against the weakening of morality among the populace. The strength of this desire for a government which would incorporate these policies was chiefly responsible for the uncritical support which greeted the Nazis' sudden rise to power in 1933, and for the reluctance of the churches to recognize that the new regime of their choice had far more radical and dangerous ambitions in mind.

By 1939, the churches' position throughout Europe had radically changed. In the Soviet Union, Christianity had been reduced to a troglodyte existence. In Germany, the policies of the regime were increasingly hostile and menacing towards the churches. Even in the west, the self-confidence of earlier years had been replaced by a soul-searching recognition that the churches now played a far less significant role in public affairs. Nevertheless, when the call to arms came again, the churches were expected, both by the governments and by the population, to provide the necessary spiritual reinforcement to the national goals. In the case of the Nazis, this was a

blatantly hypocritical move. Demands were made for unqualified support of the war effort from Protestants and Catholics alike, even as new and sharply increased measures of Nazi persecution of the churches were imposed and justified by the war-time conditions. The Nazis did not hesitate to increase their depredations against the churches, on the grounds of an alleged lack of spiritual support for their aggressions. But likewise, such British church leaders as Bishop Bell of Chichester became highly unpopular when they sought to moderate or oppose political decisions, such as the carpet bombing of German cities, or the inhumane treatment of prisoners and internees. Even in the United States and Canada, the influence of the churches was

lessened by the exigencies of war-time circumstances, and then

representations ignored when military or political considerations dictated otherwise, as in the case of the deportation of then

citizens of Japanese origin. And in the Soviet Union, despite Stalin's

willingness to permit the re-establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate in 1943, it is clear that nothing more was expected from the churches than an unquestioning obedience to Soviet political directives. Stalin's cynical question: "How many divisions has the Pope?" shows

his evaluation of the importance or effectiveness of Catholic, or indeed Christian, power in political affairs.

In the Second World War, the churches were at best treated as useful agents of political propaganda; at worst, they were the objects of suspicion and repression from a hostile regime. In response, some German bishops mistakenly believed that the dedication of their followers to the national cause would be a means of regaining their lost position in the national community. They even at times publicly expressed their baffled bewilderment at the Nazis' refusal to acknowledge their services and sacrifices. In the west, even those leading churchmen who gave their support to the identification of the war effort with Christian civilization, were forced to recognize that they had little or no influence on the immediate conduct of the war. Increasingly they had to solace themselves with the hope of a later re-Christianizing of Europe, by drawing up "a plan of action which shall win the peace when the din of battle is ended." 9 The same process of disappointment and disillusionment on the part of the Pope, Pius XII, is clearly evident from the published Vatican documents. A notable example may be seen in the frustration felt in 1942, when Pius XII discovered that President Roosevelt, whom up to then the Pope had believed to be genuinely working for a negotiated peace, now demanded unequivocal support for American war aims and forthright condemnations of German and Japanese crimes. From the middle of the war, and especially during the German occupation of Rome from September, 1943, to June, 1944, the Vatican was in a state of siege, infiltrated by spies, and its every move openly misrepresented or distorted by each side's propaganda. The feeling of claustrophobia was intense.

These considerations do not, of course, constitute a defense of these leaders' actions or inactions. It is however indisputable that they felt constrained to consider and evaluate the effectiveness or applicability of every appeal or protest. Equally indisputable is the fact that, with the knowledge and awareness of later years, such prudential calculations are open to criticism and attack.

We may today fail to realize the extent to which the war reinforced and

accelerated the sense of dismay and confusion which assailed the majority of church leaders. Rival ideologies to traditional Christianity seemed to be gaining the allegiance of modern man. The strident claims of nationalism were everywhere apparent. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer percipiently noted in the summer of 1939:

Christians in Germany will face the terrible alternative of either willing the defeat of their nation in order that Christian civilization may survive, or willing the victory of their nation and thereby destroying our civilization.

The belief held by other less clear-sighted churchmen that militant nationalism and Christianity could again be harmoniously combined, as in the First World War, was soon shown to be an illusion. But it was no less of an illusion to believe that the Church could adopt the alternative role of being a reconciling peacemaker, as promoted by Pope Pius XII, among others. In view of the real aims of the Nazis, which were clear enough by 1942, the maintenance of this stance only reveals the reluctance with which such church leaders came to terms with the realities of genocidal war. The perceptible diminution of the churches' influence throughout the Second World War was a major factor in reinforcing the pessimism of many churchmen towards the whole unwelcome developments of the twentieth century.

With hindsight, it is evident that the situation was made more critical by the specific institutional and theological presuppositions of the church leaders, which now, to us, may appear outdated and inadequate to deal with such an enormous crisis of confidence and credibility. As institutions, they were still thinking in terms of the previous centuries, when their role as part of the governing structures in each country was acknowledged and respected. The church hierarchies were accustomed to acting as the moral guardians of the state, and expected their services to be appreciated by the secular rulers. The Vatican, for example, had an unrivalled network of papal nuncios and apostolic delegates whose role as ambassadors to the various governments was a long-accepted diplomatic practice. The concomitant result was that the church's institutional role was seen as giving leadership from the top downwards, working through and in collaboration with the state's authorities. Institutionally the churches were unprepared for the phenomenon of totalitarian populist regimes, whose alleged claims for authority no longer rested on the presuppositions of a past Christian heritage. In these new circumstances, the churches' reliance

on inherited structures and hierarchically organized modes of operation were inappropriate mechanisms for achieving their ends. But these institutional arrangements rested on theological presuppositions which were even more difficult to abandon

or alter, especially in such highly turbulent and dangerous conditions.

Theologically, the churches of the 1930's and 1940's were in striking disarray. The credibility crisis caused by their support of mutually-contradictory nationalisms in the First World War had only been heightened by the evident inability of the gospel of peace to be heeded in those and subsequent years. The optimistic assumptions of the gradual triumph of Christian civilization had been shattered. The rise of revolutionary and destructive forces, such as the Soviet Union's open and devastating attacks on the Russian church, portended a dire future for traditional Christianity. The world-wide economic crisis of 1929 destroyed the belief in the beneficial workings of the market forces of modern industry. Those church leaders, like Archbishop Soderblom of Sweden, who recognized the need for the churches' life and work to be dedicated to the binding up of the wounds of war, received no assistance from prominent German theologians. The church's traditional message seemed too weak and ineffective to counteract the waves of hatred and hostility which engulfed Europe. 11 It was hardly surprising that many church leaders gave preference to their pastoral roles and to the safeguarding of their own institutions. The prophetic voice of Christianity was confused and timorous, and its reliance on outdated methods of propagation only reduced its appeal. Its view of social order and moral standards, based on the conservative ideals of the past, appeared to have been almost irreparably broken, or rendered irrelevant, by the rise of alternative ersatz religions or forces beyond control.

These were conclusions which many churchmen were unwilling to recognize at the time, and which church historians and commentators, for understandable reasons, have been unwilling to stress since. But it is clear that the absence of any adequate stance against such dangers as antisemitism was only one part of the whole malaise of Christian witness during this period. We cannot now say whether alternative strategies, relying on different theological insights, might have led to more appropriate responses. This remains hypothetical. But there is evidence which suggests that in several countries, including Germany, a more

determined response to the plight of the Jewish people would have been welcomed by Christian laity, who looked in vain for a forceful and courageous lead from their bishops, but whose spontaneous actions deserve recognition.

The renewal of war in 1939 only made the situation worse. The hopes entertained, not only by the Vatican but also by leading Protestants, that the churches could assist in creating a climate for a peaceful negotiated settlement, had to be abandoned by the summer of 1940. As the course of Nazi aggression spread across Europe, and irrefutable evidence came to hand of the brutalities and atrocities inflicted on nation after nation, the options for effective Christian interventions appeared ever more diminishing. It was difficult to resist the conclusion that the evils of Nazism, the ruthless rapaciousness of Hitler and his henchmen and the fanatical racism of Nazi policies were part of a demonic plot to bring Christian civilization to an end. The daily news bulletins were grim enough. But even more depressing were the confidential reports sent in by the ecclesiastical envoys which foreboded an ever direr future. The published collections of such documents, on the international level in the *Actes et documents du Saint Siege*, and on the German national level in the *Akten deutscher Bischofe*, make absolutely clear that the Catholic authorities could only look forward to further persecutions and depredations, and that a German victory would entail a still more final reckoning with the churches. Repeated, lengthy, and well-argued protests to the Nazi authorities were either ignored or scornfully dismissed. The tone of the letters exchanged between the Pope and the German bishops was gloomy. It was in this cheerless climate that trustworthy reports began to flow in about the most bestial Nazi atrocity of all — the deliberate annihilation of the Jews.

Let us look more closely at the events of 1942. The year began with the sweeping victories of the Japanese in Asia. Preparations were being made for the renewal of the German offensive to drive still deeper into the heart of the Soviet Union, as soon as the weather allowed. The possibility that the Axis new order would triumph on a world-wide scale seemed even more likely than before. And on January 30, Hitler announced on the radio that: "The Jews will be liquidated for at least a thousand years." Ten days earlier, though none of the bystanders could know this at the time, the Wannsee conference had been held to co-ordinate the German bureaucracy's plans for the implementation of Hitler's desires. On the very

same day, the Vatican was informed that its efforts on behalf of Jewish children in Croatia had failed to prevent them from being taken away to a "horrible deportation".

Confirmation of these sombre tidings first came from Slovakia in March. The Vatican charge d'affaires, the energetic Msgr. Burzio, reported on a proposed plan to deport 80,000 Jews from this small satellite state to Poland, which, in his view, would be "the equivalent of condemning a great part of them to death." 15 Despite prompt protests from the Vatican, the deportations began on March 26th. On receiving this news of the ineffectiveness of their representations, the Vatican deputy secretary Tardini could only comment:

Madness. And the madmen are two in number: Tuka [the Prime Minister] who orders it and Tiso [the President] who lets it happen — and Tiso is a priest.

It is a great misfortune that the President of Slovakia is a priest. Everyone knows that the Holy See cannot bring Hitler to heel. But who will understand that we can't even control a priest?

This evidence of callous antisemitism in a reputedly Catholic land such as Slovakia aroused bitter feelings of frustration, even of betrayal.

In the following month, in neighboring Bohemia, the assassination of the Nazi Protector, Reinhard Heydrich, led to systematic shooting of large numbers of hostages and to the notorious elimination of the whole village of Lidice in reprisal. At the same time, terrible news was arriving from Yugoslavia. Catholic Croats were participating in massacres of the Serbian Orthodox population and encouraging forcible conversions to Catholicism. The Germans had demanded the mass expulsion of the Jews, and Vatican interventions had succeeded only in delaying, but not preventing these inhumane measures. In July, the Nuncio in Vichy reported on the rounding up of Jews in occupied France, and a month later the same process was extended to the unoccupied area. The French premier, Laval, said he approved getting rid of the Jews; Petain pleaded pressure from the Germans. The Swiss police received orders to turn back Jewish refugees at the frontiers. From Poland, Cardinal Sapieha of Cracow wrote despairingly about the suffering among his countrymen. And at the end of August, one of the most vivid accounts of German atrocities in eastern Europe was penned in his own hand by the redoubtable Ukrainian Catholic

Metropolitan of Lemberg (Lvov), Archbishop Count Szeptyckyj:

After being freed from the bolshevik yoke by the German army, we experienced a certain relaxation but this only lasted for a month or two. Little by little the government has instituted a reign of terror and corruption which is truly unbearable, and which is becoming, day by day, heavier and more insupportable. Today, the whole country agrees that the German regime is evil, almost diabolical, to a degree perhaps greater than the bolshevik regime. For at least a year, there is not a day when the most horrible crimes, murders, robberies and rapes, confiscations and injuries are not committed. The Jews are the first victims. The number of Jews killed in this small region has certainly passed two hundred thousand. As the army moves east, the number of victims increases. Some days ago, in Kiev, thirty thousand men, women and children were slaughtered.... They have begun to kill the Jews in the streets, shamelessly and in full view of the population.

During the remainder of the year, the flow of reports confirming one atrocity after another continued. In August, the Jewish bystanders in Geneva in the offices of the World Jewish Congress were informed from a German source, which they regarded as reliable, that the Nazis then planned to deport all the Jews of Europe, and annihilate them en masse to resolve the Jewish question once and for all. By the end of the year the evidence was overwhelming that the persecutions and killings were proceeding on an unprecedented scale. In London, the House of Commons passed a strong resolution condemning these atrocities and stood for a period of silence in memory of the victims. The illusion that the sufferings of war would be contained within bounds, or that the loss of life could be regarded as incidental to the conflicts of the battlefields, had now to be shed. With this escalation of the war's horrors to the scale of deliberate genocide, there was no longer any prospect that humanitarian urgings would be respected, or that appeals for a cessation of bloodshed and the restoration of peace would be listened to.

In the face of these moral disasters, it is perhaps only surprising that the churches' efforts to mitigate or lessen these horrors still continued. The extensive collection of protests against antisemitism and the persecution of the Jews, issued by Protestant and Orthodox churches and church leaders during Hitler's rule, entitled *The Grey Book*, is an impressive witness to their attempts to express solidarity

with the Nazis' victims across the continent. On an individual basis, the conspiratorial actions of those who later were to be called the "righteous Gentiles" must not be forgotten. And the Vatican documents are replete with repeated, if almost always ineffectual, efforts to curb the Nazi ferocity.

Yet undeniably the resources, both spiritual and political, were insufficient to the task. Clearly there was also a failure of imagination. None of the Christian leaders recognized the singularity of the Holocaust in all its horror and uniqueness. There is no evidence to suggest that, despite their world-wide connections, the Vatican officials were more percipient than others in realizing the deliberate intent of the Nazi genocide of European Jewry. The Protestant leaders were even more hampered by their national horizons. And certainly no one at the time recognized the implications for Christianity or the churches which the Holocaust entailed.

But in this regard, the church leaders were no different from the bystanders in other professions. The lack of comprehension was general and widespread. Visser't Hooft, then the Geneva-based General Secretary of the mainly Protestant World Council of Churches, and closely in touch with the World Jewish Congress, accurately described the mentality prevailing at that time:

Hitler's strength was that he did the unimaginable. When people heard about the wholesale massacre they could still not realize what it really meant and therefore they could not react in time. That was the strange situation in the years 1942 and 1943. A considerable number of people in Germany, in occupied countries, in Allied and neutral countries, heard stories about mass killings. But the information was ineffective because it seemed too improbable. Everyone who heard it for the first time asked whether this was not a typical piece of wildly exaggerated war-time propaganda. The neutral press did not dare to publish these stories. Even the underground press in occupied countries did not report the facts until very late. And in the Allied countries the press spoke only in vague terms about the present Jewish catastrophe.

Visser't Hooft went on to make further significant comments:

It has been said that the outside world remained indifferent because the victims were Jews — in other words, that the lack of reaction was due to a latent antisemitism. I do not underestimate the reality of such antisemitism,

but I have found little evidence that this played the main role in this situation. It was rather that people could find no place in their consciousness for such an unimaginable horror and that they did not have the imagination, together with the courage to face it. It is possible to live in a twilight between knowing and not knowing. It is possible to refuse full realization of facts because one feels unable to face the implications of these facts.

I believe this also reflected the situation in the claustrophobic atmosphere of the Vatican, and indeed in certain leading Jewish circles as well.

At the height of war, when military considerations are given the highest priority, the fate of individual victims often becomes relegated to the background. It is to the credit of the church leaders that they persevered despite refusals, prevarications and deliberate rejection of their unwanted "meddling" in political affairs. In Britain, both Archbishop Temple and Bishop Bell made forceful appeals in the House of Lords urging the government to undertake immediate and energetic steps to assist Jewish refugees. Temple's closing sentence was: "We stand at the bar of history, of humanity and of God." And six months later, in June, 1943, Bell criticized the meager results of the Bermuda conference as follows:

With the appeal of the stricken people in our ears, we should be false to our tradition if we failed to do everything we can.

In the United States, the Federal Council of Churches at the end of 1942 similarly tried to exert pressure.

The violence and inhumanity which Nazi leaders have publicly avowed towards all Jews are apparently now coming to a climax and is a virtual massacre. We are resolved to do our full part in establishing conditions in which such treatment of Jews shall end.

In Catholic circles, the fate of the victims was also watched with ever-growing anxiety. As Pius XII told his Cardinals in June, 1943:

Every word which we have sent to the respective authorities about such matters, and each of our public pronouncements, must be the object of long and thoughtful deliberation in the interests of the suffering peoples themselves, lest involuntarily their position should be made even worse, more difficult and unbearable. 23

But the Nazi atrocities continued relentlessly, and the Allied governments were unprepared to change their priorities.

The evidence is not convincing that still more outspoken protests by church leaders would have been able to break through these obstacles, or to produce more effective action on behalf of the Jewish people. By the middle of the war, the church leaders could not fail to see that their moral influence had markedly diminished. The risk of exposing their weakness still further to the world was a very real deterrent. The impact of such protests is continually incalculable, but the loss of credibility, if obedience is not forthcoming, can be extremely damaging and long-lasting. To suggest that the power of the churches would have been sufficient to deter the Nazis' murderous policies during the Holocaust is, on the one hand, to exaggerate their potential authority, and on the other, to ignore the obsessions of the Nazi leaders on the Jewish issue. As O.D. Kulka has rightly noted:

The war against the enemy "Judaism" assumed such a primary place of importance in both Hitler's Weltanschauung and his conception of the world war that it cannot be compared to any issue for which Hitler had abandoned or moderated his plans in response to public pressure.

It is undeniable that the churches' leaders were not fully aware of this obsession, nor alert to the terrible consequences it was to have. But they could not fail to recognize that the intransigence of totalitarian governments was no longer susceptible to moral protests, however forcibly or frequently repeated.

In his book, *The Cunning of History*, the American theologian, Richard Rubenstein, provocatively argued that the Nazis committed no crime at Auschwitz. Such mass extermination organized by the modern

state, he claimed, lay beyond the traditional concepts of western law, morality or religion. "With the collapse of every credible religious and moral restraint on the state, and with the inevitable depersonalization of the relations between the rulers and the ruled, the state's sovereignty can achieve an ultimacy unimpeded by any contending claim." The history of the twentieth century has seen an exponential growth of technology, an increasing bureaucratization of the state's machinery of control, and an unprecedented readiness to manipulate whole populations for the alleged benefit of the state. At the same time, these forces have been accompanied

by a corrosive decline in acceptance of the moral codes and humanitarian ideals held in common by Judaism and Christianity.

In the First World War, the military leaders adopted the view that mass death, even of their own rank and file, was justifiable for the sake of the national struggle. Lenin and Stalin adopted the same strategy for the sake of the class struggle. The Holocaust was certainly unique in the irrationality of its alleged justification. But Ernst Nolte is surely right to point out that the concept of group annihilation was not a Nazi invention. Already in the 1920's and 1930's the systematic murders taking place in the Soviet Union had set a fateful precedent by showing how an ideologically-motivated regime could ruthlessly and successfully eradicate unwanted political opponents en masse. As Rubenstein rightly noted:

The passing of time has made it increasingly evident that a hitherto unbreakable moral and political barrier in the history of western civilization... has been overcome in what for millennia had been regarded as the permissible limits of political action.... Henceforth the systematic, bureaucratically administered extermination of millions of subject peoples will forever be one of the capacities and temptations of governments.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, the churches' failure to prevent or mitigate its horrors has frequently been attributed to the moral weakness or cowardice of their leaders, and the consequent lack of response from their followers. I have tried to suggest that this is too simplistic. The obvious decline in the churches' political and social influence had begun much earlier to be reversible in the

circumstances of virulent social hostilities, racial antagonisms or military confrontations.

The events of the Second World War were to prove that even in purely humanitarian concerns, such as assistance to refugees or starving populations, the churches' ability to achieve results was constantly thwarted by the political priorities of governments. And on more vital matters, such as the persecution of the Jews, the churches' leaders were forced, however reluctantly, to see that a direct challenge to the central ideological goal of Nazism was a battle they could not win. The fact was all too apparent that any call for a radically different obedience would not be heeded. It was galling to find that even in expressly Christian countries, the churches' calls for brotherly love were disregarded or insolently

disdained. Their ideals were dismissed, their counsels spumed, and their God rejected. Much against their will, the leaders were obliged to face the fact they no longer possessed either the temporal or the spiritual power to sustain their traditionally conservative roles in European society. The supremacy of the Christian religious heritage was everywhere challenged. Its credibility was almost irreparably damaged. In short, the churches and their leaders were increasingly relegated to the margin of events, institutionally attenuated and ideologically assaulted. As the violent and tragic developments of the Holocaust escalated, they were compelled to be horrified but ineffectual and powerless bystanders.

Only the military defeat of Germany by the Allied powers brought to an end the mass annihilation of the Jews and all the other victims of Nazi aggression, and enabled the churches to survive for another day. But we may well ask whether the lessons of these terrifying and fateful events have yet been learnt, or appropriate mechanisms found to forestall their repetition. In any such attempts, there will need to be a vision of a global community capable of overcoming the societal tendencies towards racism and nationalism. This is a task in which Jews and Christians alike can surely share.

Notes

1. See for example, James Bentley, *Martin Niemoeller*. Oxford: 1984, and Klaus Scholder, *Die Kirchen und das dritte Reich*, vol. 2, Berlin: 1985.

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2. Rolf Hochhuth, *The Representative*. Translated by R.D. Macdonald, London: 1963. John F. Morley, *Vatican Diplomacy and the Jews during the Holocaust 1939-1943*. New York: 1980.

3. *Actes et documents du Saint Siège relatifs & la seconde guerre mondiale*. Edited by P. Blet, RA. Graham, A. Martini, B. Schneider, 11 vols., Vatican City: 1965-1981.

4. Jerusalem, 1986.

5. Peter Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII. Pope of the Council*.

London: 1984.

6. Roland N. Stromberg, *Redemption by War. The Intellectuals and 1914*. Lawrence, Kansas: 1982.

7. W.E. Orchard, *The Outlook for Religion*. London: 1917, p. 80, quoted in Stuart Mews, "The Sword of the Spirit," in *The Church and War, Studies in Church History*, vol. 20, Oxford: 1983, pp. 411-412.

8. Numerous examples can be found in the representations made by these bishops to Nazi officials, published in *Akten deutscher Bischoefe*, vol.5, 1940-1942, edited by L. Volk, *Veroeffentlichungen der Kommission fur Zeitgeschichte, Reihe A, Quellen, Band 34*, Mainz: 1983.

9. Cardinal Hinsley of Westminster, May, 1941; see also George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, *Christianity and World Order*. London: 1940; also Ronald C.D. Jasper, *George Bell, Bishop of Chichester*, London: 1967, pp. 247-250; Willem A. Visser't Hooft, *Memoirs*, London: 1973, pp. 153-154.

10. Letter of Dietrich Bonhoeffer to Reinhold Niebuhr, June, 1939, quoted in Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eine Biographie*, Munich: 1967, p. 736. But we should note Bonhoeffer's response in 1941 to the question: "What do you pray for in the present situation? I pray for the defeat of my country, for I believe this is the only way in which it can pay for the suffering which it has caused in the world," quoted in Visser't Hooft, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

11. As the members of the 1934 Life and Work Conference were reminded: "We stand in the midst of a great and critical debate between the Christian faith and the secular tendencies of our time. In this struggle, the very existence of the Christian church is at stake,": minutes of the meeting of the Christian Universal Council for Life and Work, 1934, quoted in ed. Stephen Neill and Ruth Rouse, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*. London: 1967, p. 584.

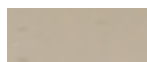
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12. See note 8 above.

13. *Actes et documents du Saint Siige*, vol. 2, *Lettres de Pie XII aux Eveques aUemands 1939-1944*, *passim*.

14. *Actes et documents*, vol. 8, no. 261, p. 416.

15. Ibid., no. 298, p. 453.
16. Ibid., no. 326, p. 479.
17. Ibid., no. 426, p. 598.
18. Actes et documents, vol. 3, no. 406, p. 625.
19. Johan M. Snoek, *The Grey Book*. Assen, The Netherlands: 1969.
20. Visser't Hooft, p. 166.
21. Jasper, pp. 156-157.
22. Snoek, p. 261.
23. Quoted in W. Bussmann, "Der Papst und die Diktatur" in *Monat*, 196, May, 1963, p. 18. This passage was not included in the extract published in *Actes et documents*, vol. 7, no. 225, pp. 396-400.
24. O.D. Kulka, "Popular Christian Attitudes in the Third Reich to National-socialist Policies Towards the Jews" in: *Judaism and Christianity under the Impact of National-socialism*, op. tit., p. 242.
25. Richard Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History: Mass Death and the American Future*. New York: 1975, p. 87ff.; see also his sequel. *The Age of Triage. Fear and Hope in an Overcrowded World*. Boston: 1983.
26. Ernst Nolte, "Between Myth and Revisionism? The Third Reich in the Perspective of the 1980's" in *Aspects of the Third Reich*. Edited by H.W. Koch, London: 1985, pp. 35-36.
27. Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History*, p. 2.



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GERMAN POPULAR OPINION DURING THE "FINAL SOLUTION": INFORMATION, COMPREHENSION, REACTIONS

Ian Kershaw

"One is left with the troublesome thought that there may not have been much resistance at all to involvement in genocide, that it is by no means foreign to man-in-society, and that many features of contemporary 'civilized' society encourage the easy resort to genocidal holocausts." This was Leo Kuper's concluding sentence to his chapter on the German genocide against Jews, placed in a comparative perspective in his book, *Genocide. Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*. I would like to bear this comment in mind in the following reflections on German popular opinion during the Third Reich, and its responses to the Final Solution. It seems to me that Kuper's remark directly poses the open question, going beyond historical research and beyond German-Jewish relations, of whether the perceptible German patterns of opinion and behavior toward the Jews are consonant with what could conceivably take place in other advanced societies, and involving minority groups other than Jews, where, for whatever reasons, a paranoid ideological thrust levelled at a recognizable, and largely unpopular, ethnic minority could be turned into a central focus of government policy.

Not long ago it would have seemed futile to pose any questions about the nature of popular opinion in Nazi Germany, widely regarded as a monolithic, totalitarian, "mass society", manipulated and repressed into uniformity by a powerful combination of propaganda and coercion. The "mass society" image had links with two radically opposed sets of generalized impressions of the position of the German people in the Third Reich which thrived in and immediately after the war. On the one hand,

there was the distorted image prevalent in Allied wartime propa

ganHa, and continuing to some extent even in the postwar period, of a population won over almost in its entirety by Nazi ideas, and, therefore, of a more or less direct equation of German and Nazi. The apologetic counter-picture placed the emphasis not on propaganda but on repression: this was the self-image of the Germans as the helpless victims of totalitarian terror incapable of voicing their dissent from Nazi policies.

Recent research on German society under Nazism has had no difficulty in demonstrating the palpable absurdity of both types of generalization. It has become increasingly clear that attitudes and behavior of "ordinary" Germans in the Third Reich, on a whole range of issues, were far from uniform, and that a plurality of political, social,

moral-ethical, intellectual, and religious influences continued to exist, posing at least partial blockages to Nazi ideological penetra

tion. The very wide variety and extent of political non-conformity and dissent has been amply demonstrated, particularly in issues affecting the spheres of interest of the Christian churches and daily economic concerns, especially labor relations. In such cases, collective protest and forms of civil disobedience were far from unknown. In the most celebrated instance, the so-called "euthanasia action" — a genuine issue of humanitarian concern — a halt (at least in part) was called in August, 1941, to the liquidation of hereditary and incurably sick persons in asylums within Germany itself, as a result of the

growing popular unease and objections articulated by leading churchmen. The fact that protest could and did take place in a range of issues, even including, as in the "euthanasia action", a directly

humanitarian issue, itself indicates the hollowness of the apologetics that the terroristic repression of a totalitarian system was sufficient in itself to deter any dissent.

Of course, the fear element as a genuine deterrent from opposing anti-Jewish policy has to be highly rated. But terror alone would not have sufficed to quell objections, had the so-called "Jewish Question" been an issue of importance, relevance, and above all self-interest to a large number of Germans. The apologetics that people did not know the fate of

the Jews can be fairly rapidly dispelled. But what I would like especially to suggest in this paper is that the general passivity which marked the most pervasive reaction — or perhaps one should say non-reaction — to the persecution and extermination of the Jews reflected above all the low level in the ranking of priorities which the fate of the Jews occupied in German consciousness. The lack of

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interest in or exclusion of concern for the fate of racial, ethnic, or religious minority groups marks, I would argue, at the societal level a significant prerequisite for the genocidal process, allowing the momentum created by the fanatical ideological hatred of a section of the population to gather pace, especially, of course, when supported by the power of the state itself.

The following comments concern themselves with popular opinion in Germany only at the time, between 1941 and 1943, when the genocidal process had reached its climax. It is hard to imagine that any expression of public concern could by this stage have presented a major obstacle to the determination of the Nazi leadership to exterminate the Jews, even if the extreme emphasis upon the secrecy of the Final Solution itself suggests the regime's uncertainty about its public reception. But the difficulties for the Nazis in arriving at that stage would have been incomparably greater had the position of the Jews been incorporated into the sphere of humanitarian self-interest and self-defense at a much earlier stage by the Christian churches, and, before 1933, also by the trade unions and the anti-Nazi political parties.

In what follows, I want to consider briefly, and by way of a few selected examples from the available evidence, three aspects of popular opinion and the Final Solution: whether the information in circulation was of a kind which allowed people to deduce the nature of Nazi anti-Jewish policy in eastern Europe; whether the genocidal character of the policy was comprehended; and what sort of reactions the Final Solution provoked among the German people.

Information

The notion that there was an effective wall of silence around information about the Final Solution inside Germany — the postwar apologia that no one had been aware of what was happening to the Jews ~ has been thoroughly disposed of, not least in Walter Laqueur's book. *The Terrible Secret*.* Of course, it goes without saying that it is impossible to establish how many people knew of the extermination of the Jews, and what degree of knowledge they possessed. There is no good reason to doubt that many people were genuinely shocked at the postwar revelations about the scale and nature of the Holocaust, and at the disclosed horrors of the extermination camps, and that they had

never possessed genuine and exact information about what was going on in the occupied territories. But what can be established beyond question is that widespread rumors were in circulation about the fate of the Jews, and that the information contained in the rumors was often explicit enough to provide an unmistakable indication that Jews were being killed in great numbers in the east. No less than Hitler himself referred to public rumors about the extermination of the Jews in one of his "Table Talk" monologues in October, 1941. And a year later, Martin Bormann felt it necessary to counter rumors about "very sharp measures" taken against Jews in the east which had been, as he said, a topic of discussion among the population. Such evidence is sufficient in itself to suggest that information pointing to genocidal policies was widely available in Germany and certainly not confined to a tiny minority of the population. How many chose to close their ears to such rumors cannot of course be elicited. Many doubtless became skilled at knowing how not to know.

What was the nature of the rumors referred to? Some fragmentary local SD reports which have survived confirm the existence of rumors of mass shootings of Jews as early as autumn, 1941, and indicate that ordinary Germans who were keen to find out could ascertain with some accuracy what was happening. According to a report from Minden in December, 1941, it was being said in the district that all the Jews were being deported to Russia, the transport being carried out in cattle cars once they had reached Warsaw, and that once in Russia the Jews were being put to work in factories, while the old and sick were being shot. Rumors in the Erfurt

area in April, 1942, where there was said to have been considerable interest in acquiring information, stated that the Sicherheitspolizei had been given the task of "exterminating Jewry" in the occupied territories, with thousands of Jews having to dig their own graves before being shot, and shootings reaching such an extent that members of the extermination squads were suffering nervous breakdowns.

An extraordinary record both of the nature of the rumors in circulation, and of the information open to those interested in acquiring it, is provided by the remarkable diary notes kept by Karl Duerckefaelden, son of a worker in the Celle district of Lower Saxony, who himself later became a skilled technician and engineer. He heard of the deportation of the Jews of Holland from a conversation with a Dutch lorry driver in July, 1942, and a few months later recorded the news of deportations of French Jews which he heard from the BBC. The wife

of a Jew in the area told him details in July, 1942, of the transportation of the last Jews from Peine, in Lower Saxony, to Theresienstadt, and of the conditions of other Jews from the area who had been deported earlier to Warsaw. In autumn, 1942, he heard again on the BBC of the gassing of Jews in motor vans. A soldier who had formerly worked in the same firm provided him in January, 1943, with information about the shooting and gassing of Jews from France and other countries who had been shipped off to Poland, and he learnt from the same source that only a fraction — a tenth, it was said — of the former Jewish population still survived in the town of Vilna. His brother-in-law, a construction engineer who had helped build a bridge across the Dnieper near Kiev, visiting him on June 6, 1942, on leave from the front, gave him a graphic description, recounted in the diary in detail, of the shooting of 118 Jews from the work force — Jews who had been ill-provisioned and had become too ill and weak to work. Asked if he had seen it himself, his informant told Duerckefaelden that he had stood twenty meters away. He spoke further of the mass burial of 50,000, on another occasion of 80,000 Jews, and on a further trip home from the front declared that there were no more Jews in the Ukraine; they "were now all dead."

Compared with information on shootings, rumors of gassing seem to have been relatively sparse. As in the case of Duerckefaelden, some information was available by listening to foreign broadcasts — an audience estimated to have been, despite the draconian penalties, in the millions rather than

the thousands. Here too, rumors were spread by soldiers on leave from the front. Surviving records, it can be confidently asserted, can hardly bear sufficient testimony to the extent of knowledge of the gassing operations. Even so, the silence, compared with the availability of information on the shootings, suggests that knowledge of the gassings, and in particular of the conveyor-belt extermination of the death camps, was relatively limited in extent. It might be expected that information on the camps would be more extensive in the eastern regions of the Reich than in the far west. According to a report from Upper Silesia in mid-1943, the slogan "Russland-Katyn, Deutschland-Auschwitz" had been chalked up on walls in parts of Upper Silesia. An explanatory note pointed out that "the concentration camp, Auschwitz, generally known in the east, is meant,"¹¹ though I have not encountered the name of Auschwitz or of any other extermination camp in documents emanating from western parts of Germany at that time.

Clearly, not everyone in Germany was hearing stories about the Jews in the east. But even the few examples from a far more extensive array of evidence which I have quoted here demonstrate categorically that hard information, not just vague rumor, was being brought back to the Reich and was available. Its extent was considerable, the information itself often impressive in its detail. Only those anxious to shut their ears to the rumors in circulation could have been utterly ignorant. And only the willfully ignorant could have imagined a drastically different fate for the Jews than was actually in store for them, even if the exact character and scale of the Final Solution was scarcely conceivable. The question of the comprehension of what was happening, partly answered on the above evidence, will detain us only for a short while longer.

Comprehension

What people made of the information coming their way, how far they comprehended the full significance of the information and grasped the magnitude of the developments unfolding in the east, are questions which by their nature can scarcely be answered in any precise way by the historian. As Walter Laqueur has said: "Those who had witnessed the murder of a thousand people or heard about it from an unimpeachable source could still persuade themselves that this had been an exceptional case. They might even forget it; after all a great many people were killed in the war, human life was cheap." However, it is difficult to imagine that the evidence we have already seen and the further examples I am about to provide left much doubt in the minds of the purveyors and the recipients of the information that the "radical solution" to the "Jewish Question", which Hitler himself, Goebbels, and others were openly hinting was under way, meant more than simple resettlement of the Jews. It is difficult to imagine, in fact, that it could have been taken to mean anything other than what it was: systematic physical annihilation — genocide.

To return to Karl Duerckefaelden for a moment: At the beginning of February, 1942, he had heard on the BBC a broadcast by Thomas Mann, who had mentioned that 400 young Dutch Jews had been killed in Germany through the testing of poisonous gas. Duerckefaelden put this information, as he did on other occasions, in his diary notes in the context of official statements by the Nazi leadership. On February 24, 1942,

Hitler delivered a major speech on the anniversary of the Nazi Party's foundation in which, as in several other speeches that year, he alluded to the destruction of the Jews with reference to his baleful "prophecy" of January 30, 1939, when he had forecast the destruction of European Jewry in the event of another war. The report of the speech on the following day in the Niedersaechsische Tageszeitung had one paragraph relating to the "prophecy" part of Hitler's speech, under the heading: "The Jew is being exterminated" (Der Jude wird ausgerottet). It was precisely this page of the newspaper which Duerckefaelden kept in his diary.

The extreme anti-Jewish sentiments expressed in some letters from soldiers at the front, which at times gave explicit details of mass shootings

of Jews — one surviving letter speaks of the shooting of 30,000 Jews in one town — also included direct references to Hitler's stance on the "Jewish Question", interpreting the war in classical Nazi fashion as a struggle brought about by the Jews and destined to end in their destruction. Comprehension about what was taking place is evident in the comments. One, stating that "the great task imposed on us in the struggle against Bolshevism resides in the annihilation of eternal Jewry," went on: "Only when you see what the Jew has brought about here in Russia, can you really understand why the Fuehrer began the struggle against Jewry. What sort of suffering would not have fallen upon our Fatherland if this beast of mankind had retained the upper hand?" Another, this time from a lance-corporal serving on the western front and evidently of an extreme Nazi mentality, expressly referred to Hitler's "prophecy" in a malevolent tirade in which, among other things, he thanked the Stuermer for remaining true to its principles in the "Jewish Question". He added: "Things have now finally reached the point which our Fuehrer at the outbreak of this struggle prophesied to world Jewry in his great speech.... Gradually, this race is being ever more reminded of these words.... All its efforts won't any longer be able to alter its fate." Other soldiers sent letters with similar sentiments direct to the Stuermer, which still had a circulation during the war estimated at over 300,000. 17

Surviving sources from the "home front", too, indicate that comprehension of what was happening to the Jews went beyond belief that the reported atrocities were isolated incidents. As the war started to turn sour for Germany, "situation reports" of the SD and other Nazi agencies recorded awareness that Jews were suffering a dire fate in

the occupied territories, and the fears that there would be retaliatory measures taken against Germany in the increasingly likely event of a lost war. An SD report from Franconia in December, 1942, pointed out unequivocally that "one of the strongest causes of unease among those attached to the church and in the rural population is at the present time formed by news from Russia in which shooting and extermination (Ausrottung) of the Jews is spoken about," adding the "widely held opinion in the rural population" that "if the Jews come again to Germany they will exact dreadful revenge upon us." Nazi propaganda exploiting the discovery of Polish officers' graves at Katyn was also countered, according to SD reports, by remarks that the Germans had no right to condemn Soviet atrocities when "on the German side Poles and Jews have

been done away with in much greater numbers." Clergy in Westphalia were reported as declaring that "the terrible and inhumane treatment meted out to the Jews by the SS demands nothing short of God's punishment for our people. If these minders do not bring bitter revenge upon us, then there is no longer any divine justice! The German people has taken such blood guilt upon itself that it cannot reckon with mercy and pardon."

These selected examples from the available evidence provide incontrovertible testimony to a plain awareness of the genocidal nature of Nazi policy toward the Jews, even though the actual details of the Final Solution were known only to a relatively small number of people. Those who closed their ears to the available information doubtless closed their minds to the unmistakable significance of that information. And many who heard and even understood had, it seems certain, been affected by years of dehumanizing Nazi propaganda and the increased brutalization of the wartime period, and grasped reality only in an abstract or remote sense, along the lines that terrible things happen in war. Such partial comprehension was still reconcilable with genuine expressions of shock at the postwar exposure of the reality of the Final Solution.

Lastly, we move on to a brief attempt to place the evidence I have so far surveyed in the context of overall reactions of the German people to the radicalization of anti-Jewish policy.

Reactions

The lack of uniformity in reaction, which had been perceptible in the pre-war era in popular responses, for example, to the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, or the Reichskristallnacht pogrom in 1938, is still plainly discernible in the period of the Final Solution. On the one hand, there are reflections in the available sources of a hardening of attitudes toward Jews in verbal expressions of hatred and of approval of Nazi policies (though one should bear in mind here the probability that outrightly Nazified sentiments are over-represented in SD reports and the like). Contrasting reactions — verbal expressions of sympathy and solidarity with Jews, existing amid the general climate of hostility — were also registered among a small minority of the population. The liberal intelligentsia, active churchgoers, and left-wing opponents of the regime, as before the war, were the groups most likely to be sympathetic to Jews.

Three examples referring to the deportations will illustrate the mixed

recorded reactions. The Gestapo in Bremen indicated in November,

1941, that "while the politically educated section of the population generally welcomed the imminent evacuation of the Jews,... churchgoing and commercial circles especially... show no sympathy for it and still believe today that they have to stick up for the Jews...." Both Catholics and Protestant supporters of the Confessing Church were said to have vehemently expressed their pity for the Jews. The deportation of Jews from Minden, a few weeks later, reportedly prompted the "great concern" of a large proportion of the population, and the voicing of two basic viewpoints: the likely retaliation abroad, especially in America, with reference to the way the "Crystal Night" pogrom had harmed rather than helped Germany, and secondly, a more humanitarian standpoint which, it was said, could not be widely registered, but could be heard in a large section of the better-off circles, especially among the older generation, that the deportation was far too "hard", that many Jews could not be expected to survive the journey to the East in the middle of winter, and that they were all Jews who had lived in the district since time immemorial. A third response was then noted, "among the people's comrades who understand the Jewish Question," which was that "the entire action is absolutely approved of," and the "German identity feeling" brought into prominence. Finally, the transport of the last Jews from Lemgo in July,

1942, also attracted considerable attention and provoked mixed respon

ses. The deportation, it was observed, "was generally negatively criticized" by a large proportion of the older population, among them Party members. It was objected that the hardship now to be imposed upon the Jews was unnecessary, since they were in any case dying out in Germany. Even people who had previously demonstrated their "National Socialist attitude" were said to have upheld the interests of the Jews, and people in churchgoing circles spoke of the coming "punishment of God". Although those with confirmed Nazi views sought to explain that the "action" was fully justified and absolutely necessary, this argument was countered by the opinion that the old Jews could not do any damage, would in fact "not harm a fly", and that there were many among them who had done much good.

As we have already suggested, the fairly widespread knowledge of the mass shootings of Jews was also compatible with a spectrum of responses ranging from overt approval to blank condemnation, and above all with an

apathetic shrug of the shoulders, the feeling of impotence, or the turning of the face from unpalatable truths.

Much suggests, in fact, that this last type of reaction — that is, non-reaction — was the most commonplace of all. If one term above all sums up the behavioral response of the German people to the persecution of the Jews, it is: passivity. The passivity was consonant with a number of differing internalized attitudes toward Jews. Most obviously, it corresponded to latent antisemitism, and arguably, to a mentality of "moral indifference". It also mirrored apathy, a deliberate turn away from personal concern, and a willingness to accept uncritically the state's right to take radical action against its "enemies". Above all, I would argue, passivity, as the most general "reaction", was a reflection of a prevailing lack of interest in the "Jewish Question", which ranked low in the order of priorities of most Germans during the war and played only a minor role in the overall formation of popular opinion. At the time that Jews were being murdered in their millions, the vast majority of Germans had plenty of other things on their mind.

Let me return now to the considerations I raised at the outset. I hope I have sufficiently demonstrated that information about the Final Solution was widely available, and that the significance of that information was often well comprehended. I have also attempted to illustrate the varied reactions to the "Jewish Question", and have argued that the momentous scale of the inhumanity carried out in the occupied territories was of relatively little concern to most Germans.

Given the access to information on genocide and comprehension of that information, should people have reacted differently? Would the populations of other countries have responded in more "honorable" fashion in similar circumstances? I suspect not. Certainly, the decline of basic humanitarian and moral values among a sizeable proportion of the population of Nazi Germany was an extremely steep one, even before their almost collapse during the war itself. But the liberal assumption that people will instinctively defend other human beings against mass slaughter seems at least questionable. To cite Leo Kuper again, it may be that "one must allow for the possibility that there are historical situations or periods in which genocide is taken for granted." In the case we have been considering it seems clear that, although the "Jewish Question" was not an issue of the greatest moment to the majority of the population, the

widespread latent antisemitism which itself conditioned the absence of any serious and organized opposition to antisemitism from non-Jewish institutions before the Nazi takeover of power, was quite sufficient to allow the anti-Jewish radical momentum of the Nazi regime from 1933 onwards to gather pace until, given the existential conditions of the war years, it was as good as unstoppable. Self-preservation is not a particularly admirable instinct, but especially in a climate of repression and terror it is usually stronger than the instinct to preserve others. It goes hand in hand with moral indifference and apathetic compliance. But there may be little in it which is peculiarly German, or specific only to the "Jewish Question". The most obvious conclusion would seem to me that the "failure", if that is the right word, of German popular opinion with regard to the Jews during the Third Reich was really the failure of the pluralist society of the pre-Nazi era to anchor the defense of Jewish interests in its organizational and institutional structures. For, it seems to me, only the incorporation of minority interest into the organized defense of majority interest against authoritarian inroads provides the structural framework where the processes which can culminate in genocide are blocked from the outset.

Notes

1. L. Kuper, *Genocide. Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*. Harmondsworth: 1981, p. 137.
2. Among an extensive body of literature, see e.g. *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*. Edited by M. Broszat et al., 6 vols., Munich & Vienna: 1977-83; *Die Reihen fast geschlossen. Beiträuge zur Geschichte des Alltags unterm Nationalsozialismus*. Edited by D. Peukert and J. Reulecke, Wuppertal: 1981; *Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft*. Edited by TW. Mason, Opladen: 1975; TW. Mason, "The Workers' Opposition in Nazi Germany", *History Workshop Journal*, 11 (1981); I. Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich. Bavaria, 1933-1945*. Oxford: 1983.
3. It should be noted, however: that unrest about the "euthanasia action" did not emanate alone or even chiefly from humanitarian concern, but arose in good measure from doubt — reaching into Nazi circles — about the lack of clear legal guidelines and sanctions for the taking of "useless life"; that the well-known public protest by Bishop von Galen was voiced only in August, 1941, after the "action" had been in operation for close on two years (though letters of protest by church leaders to the Nazi

authorities had begun almost a year earlier); that by August, 1941 the numbers murdered in the "action" had already exceeded the initial target figure for potential victims; that "euthanasia" murders did in fact continue in Germany itself (and even more extensively in the occupied territories), especially in concentration camps, after the supposed halt, terminating the action in selected asylums, had been called in August, 1941; and that, according to one piece of post-war testimony, the "halt" of August, 1941 amounted to a rumor put around by the Propaganda Ministry, suggesting that the Fuehrer had just discovered the truth of what was going on, and had immediately ordered its cessation. See, definitively now on the "euthanasia" issue, E. Klee, "Euthanasie" in NS-Staat. Die "vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens". Frankfurt am Main: 1983, and Dokumente zur "Euthanasie". Edited by E. Klee, Frankfurt am Main: 1985.

4. W. Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret. Suppression of the Truth about Hitler's "Final Solution"*. Harmondsworth: 1980, esp. pp. 17-40.

5. Adolf Hitler. *Monologe im Fuehrerhauptquartier 1941-1944*. Edited by W. Jochman, Hamburg: 1980, p. 44. The guests on this particular evening were Himmler and Heydrich.

6. Cit. in M. G. Steinert, *Hitlers Krieg und die Deutschen*. Duesseldorf: 1970, p. 252.

7. SD-Au\$enstelle Minden, 12 Dec. 1941, in O.D. Kulka, *The Final Solution and the German People*. Indiana University Press, forthcoming.

I am most grateful to Prof. Kulka for his kindness in allowing me to use this material in advance of its publication.

8. SD-Erfurt, Beobachter 11 Steiger and die SD-Hauptausenstelle Erfurt, April 30, 1942, in *ibid.*

9. The following details are taken from H. Obenaus, "Haben sie wirklich nichts gewusst? Ein Tagebuch zum Alltag von 1933-1945 gibt eine deutliche Antwort," *Journal fuer Geschichte*, 2 (1980), Heft 1, pp. 28-9; and H. and S. Obenaus, "Schreiben, wie es wirklich war!" *Aufzeichnungen Karl Duerckefaeldens aus den Jahren 1933-1945*. Hanover: 1985, pp. 107ff.

10. See Laqueur, p. 28.

11. O.D. Kulka, "'Daat Kahal' beReich Hashlishi ve'Habayah Hayehudit' — Mekorot uBaayot" ("Public Opinion" in National Socialist Germany and the "Jewish Question"), *Zion*, 40 (1975), p. 289.
12. Laqueur, p. 31.
13. Obenaus, "Haben sie wirklich nichts gewusst?", pp. 28-9; Obenaus, "Schreiben wie es wirklich war!", pp. 107-8.
14. *Das andere Gesicht des Krieges. Deutsche Feldpostbriefe 1939-1945*. Edited by O. Buchbender and R. Sterz, Munich: 1982, p. 173, no. 354, July 27, 1943.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 171, no. 351, July 18, 1942.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 172, no. 352, July 22, 1942.
17. F. Hahn, *Lieber Stuermer. Leserbriefe an das NS-Kampfblatt 1924 bis 1945*. Stuttgart: 1978, pp. 114, 149, 188-227.
18. Staatsarchiv Nuernberg, LRA Hilpoltstein 1792, report of .SD-Aussenstelle Schwabach, Dec. 23, 1942.
19. *Meldungen aus dem Reich. Auswahl aus den geheimen Lageberichten des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1939-1944*. Edited by H. Boberach, Neuwied: 1965, p. 383; and see L.D. Stokes, "The German People and the Destruction of the European Jews," *Central European History*, 6 (1973), p. 186.
20. Kulka, "Public Opinion", p. 290.
21. See O.D. Kulka, "Die Nuernberger Rassengesetze und die deutsche Bevoelkerung im Lichte geheimer MS-Lage- und Stimmungsberichte," *Vierteljahreshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte*, 33 (1984), pp. 582-624, esp. pp. 601ff.
22. See W.S. Allen, "Die deutsche Oeffentlichkeit und die 'Reichskristallnacht' - Konflikte zwischen Werthierarchie und Propaganda im Dritten Reich," in Peukert and Reulecke, pp. 397-411; and Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, pp. 257 ff.

23. Staatspolizeistelle Bremen an den Buergermeister Bremen, Nov. 11, 1941, in Kulka, forthcoming (see note 7).

24. SD-Aussenstelle Minden, Dec. 6, 1941, in *ibid.*

25. SD-Aussenstelle Detmold, July 30, 1942, in *ibid.*

26. Kuper, p. 85.

BUREAUCRACY AND MASS MURDER:

THE GERMAN ADMINISTRATOR'S COMPREHENSION OF THE FINAL SOLUTION 1

Christopher R. Browning

In his incomparable work, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Raul Hilberg argues that the Final Solution was an administrative process involving the participation of bureaucrats from every sphere of organized life in Germany. In what will surely be one of the most quoted passages of the revised and expanded edition of this work, Hilberg writes that a consensus for mass murder emerged among these bureaucrats that "was not so much a product of laws and commands as it was a matter of spirit, of shared comprehension, of consonance and synchronization." But how did this shared comprehension, this consonance and synchronization, come about? If the German bureaucrats' collective actions are relatively well-documented for the historian, the latter encounters much greater difficulty when he enters the realm of individual consciousness. Few bureaucratic documents reveal the intellectual and moral odyssey of their authors. If sweeping generalizations are presumptuous, nonetheless the path to and comprehension of mass murder for some individuals can be traced.

For this purpose I would like to take as case studies three German bureaucrats whose considerable involvement in handling so-called Jewish affairs within the German government preceded the Final Solution. Representing the Jewish experts of the Berlin ministries will be Franz Rademacher of the Foreign Office. For the military administration of the occupied territories, there is Harald Turner in Serbia. And managing the second largest ghetto of eastern Europe is Hans Biebow, of Lodz. In all of these cases, three questions will be posed: 1) How did these bureaucrats conceive of a solution to the Jewish

question before the policy of mass murder was inaugurated? 2) How did they first perceive or learn that the policy of mass murder was going to be

implemented? 3) How did they respond to this information?

Let us first examine the background of these three men and their respective Conceptions of a solution to the Jewish question prior to the fall of 1941. Franz Rademacher was a self-made man whose father, a locomotive engineer, had insisted that young Franz pursue an education rather than a career in the navy. Often earning his own way, Rademacher completed his legal studies at the Universities of Munich and Rostock, passed the required exams for state service, and served his bureaucratic apprenticeship in the Mecklenburg judicial system. Along with thousands of other ambitious civil servants, Rademacher joined the Nazi party in March, 1933. A judicious blend of political enthusiasm and career opportunism can be detected in Rademacher, evidenced first by his joining the SA in the summer of 1932, before Hitler's assumption of power, and then by his leaving that increasingly suspect organization in the spring of 1934 shortly before the Roehm purge. In 1937 Rademacher was called to the Foreign Office and posted to Montevideo. He returned to Germany in the spring of 1940 and was immediately assigned to head the Jewish desk of the newly-formed Abteilung Deutschland. He quickly arranged, through the courtesy of Albert Speer's office, to have a Jewish apartment evacuated for himself. In the true spirit of the self-made man, he ordered numerous books on the Jewish question in order to attain the expertise expected of his new position, and he cultivated the acquaintance of noted antisemites such as the foreign editor of Streicher's *Der Stuermer*, Paul Wurm.

Among our case studies, Rademacher most fully recorded his vision of a solution to the Jewish question before the era of systematic mass murder, for he was the enthusiastic author and advocate of the Madagascar Plan. In early June, 1940, Rademacher suggested to his superior, Undersecretary Martin Luther, that his desk, the Judenreferat, should no longer concentrate its work on the various mundane bureaucratic tasks of the past that involved above all foreign complications arising from anti-Jewish measures within Germany. As foreign repercussions no longer weighed so heavily, the Jewish desk should now concentrate its efforts on shaping Nazi Jewish policy in accordance with Germany's overall war aims. This was particularly urgent, he suggested, since the traditional, that is to say less Nazified, elements in the German Foreign Office would otherwise shape war aims securing the political, military, and economic conditions necessary

for Germany as a world power, while ignoring those measures necessary for the "liberation of the world from the chains of Jewry and free masonry." One possible policy in this latter regard, he suggested, was the resettlement of European Jewry on the island of Madagascar.

Foreign Minister Ribbentrop agreed that Rademacher's desk should undertake preparatory work on the solution to the Jewish question within the framework of the seemingly imminent peace treaties with France and Great Britain. Ribbentrop also carried the Madagascar idea to Hitler. Banned among antisemites in the past, it was an idea whose time had come. On June 18, 1940, Hitler told Mussolini of his intention to use Madagascar as a Jewish reservation, and by June 23, the attentive Reinhard Heydrich was insisting on SS jurisdiction in any "territorial" solution to the Jewish question being planned in the Foreign Office. Rademacher spent the summer of 1940 in frenetic activity on his pet project. The goal was clear. "The imminent victory gives Germany the possibility and, in my opinion, also the obligation to solve the Jewish question in Europe," he wrote. "The desirable solution is: All Jews out of Europe." When Great Britain was not beaten, the Madagascar Plan collapsed. The "desirable solution" had proven unrealizable. But the "obligation to solve the Jewish question" remained, an obligation that Rademacher would not escape.

Our second example, Harald Turner, was a man of unusual background. His great grandfather had been an English cavalryman in the Peninsula campaign and had fought at Waterloo. His English father married a German woman, settled in Germany and served in the Prussian army. Harald Turner likewise pursued a military career and was wounded on both the western and eastern fronts in the First World War. After the defeat he dabbled in Freikorps activities, held various government jobs, and completed legal studies at the University of Giessen. He joined the NSDAP in 1930 and the SS in 1932. As a civil servant with *Altkaempfer* credentials, he rose quickly after the *Machtergreifung*. Goering became his patron, making him first *Regierungspraesident* of Koblenz and then bringing him to Berlin where by 1936 he rose to the position of *Ministerialdirigent* of the Prussian Finance Ministry. He received commensurate SS promotions during this rapid rise. After serving in the occupation regimes in both Poland and France, he was made chief of the military administration in Serbia in April, 1941.

In Serbia Turner conceived of his task as a dual policy of Aufbau and Ausschaltung. By the first, Turner meant the "construction" of a collaborating Serbian administration and police force, a policy which

would find increasing disfavor among hardliners, including the officers of the SS-Einsatzgruppe under his command, who felt that no Serbs could become trusted tools of Nazi rule. Ausschaltung was less controversial, for by that Turner meant the "elimination" of all "unreliable elements" but "first of all Jews." 6 Initially Ausschaltung involved rapidly imposing registration, marking, exclusion from many occupations and social activities, expropriation of property, and forced labor. But such measures were not enough for Turner. He wanted to be rid of the Jewish population entirely, and thus in mid-August asked the German ambassador in Belgrade, Felix Benzler, to inquire whether the Jews could be deported down the Danube to Romania or to the General Government. This request was repeated two more times in early September, with Russia added as a possible reception area for the Serbian Jews. 8 In instigating this request Turner was not of course envisaging the later deportation program of the Final Solution, for the death camps did not yet exist. Turner was only trying what the Gauleiter of Baden, Saarpfalz, the Warthegau and other regions had already tried with mixed success, that is, to dump their own Jews on someone else. To add weight to the request, Turner and Benzler emphasized a connection between the Jewish presence in Serbia and the intensifying partisan uprising, though by mid-August virtually all the male Jews were already interned and could not possibly have been involved in the partisan activity they allegedly inspired. This request for deportation, sent through Franz Rademacher at the Foreign Office Jewish desk, was rejected for reasons that we shall soon examine in closer detail. Turner, like Rademacher, was on record concerning the urgent need to solve the Jewish question but had found his desired solution of Jewish expulsion thwarted.

The third subject of our study, Hans Biebow, was the son of a Bremen insurance director. He had hoped to succeed his father but the business was ruined by the inflation. The younger Biebow then successfully founded his own coffee import company, which he built up by 1939 to a large firm employing 250 people. He joined the NSDAP in 1937 and took up the position of head of the Office of Food Supply and Economics in Lodz in May 1940, at which point the ghetto of 160,000 Jews had just been sealed. As part of his duties in the city administration, Biebow

became "ghetto manager". Greiser, the Warthegau Gauleiter, had originally decided upon a ghetto in Lodz in December, 1939, as a way of extracting from the incarcerated Jews their alleged hoards of wealth in exchange for food, before they were expelled into the

General Government. 11 It was expected initially that the Jews would be deported in the spring of 1940; when this plan was not realized, deportations were rescheduled for August of that year. 12 Thus when Biebow arrived on the scene in Lodz, the Germans still viewed the ghetto as a short-term arrangement for extracting Jewish wealth, and no plans existed for either funding an on-going provisioning of the ghetto or exploiting it as a potential source of labor. Jewish resources, it was estimated, would last through July. 13 After that the Jews would be gone.

In July, however, news of Hitler's support for the Madagascar Plan reached the incorporated territories and the General Government. Since it was now intended to deport overseas all Jews from both these territories as soon as the war was over, the August deportations from Lodz to the General Government were cancelled. In late July Gauleiter Greiser and his Higher SS and Police Leader Wilhelm Koppe literally begged Hans Frank to take the Lodz Jews into the General Government as an "interim solution" because "the situation regarding the Jews in the Warthegau worsened day by day." The ghetto there "had actually only been erected on condition that the deportation of the Jews would begin by mid-year at the latest...." Frank was unmoved, and the Lodz Jews were thus "stuck" for an indefinite period. It was left to the local authorities, Biebow in particular, to cope with the unexpected situation.

Since the spring of 1940, the chairman of the Lodz Jewish council, Chaim Rumkowski, had been urging the German authorities to permit the employment of the ghettoized Jews in order to earn money for the purchase of food supplies. By July Rumkowski argued that the ability of the Jews to purchase food out of their own resources had been exhausted. Biebow's deputy, Alexander Palfinger, refused to believe this assertion, arguing that the Jews were merely trying to find other ways to provision the ghetto rather than give up their dearest possessions. Only "the most extreme plight" would pry loose their last reserves, he argued. Biebow was more cautious, reserving judgment. By September, however, Biebow was convinced Rumkowski had been right, as the death rate in the ghetto had soared in July and August and food supplies for the ghetto were simply

piling up outside because virtually no one within had the means any longer to make purchases. After Biebow asked Regierungspraesident Uebelhoer for funds to resume food deliveries, the ghetto manager concluded that every effort had to be made "to facilitate the self-maintenance of the Jews through finding

them work." This self-maintenance would require "initially high subsidies" both to stockpile provisions for winter and to procure contracts and erect factories in the ghetto. A meeting of local German officials on October 18, 1940, confirmed Biebow's viewpoint: "It was established at the outset that the ghetto in Lodz must continue to exist and everything must be done to make the ghetto selfsustaining." 17 The Jewish council was granted a 4 1/2% six month loan of 3 million Reichsmark, naturally out of confiscated Jewish funds, to finance this process.

Not everyone agreed with this approach. Alexander Palfinger bitterly criticized a policy based on "salesman-like negotiating ability" instead of national socialist principles. What he meant by the latter was quite clear. "A rapid dying out of the Jews is for us a matter of total indifference, if not to say desirable, as long as the concomitant effects leave the public interests of the German people untouched." But Palfinger did not prevail, and he departed for Warsaw to try his methods there.

Buergermeister Dr. Karl Marder, Biebow's boss, subsequently summarized the change in perspective that had taken place. As long as the ghetto was a "transition measure", not intended to last the year, the major task of the ghetto administration had been the "drawing off of the wealth of the ghetto inhabitants in order to supply their necessities of life." Now the character of the ghetto had been "fundamentally altered". Instead of a "holding or concentration camp", it was to

become an "essential element of the total economy... a one-of-its-kind

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large scale enterprise."

It was within this framework that over the next year Biebow fought to overcome the many obstacles that stood in the way of procuring for the ghetto equipment and orders on the one hand, and an increased food supply on the other. He was more successful in the former than the latter, a

matter over which he never ceased to complain. Some progress was made in the late spring of 1941, and in early June Greiser even held out the prospect of "Polish rations" for the ghettoized Jews, though this prospect evaporated with the invasion of Russia weeks later. As the economic importance of Lodz increased, slowly and perhaps even unconsciously the terms of Biebow's argument altered. If initially he had argued that without work the Jews could not be fed, by August, 1941, he was arguing that without food the Jews could not continue to work, and vital economic activity would be endangered. For Biebow the productivity of the ghetto had become an end in its own

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right, not the means to relieve the Reich of the cost of feeding Jews. The events of autumn, 1941, would push this logic to a fatal turning point; those Jews who could not work ought not to be fed.

What conclusions can be drawn from the pre-Final Solution careers of these three men that are relevant to the issue of "information and comprehension" of the Holocaust within the German bureaucracy? Firstly, prior to the war none of these men had a career marked by involvement in Jewish affairs. Rademacher was a judicial authority in Mecklenburg and then charge d'affaires in Montevideo; Turner was in the Prussian Finance Ministry; and Biebow was a Bremen businessman. Nevertheless, all were Nazi party members, and all were very ambitious men intent on building successful careers. By virtue of the positions they subsequently took up, each of these men became deeply involved in the Nazi treatment of the Jews and accepted unquestioningly the existence of a "Jewish problem" that Germany was obliged to solve. Each had a clear vision of his contribution to this solution. For Rademacher and Turner, the Jews quite simply had to disappear. From Turner's local vantage point in Serbia, this end meant dumping his Jews on someone else further east, in Romania, Poland or Russia. From Rademacher's pan-European perspective in Berlin, shoving Jews from one place in Europe to another was clearly not enough. "All Jews out of Europe," was his watchword, and this goal could be accomplished only by expulsion overseas to some place like Madagascar. Hans Biebow's position was different. He came to Lodz when the attempted expulsion of the Jews failed. Something had to be done with the incarcerated Jews until Berlin decided how to dispose of them. For Biebow the ghetto was a warehouse for storing the Jews in this interim period, and

his responsibility was to insure that this "warehousing" was done at no cost to the Reich. To insure that the Jews were no financial burden, he sought to make the ghetto economically self-sufficient. Work had to be found if the Jews were to be fed at their own expense.

Finally, none of these men conceived on his own of mass murder as a solution to the Jewish question. Biebow explicitly opposed Palfinger's suggestion for presiding over a "rapid dying out of the Jews" through starvation. Turner, as we shall see, renewed his request for deporting the surviving Serbian Jews even as the Wehrmacht firing squads were clamoring for more Jews to shoot in order to fill their obscene reprisal quotas. Certainly the expulsion of millions of Jews to Madagascar would have involved catastrophic mortality, but Rademacher was more feckless than cynical when he envisaged his Madagascar "super-ghetto"

as proof of Germany's "generosity" to the Jews that could be exploited propagandistically. None of these case studies provides evidence that the Final Solution was launched or triggered by middle-echelon bureaucratic initiatives from below rather than by signals from above.

How then were these three men initiated into the Final Solution, and why did they react the way they did? How, in short, did they so quickly become mass murderers? For both Rademacher and Turner, the path to the Final Solution led through Serbia. As we have seen, faced with a Serbian partisan uprising of unprecedented gravity, Turner and Foreign Office officials there urged that the Serbian Jews be deported to Romania, Poland, or Russia. As the Tighina agreement had just been reached, ending German attempts to expel Jews from the Ukraine into the Romanian sphere, any approach to that country was ruled out completely. But Rademacher did ask Eichmann about the possibility of sending Serbian Jews to Poland or Russia. Rademacher's hand-written notes record the answer of September 13, 1941: "According to Sturmbannfuehrer Eichmann... residence in Russia and GG impossible. Not even the Jews of Germany can be lodged there. Eichmann proposes shooting." Apparently not grasping the full import of this, Rademacher drafted a message for Belgrade suggesting that "large numbers of hostages" be shot if the Jews fomented unrest. Officials in Belgrade persisted in requesting deportation of the Jews, however, even carrying their complaint of insufficient support from Berlin directly to Ribbentrop. Rademacher's boss, Luther, and Reinhard Heydrich decided to send a delegation of one Foreign Office

representative, Rademacher himself, and one SS man, Eichmann's deputy, Friedrich Suhr, to Belgrade to check whether the problem of the Serbian Jews, "whose deportation had been urged by the embassy, could not be settled on the spot." Heydrich had one other reason for sending his own man, namely, to check the complaints of the SS men in Belgrade that Turner was too "soft" for his job^ particularly given his strong advocacy of collaboration with Serbs.

Meanwhile in Serbia the army had taken a keen interest in the Serbian Jews. Ordered to carry out reprisal executions on the ratio of 100-1 for German soldiers killed by partisans, the army found the incarcerated male Jews to be the most convenient pool from which to draw its victims. The reprisal massacres began in early October and resulted in such grotesque absurdities as the predominantly Austrian troops of the 718th division shooting refugee Austrian Jews in Sabac

in reprisal for Serbian partisan attacks on the German army. 25 Of all the German officials in Serbia, only Turner seemed to perceive the anomaly. "Actually, it is false, if one has to be precise about it, that for murdered Germans, on whose account the ratio 1:100 should really be borne by Serbs, 100 Jews are shot instead," he wrote. But Turner consoled himself that "the Jews we had in camps, after all, they too are Serb nationals, and besides they have to disappear." 26 If Turner, like virtually all German officials, fully shared the view that the Jews had to disappear and mass murder was one way of achieving that, it still had not dawned on him, however, that mass murder was now indeed the preferred way.

On October 18, 1941, the day after Turner wrote the letter quoted above, Rademacher and Suhr arrived in Belgrade. Turner immediately expressed to Rademacher his bitterest disappointment that his request to deport the Serbian Jews had not been honored; moreover, he continued to urge the deportation of those Jews who were still alive. The leader of the SS-Einsatzgruppe, Wilhelm Fuchs, urged on the other hand that the problem of the remaining male Jews could be quickly solved by continuing to supply them to meet the army's reprisal quotas. At a meeting on October 20, 1941, with Rademacher, Suhr and Fuchs, Turner hesitated and then relented. As Rademacher subsequently reported, the problem of the male Jews would be "settled" by the end of the week.

The Jewish women and children remained, however, as the German army deemed itself too chivalrous to shoot them as hostages. In this regard

Turner and Rademacher learned something entirely new at this October 20th conference attended by Suhr, who had the latest information from SS circles in Berlin. The SS opposition to deporting Jews to the east because there was no room, as voiced by Eichmann a month earlier, was apparently temporary rather than permanent. The Jewish women and children would first be interned in Serbia. "Then as soon as the technical possibility exists within the framework of the total solution of the Jewish question, the Jews will be deported... to a reception camp in the east," Rademacher reported.

At this point Turner grasped the new realities of Nazi Jewish policy, and his response was instantaneous. If expulsion was out of favor, and mass murder was in, Turner wanted not only to facilitate it but above all to receive full credit for it. On October 26, only six days after the meeting with Suhr, Turner issued new guidelines for the treatment of civilians. "As a matter of principle it must be said that the Jews and Gypsies in general represent an element of insecurity and

thus a danger to public order and safety.... That is why it is a matter of principle in each case to put all Jewish men and male Gypsies at the disposal of the troops as hostages." Turner's help was more than just rhetorical. Army statistics of December, 1941, credited police forces under Turner's jurisdiction with carrying out one third of all reprisal shootings to that date.

For Turner, however, that was not enough. Turner had aroused suspicions in Berlin not only by his initial hesitancy to implement a local solution to the Jewish question but more so by his belief in the desirability of relying on Serbian collaborators, an issue that had led to steadily worsening relations between Turner and the local SS Einsatzgruppe. Suhr had been sent by Heydrich not only to investigate the Jewish question in Serbia but also to report on the deteriorating relations between Turner and his SS men. Following Suhr's visit, Turner's position in Serbia was seriously undermined by the appointment in January, 1942, of August Meyszner as the Higher SS and Police Leader, for Meyszner took command of the SS units previously under Turner's control, and his rabid Serbophobia clashed totally with Turner's collaboration policy. Turner now wished to impress Berlin with his vigor and toughness on the Jewish question, especially to compensate for his alleged weakness on Serbs, and he repeatedly exaggerated his role in the murder of the Serbian Jews. In February, 1942, he went so far as falsely to claim that the army had actually refused to

shoot Jews, so that they had to be shot "exclusively" on his order by the Einsatzgruppe and police. When a gas van was sent from Berlin in March, 1942, to eliminate the Jewish women and children interned in the camp at Semlin, Turner wrote Himmler's adjutant, Karl Wolff, to claim credit once more: "Already some months ago I had all the available Jews shot and all Jewish women and children concentrated in a camp and at the same time, with the help of the SD, procured a 'delousing truck' that will finally clear the camp in some 14 days to 4 weeks...." This was not how Emanuel Schaefer, the Sipo-SD commander in Belgrade remembered it after the war, when he frankly testified that the gas van had been sent directly to him, and no other German agency in Serbia had been involved. But in Nazi Germany exaggerated claims about the zealous killing of Jews were not always enough. Turner was still perceived in Berlin as too weak because of his consistent attempt to work with Serbian collaborators, and he was forced from his job in the fall of 1942. 34

If, following the October 20th meeting in Belgrade, Rademacher still had any doubts about the fate of women and children unfit for labor being sent to a reception camp in the east, they were removed immediately upon his return to Berlin. There he found waiting a letter from his old friend of Der Stuermer, Paul Wurm, who had been visiting Berlin and had just missed Rademacher. "Dear Party Comrade Rademacher," Wurm wrote. "On my return trip from Berlin I met an old party comrade, who works in the east on the settlement of the Jewish question. In the near future many of the Jewish vermin will be exterminated through special measures." By the end of October, therefore, Rademacher knew all there was to know other than the precise nature of the "special measures" to be used to murder the Jews.

How did Rademacher react to this new understanding that Nazi Jewish policy now entailed mass murder? The answer is that he reacted with effective professional competence and ineffective personal evasion. In late November his boss, Luther, received an invitation to the Wannsee Conference along with a copy of Goering's authorization to Heydrich of July 31, 1941, to coordinate a total solution to the Jewish problem in Europe. Luther eagerly accepted Heydrich's offer for continuing SS Foreign Office cooperation in Jewish affairs, for only in this way could the Foreign Office preserve its shrinking influence against further SS encroachment, a matter of primary concern for Luther. No stranger to Luther's determination to protect Foreign Office jurisdiction, Rademacher provided him with a list of "desires and ideas" of the Foreign Office for the

conference, making clear its readiness to participate in a sweeping deportation program.

By a number of accounts, not all friendly to Rademacher, the Foreign Office Jewish expert also asked to be released from his position. Luther made this release conditional upon finding and training a successor. Rademacher thus applied to the Personnel Division for a new assistant. In justification of his request for additional manpower, Rademacher wrote: "The stronger the German victory looms, the greater and more urgent become the tasks of the Referat, because the Jewish question must be solved in the course of the war, for only so can it be solved without a world-wide outcry." Rademacher continued to work in the Judenreferat for another year, without the visible initiatives that had characterized his earlier work. But loss of enthusiasm meant no loss of efficiency. While still touting his beloved Madagascar Plan to any captive audience he could find, Rademacher insured that the work of the Jewish desk was done. When he was finally replaced in the

spring of 1943, Germany was well on its way to fulfilling what Rademacher considered its "obligation to solve the Jewish question."

For Hans Biebow in Lodz, initiation into the Final Solution also came in the fall of 1941. Biebow's efforts to stabilize the Lodz ghetto had come under renewed threat as early as June, 1941, when the prospect was raised of interning there all the other Jews in the Warthegau as well. Biebow warned of catastrophic consequences if this were done without both enlarging the ghetto and insuring adequate food supplies. Nonetheless in mid-July the Warthegau Gauleiter, Greiser, ordered Lodz to accept at least 2,900 Jews from the Leslau district. The German authorities in Lodz dragged their feet and delayed this transfer until late September. By then, however, they were faced with a far greater threat in the form of Himmler's intention to resettle 60,000 German and Protectorate Jews in Lodz. The numbers were quickly scaled down to 20,000 Jews and 5,000 Gypsies, but the Lodz officials were still flabbergasted at the prospect. Biebow assiduously assembled counter-arguments for his immediate superiors, Oberbuergermeister Ventzki and Regierungspraesident Uebelhoer. "Were the ghetto a pure decimation ghetto, then one could contemplate a greater concentration of Jews," Biebow noted. But it was a "work ghetto" that "is today a finely tuned and thereby extremely sensitive component of the defense economy." More Jews could not be taken in for

health, security economic, and nutritional reasons, as well as for lack of space. Uebelhoer forwarded these arguments to Himmler. Himmler conceded that the counter-arguments had been "excellently compiled" by Uebelhoer's experts but refused to accept them. Moreover, he noted that Ventzki, under whose name this admittedly "excellent" report had been forwarded and whom Himmler thus assumed to be its author, "did not appear to be an old national socialist." Uebelhoer was ordered as both Regierungspraesident and SS leader to devote his energies to carrying out the resettlement rather than obstructing

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Uebelhoer did not immediately give up his obstruction but instead found through contacts in the Interior Ministry that Eichmann had misrepresented the situation in Lodz to Himmler by claiming, among other things, that the economic manager of the ghetto, that is Biebow, had explicitly agreed to the resettlement. This alleged agreement by Biebow was not possible, Uebelhoer noted, for in fact Biebow was the real author of the Ventzki report that Himmler had found so "excellent". Infuriated by Uebelhoer's obstruction and his audacity in

suggesting that the Reichsfuehrer-SS had been fooled by what Uebelhoer characterized as Eichmann's "Gypsy-like horse trading manners," Himmler put the Regierungspraesident in his place.* 3 The deportation of the 20,000 Jews and 5,000 Gypsies to Lodz began on October 15, just three days, it might be noted, before Rademacher and Suhr arrived in Belgrade.

Up to this point, the German authorities in Lodz were not aware of the impending Final Solution. It cannot be determined if Eichmann actually talked to Biebow in late September, as Himmler claimed, and if so, what Biebow learned. But in October preparations began for the death camp at Chelmno. On December 8, 1941, the mass murder of the Jewish populations in the immediate area of Chelmno commenced, and on December 16, the German authorities in Lodz met with Rumkowski to inform him that deportations from the Lodz ghetto itself were imminent. Then from January 16 to May 15, 1942, more than 56,000 Jews were deported from Lodz to the death camp at Chelmno. Exactly when in this sequence of events Biebow learned the real meaning behind these deportations cannot be established. But his reaction was logical and predictable. Having argued vehemently for months that the existing

population in the Lodz ghetto was not adequately fed and that an influx of yet more Jews would destroy the economic viability of the ghetto and its capacity to fulfill important defense contracts, Biebow could hardly stand in the way of eliminating that portion of the ghetto population that was not productive.

Biebow in fact threw himself into the new situation with the same zeal and efficiency that had characterized his earlier activity. In the spring of 1942, the former coffee importer was in frequent contact with the commandants at Chelmno, Lange and Boothman, to insure the recovery of the valuables and clothing of the murdered Jews for his economic operations in Lodz. This salvage operation involved even visits to the death camp itself. When the deportations from Lodz temporarily came to a halt in May, 1942, and the Germans switched to liquidating the other ghettos of the Warthegau, some 25 men of Biebow's ghetto administration joined SS and police to form the notorious ghetto-clearing squads. Biebow, moreover, was also interested in the "human material" that could be salvaged from the ghetto liquidations. In the ghetto-clearing operations, witnesses saw him personally involved in the selection of able-bodied workers to be sent to

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his workshops in Lodz. In the summer of 1944, as a fitting conclu

sion to his career as ghetto manager of Lodz, Biebow persuaded the surviving Jews to board the trains for Auschwitz.

It can be seen, therefore, that if none of these three men initiated mass murder from below, neither did they receive explicit orders from above. Unlike an Eichmann or a Hoess, none was formally called before his superior and officially initiated into the new policy of mass murder. Instead new signals and directions were given at the center, and with a ripple effect, these new signals set in motion waves that radiated outward. Because of their involvement in the Jewish question, with the situations they found themselves in and the contacts they made, these three bureaucrats could not help but feel the ripples and be affected by the changing atmosphere and course of events. These were not stupid or politically inept people; they could read the signals, perceive what was expected of them, and adjust their behavior accordingly. If Turner and Biebow were more zealous in this adjustment than Rademacher, the Foreign Office Jewish expert nevertheless did all that was needed to

facilitate the participation of his bureaucratic agency in the mass murder.

How typical were these three men? It should be noted that in regard to the issue of initiative from below, they were "relative" moderates. There was no shortage of those advocating and even practicing murder before the signals came from Berlin. We have already noted the reprisal shootings of Jews carried out by the army in Serbia and the shrill advice of Palfinger in Lodz to preside over a "dying out" of the Jews through systematic starvation. One could also note other instances. The infamous Hoepfner memorandum of July, 1941, reporting conversations among 55-men in the Warthegau, suggested to Eichmann that it would be more "humane" to kill superfluous Jews through some "quickacting" means rather than to let them starve. And when the chief health official of the General Government, Dr. Jost Walbaum, addressed 100 doctors at a meeting in Bad Krynica in mid-October, 1941, on the threat of epidemics, he approved, with the following statement, the newly-decreed death sentence for Jews caught leaving the ghettos: "One must be clear about it, and I can speak openly in this circle; there are only two ways, we condemn the Jews in the ghettos to death by starvation or we shoot them." Such sentiments did not shock his audience of doctors, for the protocol notes that his frankness was greeted with "applause, clapping".

For the most part, however, the Final Solution would be implemented not by such zealots, the "anticipators", but rather by the "normal"

bureaucrats, the "accommodators" who waited for the signal from above. It was their receptivity to such signals, and the speed with which

they aligned themselves to the new policy, that allowed the Final

Solution to emerge with so little internal friction and so little formal coordination. If the irresistibility of the Gleichschaltung of

1933 was due not only to the efforts of political activists but above all to the pervasive self-coordination and accommodation of so many Germans to the new regime, the destructive dynamic of the Final Solution was due to a similar phenomenon regarding the bureaucratic perpetrators.

In retrospect we can see that the inauguration of the Final Solution in 1941 was a monumental event in history, when old notions of human nature and progress were shattered and mankind passed forever into the post-

Auschwitz era. But if this appreciation has come to us only

gradually over the past four decades, we should not be surprised that such an appreciation was lost upon many of the murderers themselves. Nor should we be surprised at how quickly and smoothly the three perpetrators whom we have been studying took those last fatal steps into this new era. The personal adjustment that each had to make flowed so naturally out of the logic of his past conception of the Jewish question, and dovetailed so completely with his own career self-interest, that there was no sudden crisis of conscience, no traumatic agonizing, no consciousness of crossing an abyss, virtually no foot-dragging, and only occasional attempts to escape personal involvement, provided of course that it could be done without damage to career.

In short, for Nazi bureaucrats already deeply involved in and committed to "solving the Jewish question", the final step to mass murder was incremental, not a quantum leap. They had already committed themselves to a political movement, to a career, and to a task. They lived in an environment already permeated by mass murder. This included not only programs with which they were not directly involved, like the liquidation of the Polish intelligentsia, the gassing of the mentally ill and handicapped in Germany, and then on a more monumental scale the war of destruction in Russia. It also included wholesale killing and dying before their very eyes, the starvation in the ghetto of Lodz and the punitive expeditions and reprisal shooting in Serbia. By the very nature of their past activities, these men had articulated positions and developed career interests that inseparably and inexorably led to a similar murderous solution to the Jewish question. They

did not initiate the mass murder but they were certainly too implicated and entangled to stand in the way, much less extricate themselves.

After the war, perpetrators like these three men would speak of their involvement in the mass murder as something that had happened to them; that was their fate, rather than something they had inflicted on others. It was as if they had been without volition, had never made decisions, had never been responsible for their actions. They spoke as if they too had been victims. But of course in reality they had choices and they made decisions, but these choices and decisions were spread out over time and flowed so naturally one after another that they were unconscious of any particular turning-point. Elsewhere I have argued that even for the top

echelons of the Nazi leadership, the Final Solution resulted not from a single decision but rather from a series of decisions. If this is the case for Hitler, Himmler, and Heydrich, we should not be surprised that the middle-echelon bureaucrats' path to complicity in mass murder was not marked by a single decisive and dramatic turning point. Instead the path was a gradual, almost imperceptible, descent past the point of no return.

Notes

1. Research for this paper was made possible by support from the DAAD, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
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3. Christopher R. Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*. New York: 1978, pp. 29-30.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-43.
5. Berlin Document Center (hereafter cited as BDC): SS and RuSHA files.
6. Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Freiburg (hereafter cited as BA-MA): RW 40/183, Turner report of May 26, 1941, and RW 41/115, *Abschlussbericht der Militaerverwaltung Serbien*, May 10, 1945, p. 79.
7. Landgericht Nuernberg-Fuerth 2 Ks 3/53 (Rademacher trial), *Hauptakten II*, 266 (Benzler affidavit, 1949), and XI, 1911 (Benzler testimony, 1968). *Politisches Archiv des Auswaertigen Amtes* (hereafter cited as PA), Inland II A/B 65/4, Benzler to Foreign Office, August 14, 1941.
8. *Akten zur deutschen Aussenpolitik* (hereafter cited as ADAP), D, XIII, Part 1, 378; PA, Inland Ilg 194, Benzler to Foreign Office, September 12, 1941.
9. *Dokumenty i Materialy Do Dziejow Okupacji Niemieckiej W Polsce*, vol. III, *Ghetto Lodzkie*. Warsaw: 1946, (hereafter cited as DiM), 252 (Hans Biebow Lebenslauf).

10. Lucjan Dobroszycki, "Introduction", *The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto*. New Haven: xliii; DiM, 256 (Vollmacht of 4.5.40).
11. BDC: Greiser Pers. Akten, Besuchs-Vermerk of the staff of the Fuehrer's Deputy, January 11, 1940; *Faschismus ~ Ghetto ~ Massenmord*. Berlin: 1960, pp. 78-81 (Rundschreiben of Uebelhoer, December 10, 1939).
12. Hans Frank, *Das Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939-1945*. Edited by Werner Praeg and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, Stuttgart: 1975, p. 158 (entry of April 5, 1940); DiM, 168-9 (Regierungspraesident to officials of Bezirk Kalisch and Lodz, May 8, 1940).
13. Yad Vashem Archives (hereafter cited as YVA), JM 800/387-9, Vermerk by Dr. Nebel of conference of May 27, 1940.
14. Frank, *Diensttagebuch*. pp. 261-2 (entry of July 31, 1940).
15. YVA, JM 798, Activity report of July, 1940: JM 799, Palfinger Aktennotiz, July 16, 1940.
16. YVA, JM 798, Activity report of September, 1940.
17. DiM, 102-4 (conference of October 18, 1940).
18. YVA, JM 798, Activity report of October, 1940 and Auditor's report of February, 1941).
19. YVA, 0-53/78/76-82. Palfinger "critical report" of November 11, 1940.
20. DiM, pp. 177-9 (Marder to Uebelhoer, July 4, 1941).
21. YVA, JM 798, Activity report of August, 1941.
22. ADAP, D, X, p. 94 (NG-2586-B: Rademacher memo of July 3, 1940).
23. For Rademacher's trip to Belgrade, see Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*, pp. 56-67.
24. For Turner's collaboration policy, see: Christopher R. Browning, "Harald Turner und die Militaerverwaltung in Serbien, 1941-42,"

Venvaltung und "Menschenfuehrung" im Stoat Hitlers. Studien zum politisch-administrativen System. Edited by Dieter Rebenisch and Karl Tepe, Goettingen: 1986.

25. Christopher R. Browning, "Wehrmacht Reprisal Policy and the Mass Murder of Jews in Serbia," Militaergeschichtliche Mitteilungen. 1983/1, pp. 31-47.

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26. NO-5810: Turner to Hildebrandt, October 17, 1941.

27. ADAP, D, XIII, Part 2, 570-2 (Rademacher report of October 25, 1941).

28. Ibid.

29. NOKW-802: Turner to Feld - und Kreiskommandanturen, October 26, 1941.

30. BA-MA: RW 40/23, Aktennotiz of December 12, 1941, (NOKW-474).

31. Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter cited as BA), NS 19/1730, Turner Gesamtbericht to Himmler, February 15, 1942. Earlier exaggerated claims of his role in the murder of the male Jews are found in his reports of December 3, and December 15, 1941, also in NS 19/1730).

32. BDC, Turner to Wolff, April 4, 1942.

33. Landgericht Koeln, 24 Ks 1/52 and 2/53 (Schaefer trial), II, pp. 199-204, 331-34, 342-44 (Schaefer testimony). Landgericht Hannover, 2 Ks 2/65 (Pradel trial), VII, 55-7; XII pp. 238-9 (Schaefer testimony).

34. On Turner's fall, Browning, "Harald Turner un die Militaerverwaltung in Serbien 1941-2."

35. PA, Inland II A/B 59/3, Wurm to Rademacher, October 23, 1941.

36. Browning, Final Solution, pp. 76-7.

37. Ibid, pp. 81-3.

38. DiM, p. 184 (excerpt of monthly activity report of June 3, 1941).
39. DiM, pp. 188-93 (Biebow to Landrat Wolun, September 2, 1941, Greiser to Uebelhoer, September 11, 1941; Ventzki to Uebelhoer, September 9, 1941; Polizeidirektor Leslau to Reichsbahndirektion Posen, September 20, 1941).
40. T 175/54/2568695 (Himmler to Greiser, September 18, 1941).
41. T 175/54/2568671-94 (Ventzki to Uebelhoer, September 24, 1941 and 256886-70 (Uebelhoer to Himmler, October 4, 1941).
42. T 175/54/2568662-3 (Himmler to Uebelhoer, October 4, 1941).
43. T 175/54/2568543-5 (Uebelhoer to Himmler, October 9, 1941 and 256851 (Himmler to Uebelhoer, October 9, 1941).
44. For dating, see Christopher R. Browning, *Fateful Months: Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution*. New York: 1985, p. 30.
45. *The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto*, pp. 96-7 (entry of December 20, 1941).
46. Zentralstelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen Ludwigsburg, 203 AR-Z 69/59 (Chelmno trial), Bd. 1, 114-121 (Meyer testimony), and Landgericht Hanover 2 Ks 1/63 (Bradfish-Fuchs Judgment), 20.

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47. DiM, pp. 221-9.
48. YVA, 0-53/50/245-6 (testimony of Jozef Azod Kozminski) and 250-1 (testimony of Abraham Mandel).
49. DiM, pp. 267-8.
50. Raul Hilberg, *Documents of Destruction*. Chicago: 1971, pp. 87-88. (Hoepfner to Eichmann, July 16, 1941).
- 51- YVA, 0-53/145/77 (Arbeitstagung der Abteilung Gesundheitswesen, Bad Krynica, October 13-16, 1941).

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KNOWLEDGE AND COMPREHENSION AMONG THE GERMAN ARMY ON THE FINAL SOLUTION

Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm

In the winter of 1982-83 in a prize competition inaugurated by our Bundespraesident on "Every-day Life in the Third Reich - The War Years in Germany", a pupil of a Berlin gymnasium interviewed one of his teachers who had also been a grammar school student in Berlin up to 1941-42. Disabled since his childhood, my distinguished colleague, now teaching English, Russian and history, had not been drafted for Reichsarbeitsdienst and Wehmuicht. As a descendant of a renowned aristocratic Bohemian family and interested in Slavonic languages, Anselm Bubna-Littic had been brought up in artistic circles and in close contact with the large Russian colony which had existed in Berlin since the nineteenth century and had expanded further after the October Revolution of 1917. Matriculated at Humboldt University not before 1943, Bubna-Littic had in 1942 decided to join the Schering pharmaceutical trust for business training. Later he had been recruited for the so-called Ausgleichsdienst (compensation service), which he had to serve in several foreign embassies, compensating for the time his comrades lost with RAD and the Wehmuicht. Budna-Littic had never been at the front or anywhere in occupied areas. He visited Lidice for the first time long after the war, accompanying pupils, though his family had once come from there, as his name indicates.

This Schering trainee, later a student of Arabic, Spanish, journalism, political sciences, and of several Slavonic languages, who had remained in Berlin all the time — what did he hear from the outside world? What could people have known in Germany? According to the interview of January, 1983, it must have been a great deal; perhaps Bubna-Littic was better informed at home than most of his friends on

duty in France, Russia and in Africa. Sometimes he could even read foreign newspapers, for example, Pravda. He communicated with foreign students, workers, forced laborers, prisoners of war and diplomats; he could hear, not always legally, many foreign radio networks, and he daily saw many disillusioning things in the midst of the Reichshauptstadt. In a Dovifat seminar Bubna-Littic was already in May, 1943, confronted with his first Soviet Stalingrad film in which a sequence became unforgettable for him. He never saw it again later. It showed the well-known endless columns of German prisoners of war and a Soviet private on a snow bank, fiddling the German folk-song: Oh, du lieber Augustin, alles ist hin! ("O my dear Augustin, everything is lost!"). Dovifat also showed his young students an English propaganda film on El-Alamein so that they should see with their own eyes how cleverly "the enemy" worked. But Bubna-Littic had been well informed not only after his matriculation. A characteristic episode from his time as Schering trainee: One day in 1942 a soldier on leave appeared at his former place of work and proudly showed everybody who wanted to see it, and even those who disliked it, a series of 36 Leica photos, which documented in detail the capture of three female wireless operators in uniforms of the Red Army far behind the front, the brutal rape of the poor girls by a number of German soldiers and their final execution by hanging. Kiekt mal, so scheen ham wa die hier ausgezogen, wah? ("Look, how nicely we have undressed that one, didn't we?"). Outside the window, at the same time, new forced labor railway transports were passing by, and the soldier on leave continued as far as possible to impress his former colleagues with his "decidedly pornographic" pictures and, last but not least, with two or three photos of the "terrible wrenching" of the girls in their agony, with different effects: "Some were shocked deeply, and made no secret of it; others were more or less amused."

For Schering-trainee Bubna-Littic there was no doubt that everybody in Germany knew that concentration camps existed, and that the Jews were eliminated (beseitigt). As a boy of ten in 1933 he had already known that the Nazis had installed several concentration camps, and that one of these camps was located in Oranienburg near Berlin, and he knew what his parents meant, interpreting in certain situations the abbreviation "NSBO" (for: NS-Betriebsorganisation /NS-Shop Committee): Nun siehste bald Oranienburg. ("Now you will soon see Oranienburg"). Bubna-Littic, in 1983:

It's not true, when people now say that all this was unknown. Here at the

Siemens plants, for instance, in the alloy department, Jews jumped into the melting pots to avoid deportation. I remember a terrible joke: Moische, working as factotum for an SS-officer, is one day told by this officer: 'Well, Moische, tomorrow you will have to pay the price; tomorrow I'll have to drop you.' Moische rushes to the officer's dressing-table and starts to drink a whole bottle of perfume. The officer asks: 'Why that? Doesn't it burn almost unbearably? Why do you do that?' And the Jew answers: 'If soap, Herr Sturmfuehrer, then at least toilet soap!' This dreadful joke I heard as a pupil waiting for my final examination, when 'those things' were already being carried out, and when people reported that they had found nails in their soap, because the Jews were now worked up to soap. And that Jews were transformed into dunging-substances was also known. That the Jews were done away with, annihilated, was known to almost everybody - though not in all its details. It is a lie, if people say that nobody knew it. Here in Berlin we could see in our streets the columns of the KZ prisoners. That there had been a very great number of mass executions in Russia was also known. The Nazis themselves had announced that they had wiped out Lidice... There can't have been a great number of half-way vigilant adults, as I believe, who didn't know that 'terrible things' were going on.

Partially revoking his statement, Studiendirektor Bubna-Littic added: There might have been, of course, a lot of people who very quickly suppressed the knowledge they had gained, long before the catastrophe of 1945, claiming that the stories being told were exaggerations — that could not be so; that the prisoners in the camps were only "educated", not mistreated or murdered.

There are not very many people of Bubna's age and of similar profession in Germany who have by now spoken so frankly of their experiences, their possibilities of information and their own views in those days. But, conceding this, can we say that Bubna cannot have been right, or that his case may not be representative of the "silent majority"?

Perhaps we should hear a second witness. Joe J. Heydecker, born in Nuremberg in 1916, seven years older than Bubna-Littic, was drafted in Vienna in 1938. After the war he served as a correspondent in Nurem

berg during the War Crimes Trials and now lives in Brazil. He was a member of the German Army. From December, 1940, to August, 1944, he belonged at first to a propaganda company, and later to a propaganda

reserve and training battalion. In his photo volume of the Warsaw ghetto not published in Germany before 1983, Heydecker writes:

According to my experiences, it is totally wrong to make a myth out of the German war discipline and perfection. In the East, expecting victory in the near future, nobody cared about camouflaging or keeping secret the extermination of the Jews. At the common graves, where village by village the Jewish inhabitants were massacred without any distinction of age or sex, there were always to be found soldiers, railway officials, men of the 'Organisation Todt', civilians, sometimes in bathing pants, often with their cameras, who watched the awful spectacle. The killing units had no objections. There were no barring cordons, nobody was driven away. Probably everybody took it for granted that every German, in whatever uniform or dress, as a follower of Hitler, a priori supported these activities. This was an error, of course. The procedures of mass murder, the fact of the mass graves, in which a whole people disappeared, were made known by the eyewitnesses to the whole army. I maintain that only blind or deaf soldiers in the East did not take notice of 'these things'. In the laconic manner of common soldiers the facts were discussed, and I would like to see the former private of the German Army who did not know the original meaning of then usual terms like umsiedeln, liquidieren, sonderbehandeln or simply umlegen, finally vergasen and durch den Schomstein jagen ('to drive through the chimney 5'). Even if our High Command had intended to keep the massacres secret, it would not have been possible because of the dimensions. The Wehrmacht and the other formations were omnipresent in the eastern territories, and therefore they constantly had to cross the ways of the murderers in their places. The Entjudung of the places, the transports, the collecting points, and the crackling of the day-long executions could not remain unnoticed and uncommented on. I saw a convoy of Jews at an improvised collecting point near Smolensk. The ground was covered with frozen mud. The people, I suppose, had been collected from different places, and stood there trembling, waiting, wondering what might now happen to them. Most of them

had no coats. Some little children wore jackets of adults, others were only covered by rags. I asked one of their guards, a man of the Waffen-SS: 'What's the matter with them?' He turned towards me, tactfully, so that nobody else could hear what he said, and answered: Die werden umgelegt. (They will be killed'). No secret, and of course no sensational news. What was so well known to everybody, what was spoken of so unceremoniously,

what in an army of some millions belonged to the geistige Normalgepaeck ('standard intellectual baggage of each GI'), you hardly can call 'top secret'. It may be a different question, how this baggage was stomached by different GI's. Phrases like 'The German people did not know 5 or even 'If the German people would have known of these things' are refutable. Millions of members of German formations in the East came to Germany on holidays, wounded or transferred. Should they all have held their tongues, not even have whispered in secrecy? In what sort of mood they talked to others, that is a different question also. But the events were known, and when finally in the German towns the Jews were plucked from their homes and 'deported to the East', there was no doubt left what would happen to them.

Heydecker, like Bubna-Littic, was able to confirm his generalizing sentences by significant observations. He remembered the commentary given by 'honorable' housewives, eyewitnessing 'deportation' at Berlin, Neue Winterfeldt-Strasse, in 1943. With a sardonic smile at the Jews hurrying, ashamed, to a police van, one of them, with a look full of deep understanding at Heydecker too, stated triumphantly: Die werden ooch vajast. ("They will be gassed now, too!"). Heydecker remembered the slump in the price of jewels in Warsaw after the ghetto was annihilated in 1943, and he had heard of the end of the Lemberg ghetto in June, 1943: how the Judenrat had been hanged from a balcony; details of the day-long massacre; of the glare of fire over the ghetto, and of the lorries with the sacked materials and the corpses of the murdered Jews on Lemberg's streets, even days after the massacres were over. "The people meeting those horrible transports stopped up their noses. A foul soup of blood and other body fluids dripped from the lorries to the pavement, leaving a track on the roadways." Heydecker also depicts police harassment at the ghetto wall in Warsaw in the autumn of 1941, greeted by bystanders as "gratis cinema perfor

mances", with cheering, laughter and further encouragement for the policemen mistreating venerable old men. Gib ihm Saures!

Heydecker, 1983:

Such scenes emerged daily and from hour to hour.... In Warsaw these facts were so well known that day by day many members of the army and of other formations and of the German civil government came to see those shocking spectacles.... In those times in Warsaw Vergasungen were

discussed as frankly as the military situation. I heard from my wife that in the administration of the district government of Warsaw the officials, even the anteroom secretaries, talked about Auschwitz, Treblinka, and the liquidation of the Jews as bluntly and as occasionally as all routine subjects were discussed or not discussed, in civil service and even in the mess. The Polish population, acquainted with an increasing Besatzungsterror itself, had likewise noticed very well what the real meaning of the ghetto deportations was. Some friends, former members and guests of Gospoda Wloczego, an artists' club, confidentially gave me details, which once more taught me that it was an open secret...

After 1945 the whole NS-Vergangenheit - not only its darkest chapters — was quickly suppressed in Germany and abroad by many people, and the reasons were very clear. Historiography therefore had to wait a long time for testimonies like these. In the last years the situation has begun to change. Nowadays accessories and active collaborators of the culprits often tend to speak very openly, even when interviewed by TV. Historiography should use this opportunity much more intensively. The gaps which still exist in this field were demonstrated recently for millions of Europeans by Claude Lanzmann's Shoah; it also showed what great results are possible with very simple methods, if somebody is prepared to invest enough patience and thought. More "oral history" is necessary, even on the side of the perpetrators and their companions. It will not suffice to write some more intelligent biographies in coming years, thematizing Hitler and his inner circle again and again. Breitenforschung must be added. We should not speak of voyeurism and of lack of historical interest in the context of not yet written serious Mengele biographies — as already has happened in the last number of the Vierteljahreshefte feler Zeitgeschichte. We would know much more of the history of the Third

Reich, if we had not only the empathic TV films on Eichmann and on Dr. Wirths, the Auschwitz Standortarzt, not only Rudolf Hoess' auto

biography and Gitta Sereny's biography of Franz Stangl, but similar revealing films and books dealing with men like Ehrlinger, Nebe, Sandberger, Pruetzmann, Stahlecker, Jeckeln, Dr. Rasch, Dr. Best, Dr. Widmann, Heinrich Mueller and Ernst Kaltenbrunner. To return to the army: Of course, we urgently need discussible books, as free as possible of cheap, unyielding apologies and accusations, analyzing

important military leaders and administrators like Wilhelm Keitel, Jodi,

Reinecke, Brauchitsch, Haider, Bock, Eugen Mueller, Manstein, Warlimont, Rundstedt, Kluge, Karl-Heinrich v. Stuelpnagel, Paulus, Hoepner, Hoth, Busch, Woehler, Reichenau, and Guderian.

Special problems will arise, when we have to deal with superiors of the so-called sphinx type, a species not so rare in the Third Reich, not only in OKW and OKH, but also in the RSHA and in many other "branches" of administration. The crux, often neglected by Fascism theorists and comparatists of political systems, is that indeed, very often a very close connection and correlation must have existed between an Amtswalter's efficiency and his discretion. The great

"wire-pullers" in the background often preferred to use some extroverted, but insignificant and rather ineffective members of their staff as Windhunde (greyhounds), which only had the task of wiping out the traces of their Jagdhunde (hounds), as Canaris, the head of the Abwehr group in Hitler's High Command, once confessed. As divide-and-rule politicians they were used to stirring up rivalries in their own staff, today favoring these and tomorrow other projects, of course without proclaiming their own priorities and views until success or failure were already in sight. The traces we detect may exist only to mislead us; the greatest fun for sphinxes like Canaris, Schellenberg or Nebe was to make fools of everybody (historians

included). Every success, of course, had to be the result of the providence of the ingenious sphinx; every mischief was the result of incompetence elsewhere. If the responsibility of one's own office was not to deny, a scapegoat had to be found if possible, not a cautious "hound", always loyal and diligent; better one of those unreliable "greyhounds", defamable as superficial, thoughtless, frivolous, double-dealing, perhaps even as treacherous or as insane. Even the Propaganda Minister in the Third Reich did not like great programmatic declarations, because their main function in his view seemed to be to wake all sleeping dogs in the neighborhood. Who had been a "hound" and

who only a "greyhound", nobody knew; perhaps long afterwards the sphinx explained his estimation of his staff members, but never at the time. Even the "great purges" were often glossed over because of the "reputation" of the staff, the "working atmosphere", the permanent vigilance of rivals in other "branches" of the administration and of the foreign intelligence services, registering even the slightest signs of "social

change" in the Third Reich. The struggle for power ought not appear as struggle for power. Even fluctuations had to tell nothing of winners and losers which might be interpreted quite differently — as could be seen in 1945, when former high officials and officers apologized for remaining in key positions for a very long time with the argument that they had been unable to find successors.

Sein und Schein, reality and appearance, often seem to be inseparable. Programmatic statements may mislead us, "success" reports may have camouflaged failures. The identification of really efficient administrators is very difficult. The more noise, the more suspicion. The really important men could say what they wanted to say calmly, without witnesses, in their bureaus, and saw no necessity for quarrels in the market-place. Heinrich Mueller was a nobody for most of his contemporaries, but no doubt one of the most powerful persons in the NS hierarchy. Jodi, for instance, was known also as a man of great taciturnity. Perhaps Mueller and Jodi were more representative of the political system, in which they acted so long on top level, than busy orators like Goering, Ley, Goebbels, Streicher, Brauchitsch, Himmler, and even Hitler.

How successful the army had been in wiping out its traces in Holocaust affairs, we cannot explain here in detail. It would not have been as successful, if the above characterized type of superiors had not been so predominant in the army and elsewhere. We still have a great deal to do to find out the real importance of many persons in the NS-Personenverbandsstaat (Mitteis) and not only in Holocaust questions. As you know, Adolf Eichmann was only a little SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer in 1939, and after his last advancement in November, 1941, he was SS-Obersturmbannfuehrer, but nevertheless Eichmann has been one of the most important figures in the history of the Holocaust. Many similar cases must have existed in the military sector.

Almost totally absorbed by the exploration of Hitler's "greyhounds" for decades, international historiography will now have to learn to study "hounds", and, as I fear, almost nothing is known of their Innenmotorik (inner life). If Mengele was no fanatical Nazi and no

sadist, as Zdenek Zofka supposes in his already quoted VfZG article, what was his movens (basic motivation)? If Hitler's generals were (mostly) not Nazis and not Triebtaeter (criminally inclined) better treated in psychiatric hospitals, what could have given them their motivation to agree to the

Holocaust and the anti-Bolshevist "crusade" of 1941, aiming at a decimation of Slavdom?

If human beings are compared to animals, we should always be alarmed. Is it possible that not only Hitler, Canaris and others in the Third Reich tended to mix up human beings with dogs, unworthy to study their inner life? Why are we not more interested in getting to know the inner life of Hitler's "hounds" and "greyhounds"? Because we are not veterinarians? Because we don't believe dogs have an inner life at all? Even with real dogs, that would be objectionable and perhaps dangerous. How much more objectionable and dangerous must an attitude like this be if not dogs but human beings are our objects? Did we all recognize and really accept that even the worst Nazi "beasts" were human beings? Not only the so-called nationalconservative Schreibtischtäter (desk perpetrators), who never got their hands dirty, but also the sadists, the ideologists, and their fanatic followers, obedient in every case, without consideration? We have explained nothing in a scientific sense, if we declare ex post facto the conceited "master mind" of yesterday to be a "subhuman being", a "gangster", as certain German dictionaries translate Untermensch, without a soul, without sensitivity, without Gemuet (character, heart, feelings) and without higher intelligence? Did we ever ask ourselves if we were able, in case of need, to verify exactly the total absence of an inner life, worthy of being investigated, in cases like Mueller, Nebe or Kaltenbrunner? Or, let us say, Haider, Rundstedt, Reichenau, and Hoepner? Or did we, unintentionally, make the same logical mistake as those Nazis who in 1941-42 believed that they had already won the Russian campaign after having managed to proclaim their enemies to be "sub-human"? Even under-estimating dead (or "historical finished off") antagonists may be dangerous. Here the vigilance of historiography is needed, and it may be that not till historians grasp their task. Over-estimating may be less dangerous than under-estimating. In history final solutions always remain pipe-dreams, as we know. The danger overcome in 1945 may arise again, though actually it does not seem so. Only precise knowledge of the danger will help mankind to avoid unnecessary sacrifices. Every thoughtlessness in our diagnosis will raise the number of victims. We

can miss strong words on the eve of battle, spoken only to fog the minds of our own soldiers and to irritate the enemy; as scientists, worthy of being called so, we are the wrong people to deliver the phrases needed in such cases. What mankind can expect only from science and must get from us,

is a thorough, not only cursory exploration of the whole MS-syndrome which is not already satisfied after an insufficient description of some symptoms, perhaps after having given a survey of one facade of our phenomenon. Facades may change, masks surely will change, even the stages may change — only the essence (das Wesen) of the danger will be the same.

Did our tribunals ever explore the motives of those generals who had translated into deeds the "perpetrative orders" in the East since 1941, without being Nazis themselves (as they put it after 1945)? Was the decade-long discussion focusing on order and duty, the authoritarian personality, etc., only a red herring? Was the blind obedience of field-marshals and generals ever more than pure fiction? One of Hitler's main arguments to avoid the re-installation of a commander-in-chief like Brauchitsch for his army, or the creation of a theatrecommander for the East (as Rundstedt was in the West, and Kesselring was in Italy) sounded, as you know, that it would be absolutely misleading to believe that the so autocratic commanders of his army groups and armies in the East would obey men like Manstein and Kluge, though not obeying Hitler, the dictator, himself. Should we better have discussed atavism in modern mankind? The far-from-perfect domestication of certain "lower instincts", observable not only in everyday life in our century, but also and (perhaps) especially in "master mind" contexts? The re-barbarization of over-civilized Abendlandinhabitants, explicitly demanded by certain, still discussed, philosophers? The "liberation" of the "blond beast" or "fair beast" (Nietzsche), which — as beasts are ~ will not be stung with remorse when acting beastly, when brutalizing "subhuman beings" and other beasts? The Inhuman and Anti-Human of Superman between Nietzsche and Bernard Shaw? German inferiority complexes, deriving from Great Britains's imperialism in the nineteenth century? The fascination of men like Cecil Rhodes, Disraeli, Rudyard Kipling, Darwin and Houston Stewart Chamberlain? India as a model for German rule in Russia? And, last but not least, Hitler's admiration for the English "way of life", as demonstrated by the British "upper class" at home and overseas? There would be more themes, more than enough: primary and secondary virtues; preconceptions and their systematic affirmation in inter

national propaganda; ethnology and ethnic psychology as weapons in our century; survival training and hatred training in modern armies: Feindbilder — traditions; Karl Kraus' verfolgende Unschuld, not,

verfolgte Unschuld (persecuting, not persecuted innocence); Peter Watson's "War on the Mind"; putative self-defense of groups and nations; alcohol and aggressivity, etc.

Of course, feelings of superiority must have been very important in the history of the Holocaust and of other mass extermination activities in the "Barbarossa" context. But why should they have been deduced in every case from A/S-race ideology (whose heuristic importance even prominent Nazis never overrated)? Were there no different possible derivations? How important, for instance, was the faith in armament superiority, a result of the victory in France in 1940? The conviction of the invincibility of the German army was based on this faith, which seemed to guarantee the Endloesung would never be pulled into a court of law for their ~ of course, illegal — murderous actions. When the first T-34 tanks appeared at the Eastern front, Hitler's "best soldiers of the world" were soon no longer convinced that they belonged to the "best army in the world", as they were told. Even in the NS media, the victory in the West seldom was explained in terms of race ideology. But the German hubris after this victory must have been *conditio sine qua non* for the great support, which was in its beginning given the *Weltanschauungskrieg* of 1941. After the Polish campaign the army had protested with humanitarian, psychological and unconcealed political arguments against the SS "excesses". On the eve of the campaign in the West, Himmler had made clear that the cruelties had not been blunders of badly informed or undisciplined SS units, but "measures" by order of the *Reichsfuehrer SS* and of Hitler himself. Now nobody wanted to oppose the victor, preparing the next victorious campaign, particularly because almost everybody, in Germany and abroad, believed Hitler could only win quickly in the East, after he had beaten the French army, which had so long been praised everywhere as the best army on the whole continent. When *Endsieg* convictions began to perish, the *Endloesung* too became obsolete for many people, and only very few maintained that the *Endloesung* or antisemitism might remain Hitler's most important *Wunderwaffe*. In critical situations, the majority of Germans did not believe in their own racial superiority. In contrast, the faith in the power of modern technology (new inventions, especially irresistible new weapons) and in unforeseeable chances — lucky hits, *blinde Zufaelle*, and misfortunes as well — in

war and politics remained rather firm in a large percentage of the German people till the very last months of the war.

Historiography is not as sure as Bubna-Littic and Heydecker, when asked, who in the army must have known how much of the Endloesung and which authorities were to what extent engaged in the execution of the Endloesung. Nowadays, there should be no doubts left (although there still are) that at least OKW and OKH were informed of all important decisions in time, and that they had not opposed Endloesung in principle in 1941; both high commands continued partially to back Eichmann even much later. When the territorial commander in 1943 suggested not to start the deportation of the Danish Jews during a period of martial law (Ausnahmezustand), because the reputation of the army abroad might suffer, Jodi harshly replied: "Gossip! State necessities are at stake."

The RSHA had told the Reich ministries, so far as they were concerned and interested, more than enough of its "progress" in Endloesung affairs. Generalquartiermeister Wagner, in 1944 a leading member of military resistance, had been informed daily, and so had Keitel. When in 1942 the extermination was continued partially under the new cover of guerrilla warfare, Himmler's Bandenkampf reports went in OKH to the Chief of Staff (Haider, later Zeitzler), to the Operationsabteilung (Heusinger) and to Abteilung Fremde Heere Ost (Gehlen); in OKW to Warlimont, the Stellvertretende Chef des Wehrmachtfuehmngsstabes (representative of Jodi). OKW information on matters of Jewish forced labor in certain phases may have been better than that of RSHA and SS-WVHA (Pohl). Most railway transports for Endloesung purposes — of lower priority than troop and supply transports — must have been well under control of General Gercke (Chef des Transportwesens). Eichmann's transports were postponed if the military authorities saw any difficulties. It appears that nobody in OKW or OKH believed, at least until the summer of 1943, that the Endloesung might endanger the Endsieg.

"Otto Normalverbraucher" and his brother, who had joined the army, were not as well informed as OKW and OKH, though there had been Hitler's well-known programmatic speeches and certain Goebbels' editorials in Das Reich. But what they had heard must have been much more than both admitted after 1945. When in April, 1943, Katyn became a German propaganda slogan, the SD in its secret "Reports from the Reich" argued that a large percentage of the population considered the suddenly discovered sympathy of the German propaganda machinery for

the Polish people as merkwuerdig (curious), if not heuchlerisch (deceitful).

On one hand, people would refer to the often mentioned Bloody Sunday of Bromberg, and on the other hand they would assert that it was better not to get excited about certain Soviet massacres, because the Germans had exterminated (beseitigt) Poles and Jews on a much larger scale (in viel groesserem Umfang). Three months later the Zitadelle operation had already deeply disappointed all hopes of the German General Staff and of the whole nation — the Nazis "by chance" discovered new Soviet common graves, this time near Winniza, where Hitler's headquarters had been for several months in 1942-43. Again Goebbels started an atrocity propaganda campaign of grand style, but now in the SD reports from the Reich the Germans neglected all sensational news of this type: SD confidants should "often" have heard the view that the Germans had also eliminated (ausgemerzt) "all adversary elements" in the East, above all the Jews, without any consideration. People would refer to "tales" of soldiers and other persons coming from the East. On the other hand, the normal German population, according to the SD reports, was not inclined to deal particularly with the Ukrainian victims of Bolshevism, considering the heavy losses of their own nation in the western and northern parts of the Reich, caused by the almost daily allied bomber offensive. The Wochenschau pictures had here and there still led to spontaneous reactions of disgust and had led other visitors neuerdings even to the conviction that the same might occur to them in case of a Russian invasion. But the accumulated anti-Bolshevist propaganda of the last years would have resulted in the fact that now wide circles were no longer immediately interested in film reports of this genre.

Did the Germans hesitate to provoke their enemies by a propaganda that might be answered in the near future perhaps not only by a propagandistic counter-blow? Or did the "common man" and the SD mistrust their remaining possibilities to wipe out the traces of German mass murder, because the Red Army was already on the move? Of course, only very few knew, or could imagine, that a certain Paul Blobel had since June, 1942, been engaged in leveling out the mass graves of the first two waves of the Holocaust. And of course in July and August, 1943, most people did not know how the extermination camps in Poland had worked. Who could know their names, if not on duty in the Generalgouvernement, or in the Warthegau, like Heydecker's wife? But after Stalingrad, Tunis, and Kursk, every thinking individual began to wonder, if one day he might not be personally asked, what he had done

to his vanished brethren. Could anyone, after the establishment of registration offices all over the world, seriously hope to hide a crime against humanity of Holocaust dimensions by leveling all already existing mass graves and murdering in future with gas chambers and crematories?

What did the "common man" know of the number of victims? It appears that even in Himmler's inner circle nobody knew the total numbers before Korherr wrote his statistical reports in March and April, 1943. Reports of RSHA and of the local SS and police authorities were not free of overlappings, and the Meldedisziplin (correctness and promptness of reporting) in the army and in the SS was a constant cause for complaint. Hitler and Himmler were not so uncritical as some historiographers, and almost daily got new causes for criticism. The documents still available show that Himmler must not have been a hopeless paranoiac when he stated that he would not trust even SS strength reports. The art of forging reports was scarcely impeded by periodic admonitions to avoid giving information with a distinct bias, though sanctions grew heavier and heavier. Where reports were not verifiable at any time, and indeed were not verified on certain occasions, it can be assumed that the local authorities took advantage of this without any moral scruples. This was one of the reasons why in a very short time the conditions in guerrilla warfare became absolutely incomprehensible to every outsider, and the extermination of the Jews, as mentioned, had become a part of guerrilla warfare. Perhaps the civil administration in the occupied areas often preferred to work with its own rough estimates in Jewish affairs, based on pre-war statistics, because SS and police reports were not reliable; perhaps the military authorities also used similar methods from time to time. German resistance seems to have under-estimated the dimensions of the mass murders for a long time. The Weisse Rose, for instance, in one of its leaflets spoke of only 300,000 Jews murdered in an extremely brutal manner in Poland since 1939. Other prominent members of the resistance movement seem to have known no figures at all.

The enemy propaganda remained very cautious, and we still do not know the motives. Perhaps London and Washington did not want to make the same mistake as in World War I when exaggerations and pure fantasy had caused boomerang effects, still remembered in all Europe. Perhaps the authorities in both capitals were much better informed than they had revealed. Perhaps the western intelligence services were not certain how to interpret the reports they had received from Poland. 10

Perhaps the western allies had problems with their own latent antisemitism and therefore — as insider Raymond Aron once mentioned — tried to avoid the impression that their conduct of war had anything to do with the so-called Jewish question. (This was an extreme counter-position to NS propaganda, which claimed almost daily that Jewish war-mongers" behind Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin directed the whole war.) Maybe a "crusade" to "liberate" all of Europe was easier to propagate than a "normal" military action to free Hitler's concentration camp prisoners, threatened by total extermination. And why did the Vatican, which so far as we know had always had the most current and best information from Poland, proceed so overly cautious? Many questions still await answers!

Under circumstances like these, who should inform the "common man"? His military superiors? In 1941, when nobody believed in the necessity of wiping out traces, they really had informed him, though without giving figures. Reichenau's order of October 10, 1941, distributed to all army groups and armies by Wagner on October 28, 1941, by order of Brauchitsch, as worthy of being imitated, had confirmed officially that a strong, but fair conciliation (Suehne) was necessary and inevitable for the Jewish Untermenschentum. One reason given by Reichenau for the necessity, was to nip in the bud coming revolts in the rear of the Wehrmacht, because revolts, "as experience shows" were always instigated by Jews. Exceptions had not been mentioned. The number of soldiers who had themselves been eyewitnesses previously may have widely exceeded 10,000. Probably some hundred, but maybe even some thousand members of the army had already participated in Judenaktionen. In the focus of the events there were only a few, but in helping to cordon police and auxiliary police razzias, evacuations, and finally, executions, the number was large and continually growing. The first army protests, received by OKH and OKW, which were aimed at an abolition of the so-called Kommissarbefehl, seemed impractical, and in propaganda only counter-productive after the Red Army had given up the special insignia of rank for politruks and commissars. Later, commissars and "polit-workers" were handed over to the SD by special investigation commandos far behind the front line, and nobody protested. The protests in Jewish affairs apparently had similar aims. In more or less direct terms "pragmatists" pleaded for a method of liquidation applicable somewhere far behind the front line, which would not attract so much attention, and would be more "human" (if possible), nervenschonender for SS and police, front troops and local

population. In the winter of 1941-42 a new argument was added: adequate consideration of the perceptible need for labor in the occupied areas as well as at home. The RSHA received similar proposals from its Einsatzgruppen leaders; they were not rejected. Thus Heydrich could formulate the slogan, "annihilation by work", already at the Wannsee conference. Jeckeln got gas vans for his local authorities in Minsk and Riga, as already used during the euthanasia program. The first stationary gas chambers were soon under construction in Poland and were much more effective than gas vans. In 1942 each Polish pupil may have known more details of the extermination camps than the German troops hurrying to Stalingrad and to the Caucasus. From Gitta Sereny and Claude Lanzmann we have heard that not only at the railway lines to Treblinka and Sobibor Polish pupils and adults must have known extremely well what would happen to the deported Jews when they arrived at their destination. Heydecker stated that the German civilians knew as much as the Poles. From the memoirs of Udo v. Alvensleben (*Lauter Abschiede*) and of Ferdinand Prinz v.d. Leyen (*Rueckblick zum Mauerwald*) we might have learned that the military sector in Poland also must have had a clear enough picture.

The former Chef der Heeresleitung, Kurt Frhr.v. Hammerstein-Equord, however, who had told one of his sons in the summer of 1942 that an "organized mass murder" was going on in Poland, seems to have heard for the first time in early December, 1942, from a niece presiding at a Red Cross recreation centre for soldiers in Lemberg, that gas was used for that purpose. Hammerstein Sr. died of cancer some months later, but Hammerstein Jr. maintained in his memoirs that he was not exactly informed until January, 1944, of what was going on and that indeed all Jews were killed. At the end of January, 1944, Himmler spoke to an assembly of 250-300 generals, admirals and high-ran kin g officers in Posen, who had just attended a Rein&cke-Lehrgang in Doeberitz (i.e., one of the first courses for weltanschauliche Erziehung ~ better: ideological indoctrination — organized by the new NS-Fuehrungsstab der Wehrmacht, headed by Reinecke, who remained in personal union the head of the Allgemeine Wehrmachtamt). Himmler revealed that in the "race struggle" in the East only a "total solution" would make sense, because one could not allow coming generations to fall victim to Jewish revenge. It is not quite clear whether Hammerstein Jr. himself had attended the Lehrgang or only his uncle, Smilo Frhr. v. Luettwitz (a famous panzer leader and, by the way, a descendant of the military head of the Kapp-Luettwitz-Putsch

on March

13, 1920). He quotes his uncle as witness to a meeting with Hitler on January 27, 1944, in "Wolfsschanze", arranged for Reinecke's Lehrgang and some additional field-marshal and generals, among them Manstein, who received sharp criticism after assuring Hitler that doubts regarding the loyalty of his generals were absolutely unnecessary and an undeserved affront, in a well timed interruption of Hitler's salutatory address - criticism of Hitler, not of the generals. Rudolf Frhr.v. Gersdorff had been there (but also neglects the party-ideological background). According to Gersdorff, six or seven generals had not applauded (he mentions Luettwitz, v. Rothkirch und Panthen, Walter Krueger, Choltitz, and Schwerin-Schwanefeld). Gersdorff's neighbor had climbed on his seat to applaud. According to Hammerstein Jr., exactly five generals had not clapped their hands; he mentions only the name of Dietrich v. Saucken (who defended East Prussia in 1945 as commander of an army, a very courageous panzer general, fourteen times wounded). Gersdorff reported that Himmler had added almost tearful reflections concerning the heaviness of his burden, the psychological stress for his SS men, and the difficulties arising from the necessity of being consistent. According to Hammerstein's version, Reinecke is supposed to have thanked the Reichsfuehrer SS almost obsequiously (unterwuerfig) in the name of the audience. Hammerstein's conclusion: "The clapping generals and admirals did not know Eichmann, but their applause indirectly was dedicated to him." Didn't anyone in the audience actually know the executors of the Endloesung personally? Even Gersdorff seemed to have been surprised by Himmler's words. But as Ic of Army Group Mitte, Gersdorff had been Nebe's direct counterpart in 1941. Perhaps he had never met Eichmann, but he had very often met Bach-Zelewski and most of his local representatives, and he must have known exactly what was going on already in 1941. To interpret his statements correctly we should know that Gersdorff had also been in charge of the German excavations in Katyn, that he received his Knight's Cross late in August, 1944, as Chief of Staff of the 7th Army (under SS-Oberstgruppenfuehrer Hausser) in the Falaise battle, that Gersdorff was made a general of the lowest rank very late, in 1945, and that after the war Gersdorff told the German public that he had planned to kill Hitler on March 21, 1943, at a commemoration in Berlin Zeughaus, but that he had failed only because of technical problems. 12

Himmler's Poznanian speech was not the only opportunity in the whole

war for Hitler's generals to get authentic information on Endloesung topics, as Gersdorff and Hammerstein want to tell us, and Gersdorff's conjecture that the majority of the clapping generals might not have grasped what Himmler meant, was misleading. Himmler repeated his rhetorical coup twice (and he must have had reasons to do so) in Sonthofen on May 5, and June 21, 1944, again addressing Reinecke courses, with slight modifications. Now he mentioned not only the annihilation of the huge ghettos in Warsaw and Lublin, carried out in 1943 at the last possible moment, as he asserted, but also the "measures" now taken in Hungary. Two hundred thousand male Jews, he said, should be brought from Hungary to the Reich in two stages to construct subterranean plants for the German war industry, and none of the Jews should pass the visual field of the German people.

I believe, meine Herren, that you know me so far that I am not a bloodthirsty individual and am not a man who enjoys ruthlessness, or mingles fun and cruelty. On the other hand, I have such good nerves and such an elaborate consciousness of my duty, that I do execute tasks without any compromise measures, if I have ascertained that they are necessary. I thought that I had the right — this is concerning the Jewish women and children ~ not to allow the children to be brought up as revengers, who one day will kill our fathers (!) and our descendants. That would have seemed to me cowardly. Therefore the question had been solved without compromise.

So Himmler, on May 5. And on June 21:

It is good that we were hard enough to eliminate the Jews in our territories. Don't ask me how difficult that has been, but as soldiers you should have, let me say, sympathy enough to understand how difficult the realization of an order like this must be. But as soldiers only thinking of Germany, you will have to conclude, after having examined all aspects exhaustively, that it was necessary. Not only would we not have been able to endure the bombing war if we had had the Jewish people in our cities; I am convinced that we also would not have been able to defend the front line at Lemberg in the Generalgouvernement if the large ghettos in Lemberg, Krakau, Lublin and Warsaw had still been in existence.... The ghettos, confined as they were, had been the headquarters of the partisan movements. Additionally, they had

been the poisoning spots (Vergiftungsherde) for the rear areas (Etappe).... I said to all my men: First, we have got the order, and second, our conscience (Gewisseti) wants us to execute this severe purge. When it is painful for us, then we will think of our children, who died by terror bombing which, after all, has been organized by the Jews; they died without having lived.... We have the right, and we have the duty to do it.
13

The Third Reich ultras, having destroyed all bridges behind them, were seeking further companions for their way to hell, and they got many, using such arguments, even in the summer of 1944, when the allies had already invaded Normandy and the Red Army was just launching its operation Bagration, which in only three weeks annihilated the whole Army Group Mitte (now still more than 840,000 men); utilizing Holocaust information as an integrative part of power-through-fear propaganda, envisaging the twilight of the gods in an attitude of "Apocalypse now!" A different question was, how far the German people, how far the Wehrmacht indeed could realize the last "actions" in Eichmann's "parallel war" against the Jews, and did realize them during the tohubohu of the second half of 1944 and the first four months of 1945. To give an example: Who may have noticed how the "sapper Jews" (Schanzjuden) from Hungary found their way from the so-called Suedostwall (South-East Rampart) on the Balaton front line first to the outer camps (Aussenlager) of Auschwitz and then to Auschwitz itself, neighbors excluded? The evacuations of camp prisoners from the areas under military administration soon had become routine, but with the increasing tempo of the "shortening of the front" even Himmler's SS and police must sometimes have lost total control of events. The mere fact that evacuation transports were taking place cannot have been a secret from the German public, though the convoys were urged to use only by-ways and to move only by night But there was no recognizable system for the "common man"; perhaps something like that existed, with intervals, for some "experts" in RSHA and WVHA. The "planned disengagements" of the army were often a farce, a chaotic and bloody one, of course, but how should one describe the "systematic" disintegration of Himmler's "SS and Police State"? Prisoner convoys without clear destination, without food, without adequate clothing and shoes, without blankets and tents, without medicaments, almost without guards, sanitary men or drivers for the three or four cars RSHA could afford for "medium" transports;

overcrowded camps everywhere; an administration having no work and no

tools for Hitler's last reserve army in the battle fought against the war industries of the whole non-fascist world. Camp prisoners, more or less prominent, as a last dead pledge of the Greater German Reich? Or really as an indispensable labor reserve for Hitler's Restreich and its hibernation in the so-called retreat in the Alps (Alpenfestung)? Why did Himmler re-import the Jews, having been so proud in 1942-43 at having expelled them even from the Reich's concentration camps "to the East"? What about his "consequence" in "race struggle"? Empty promises? What should the victors think of Schiller's and Goethe's Germany when confronted in Buchenwald near Weimar with thousands of Jewish and non-Jewish slave-workers from all of Europe, most of them nothing but skin and bones, with open common graves and still smoking crematory chimneys? Was this impression intended? Scarcely. According to Sarah Gordon and John Toland, Himmler shall have complained in April, 1945, that "Hitler has been raging for days because Buchenwald and BergenBelsen were not completely evacuated". Some camp prisoner transports made their way from Estonia to Suebia, and had orders for Tyrolia. Where should the last act take place? Did anyone believe in a happy end? For whom?

Younger people in Germany in most cases only stare excitedly at the well-known movie sequences of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen and ask themselves or their parents and grandparents, how it was possible that "things like these" had happened and could remain totally unnoticed in their own neighborhood for twelve years, from 1933 to 1945. Those a little more acquainted with the history of concentration camps and of the Holocaust could tell them that their question must be modified. The ingenious, but very simple trick of the Nazis had been not to confront the public too long and too directly with the victims of their brutal "policy", to give the public the spatial and chronological distance to the "events", wanted by the public, and honored by the public. "Politically necessary" cruelties are primarily a question of timing, and should be executed at a well-chosen place, without witnesses, by clever and reliable assassins, noiselessly, avoiding "unnecessary" brutality, as Machiavelli, Mussolini's beloved teacher, had already taught. That Endloesung could be regarded as a "state necessity" had already been admitted, and not only by some of Hitler's generals. The question remained of how to organize it, if possible without frictions. And here the generals (but not only the generals) indeed were quite content, when in 1942 RSHA returned to Machiavelli's

principles - after a phase of euphoria and open terror in 1941, after the

anti-Bolshevist shock therapy - "Blitzkrieg", combined with annihilation of the Jews (as presumed main backers of Stalin and his terror system) — all apparently had failed.

To discuss radical Loesungen der Judenfrage theoretically long before or long afterwards, even to sign orders requiring sympathy for Himmler and his men far away, was one thing; but tolerating massacres and common graves at home, perhaps directly in front of one's sittingroom window, was another. Schizophrenia? Of course. The same Manstein who had interrupted Hitler on January 27, 1944, to affirm once more the unconditional loyalty of all generals in the army, had in 1941 demanded that the Einsatzgruppe attached to him, give up executions in a circle of 200 kilometers around his headquarters, and the very same Manstein had on November 20, 1941, signed an order in which the necessity of severe sanctions against Jewry, "the intellectual author of the Bolshevist terror", was stressed with arguments, outdoing in some points even Reichenau's order of October 10, 1941. 16 As Bock's order to Nebe on August 4, 1941, teaches, not to execute massacres in the neighborhood of his headquarters, except in cases concerning armed partisans or convicted criminals, and Manstein's desire to remain at a certain distance from certain "events" with which he agreed in principle was not at all a very particular case.

How sure can we be that we, indeed, are more intelligent and less schizophrenic?

Notes

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2. Joe J. Heydecker, Das Warschauer Getto, Foto-Dokumente eines deutschen Soldaten aus dent Jahr 1941. Second Edition, Muenchen: 1984, pp. 9-42.

3. Gert Buchheit, Der deutsche Geheimdienst, Geschichte der militaerischen Abwehr. Muenchen: 1966, p. 71.

4. H. Boberach, (ed.), Meldungen aus dem Reich, Die geheimen

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Herrsching: 1984, passim. On Hitler's extreme faith in modern technology: W. Jochmann, (ed.), Adolf Hitler, Monologe im Fuehrerhauptquartier 1941-1944, Die Aufzeichnungen Heinrich Heims. Muenchen: 1982, p. 275 (February 9, 1942).

5. Raul Hilberg, Die Vernichtung der europaeischen Juden. Die Gesamtgeschichte des Holocaust. Frankfurt: 1982, p. 393 (Befehlshaber Daenemark/Ia/Qu an OKW/WFSt, gez. v. Hannecken, dat.v. September 23, 1943, Nbg. Dok. NOKW-356 - with paraphed commentary of Jodi).

6. See H.-H. Wilhelm, "Wie geheim war die 'Endloesung'?" in: W. Benz, (ed.), Miscellanea, Festschrift fuer Helmut Krausnick zum 75. Geburtstag. Muenchen: 1980, pp. 131-148.

7. Boberach, (ed.), Meldungen, vol. 13, p. 5145, 5190, 5241-5245 (on reactions of Polish civil workers in Germany on Katyn); vol. 14, p. 5531, 5547. On Katyn further: R.-Chr. Frhr. v. Gersdorff, Soldat im Untergang. Frankfurt: 1977, pp. 139-143.

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8. See A. Rueckerl, (ed.), NS-Vernichtungslager im Spiegel deutscher Strafprozesse, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Chelmno,, Muenchen: 1977.

9. G. Schoenborn, — Weltkriege und Revolutionen 1914-1945 (= Geschichte in Quellen, edited by .v. W. Lautemann/M. Schlenke, vol. 5), Second Edition. Muenchen: 1975, p. 535f.

10. See W. Laqueur, Was niemand wissen wollte: Die Unterdrueckung der Nachrichten ueber Hitlers 'Endloesung'. Frankfurt: 1982.

11. Norbert Mueller (ed.), Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in der UdSSR 1941-1944, Dokumente. Koeln: 1980, pp. 110-113.

12. Kunrat v. Hammerstein, Spaehtrupp. Stuttgart: 1963, p. 207, 193f.;

Gersdorff, passim, especially p. 145f.; H.-H. Wilhelm, "Hitlers

Ansprache vor Generalen und Offizieren am 26. Mai 1944," In: Militargeschichtliche Mitteilungen. 20/2 (1976), p. 168.

13. Bradley F. Smith/Agnes F. Peterson, (eds.), Heinrich Himmler, Geheimreden 1933 bis 1945 und andere Ansprachen. Frankfurt: 1974, pp. 201-205.

14. Ist-Staerke of Army Group Mitte on May 1, 1944, according to: OKH/GenstdH/Org. (I), Nr. 1/17 340/44 gKdos., dat.v. June 2, 1944, BA/MA, H 1/6/6; exactly 838,014 men (non-German personnel not taken into account).

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17. Bock's diary, entry August 4, 1941, BA/MA, N 22/9. According to Bach-Zelewski, Bock once shall have pitied explicitly his Higher SS and Police Leader in regard to the dirty drudgery which the SS and police forces had taken over ~ to the great relief of the army (Schwaebische Donau-Zeitung. July 9, 1958).

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ART, PROPAGANDA AND THE PRESSURES OF HISTORY IN THE CASE OF DRIEU LA ROCHELLE

Frederic J. Grover

The Holocaust in all its monstrosity could not have happened without the complicity, sometimes active, of people who, until 1933, had never shown signs of antisemitic feelings and who, quite on the contrary, had experienced and appreciated the good qualities of their Jewish friends.

The case of the French writer Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, born four years before Hitler, and who, like him, took his own life in 1945, illustrates how this kind of reversal can happen. How an intelligent, sensitive, cultivated French bourgeois, who had liberated himself sufficiently from the prejudices of his class and his milieu to marry a Jewish woman and to have Jews as his best friends, could end up joining a totalitarian and racist movement dedicated to the elimination of the Jews. How a talented, subtle, complex artist, one of the most gifted writers of his generation, who was in a privileged position to create in his fiction authentic Jewish characters, could lower himself to betray his art and to use in a novel the most worn out stereotypes of antisemitic propaganda literature.

Since most of Drieu's work is essentially autobiographical, it is difficult to separate the man from the writer. Since he conceived himself as "one of those who, in a generation, make the liaison, at their own risk, between politics and literature," Drieu's case provides us with a natural link between history and literature.

Before discussing Drieu as the case of a writer who illustrates the representation of the Jew in non-Jewish literature during the Holocaust, I would like to situate his case in relationship to a few

writers who were slightly older or exact contemporaries: Joyce, Proust,

Celine, Malraux, Mauriac and Sartre. In fact, if one examines their works from the perspective which concerns us here, one finds that the central problem for these writers is how to deal with the coercive influence of stereotypes. The non-Jewish writer who wants to introduce Jewish characters in his work finds in his cultural and literary heritage a number of ready made stereotypes. He does not have to know Jews personally in order to create Jewish characters. If he adopts the accepted ideas about Jews, his characters will seem believable to the great majority of his readers precisely because they conform to the existing stereotypes. Only very great writers have been able to transcend these stereotypes and to create truly original Jewish characters.

James Joyce is the most striking example of a non-Jewish writer who gives to a Jewish character, Leopold Bloom, the role of an epic protagonist in a major work and makes of him a modern Ulysses. Ulysses matured over a long period of time while Joyce led the life of voluntary exile far from his homeland and from a country where his own language was spoken. During his exile in different countries, whether in Trieste, Paris or Zurich, Joyce established strong ties with Jewish artists, businessmen and intellectuals. One of his best friends was a Jewish writer of genius, Italo Svevo.

Another outstanding fictional character that comes to mind is Charles Swann and with him all the Jewish characters in Remembrance of Things Past: Marcel Proust had a Jewish mother, and the Dreyfus case forced him to become aware of the true situation of the Jews in France. Swann, a perfectly assimilated French Jew, accepted in the most aristocratic circles, became conscious of this situation and as a result, assumed his Jewishness.

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For the period that is of interest to us, 1933 to 1945, the only non-Jewish French writer comparable to Joyce and Proust for his originality and for the importance of his work, is Louis-Ferdinand Celine. Unfortunately this writer of genius, who published a great novel in 1932, Journey to the End of the Night, and whose style influenced a whole generation, proved later to be a rabid antisemite. While Journey to the End of the Night is completely free of antisemitism, Celine published two violently antisemitic pamphlets on the eve of the Second World War. Their very titles seem to announce the final solution:

Bagatelles pour un Massacre (Trifles for a Massacre) (1937) and L'Ecole

des Cadavres (School for Corpses) (1938). When Celine introduced a Jewish character in his fiction, he is a stereotype conforming to the most worn out literary tradition: Titus Van Claben in Guignol's

Band (1944) is a pawnbroker and a moneylender.

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The important French writers of this period who were favorably inclined toward the Jews avoided creating Jewish characters. Andre Malraux, to whom I expressed my surprise that he had not created Jewish characters in his fiction, gave me the following explanation: "Inasmuch as they were true artists, the writers favorable to the Jews could not bring themselves to idealize Jewish characters and to present Jews without faults. On the other hand, they were afraid that, in the general atmosphere — which was then prevalent — of hatred against Jews, any unpleasant trait of character, any misdeed committed by a Jew would become a pretext for sweeping generalizations and would therefore be used to perpetuate and increase feelings of antisemitism."

Many Jewish writers experienced the same dilemma. For instance, the American playwright Arthur Miller said that he had given up using Jews as literary material in his plays because he feared the transformation of any Jewish character into a stereotype in the spectators' and readers' minds. Malraux's explanation has therefore a certain validity.

However, one must take into account another cause for this absence of Jewish characters in the works of writers whose humanistic attitudes should have made them favorable to Jews. A great number among these writers considered themselves to be Marxists, or at least advocated the transformation of a bourgeois society into a classless society. However, they had a very abstract notion of the reality they wanted to change. They all belonged to the bourgeoisie and knew only people of their own social class. In this social class, the Jews were completely assimilated or aspired to be so. These bourgeois writers were convinced that antisemitism was a product of the bourgeoisie and that it would disappear with it. The most urgent task, therefore, was revolutionary struggle.

The Jew of the 1930's finds himself in a paradoxical and indeed impossible situation. On the one hand, the antisemite denies him his right to be a human being. On the other hand, the Marxist, who wants

to see only the human being in the Jew, denies him his Jewishness. In the eyes of the leftist writers of this period, the Jew, quite literally, does not exist.

Simone de Beauvoir in her *Memoirs* confesses her ignorance and thoughtlessness: "Olga asked me one day what it meant exactly to be a Jew. I answered without any hesitation: 'Nothing. Jews do not exist; there are only human beings.'" She adds: "On a great number of issues I was, and Sartre also was, deplorably abstract." In his *Reflections on the Jewish Question*, Sartre wrote in 1944: "The Jew is in the situation of a Jew because he lives in a community which considers h i m as a Jew; he has passionate enemies and passionless defenders."

Under these conditions: passionate enemies, passionless defenders, sympathetic writers who systematically abstain from creating Jewish characters, the only Jewish characters we can find in the non-Jewish literature of this period are, in their great majority, the products of a more or less declared antisemitism.

One of the authors who has shown the greatest awareness of this prevalent antisemitism is the Catholic French novelist, Francois Mauriac. When I asked him in 1960 how he explained that Drieu la Rochelle, a friend of the Jews, married to a Jew, could have become an antisemite, he answered: "In the first place, we must never forget that any French bourgeois has as a child unconsciously absorbed antisemitism within his family. The little French bourgeois sucks antisemitism at the same time as he sucks milk from his mother's breast. Some of this antisemitism remains forever. He may later believe himself liberated. It only takes a crisis for this disease ~ for it is a disease — to reappear in a virulent form." In his political memoirs, Mauriac expresses the same idea in the form of a warning to all non-Jewish writers: "Let us beware all the more of antisemitism, even in its latent form, that we are all, yes all of us, without any exception, the heirs of this age-old hatred."

When Mauriac talks about an age-old heritage of hatred, it is because he thinks of the traditional stereotype of the wicked, evil, Satanic Jew. Mauriac was brought up in a bourgeois milieu from the provinces where there was, even more than in Paris, a profound distrust of strangers, especially of that stranger par excellence, the Jew. Whether these bourgeois are believers or nonbelievers, makes little difference. The official religion may be Catholicism; it has in fact been replaced by

another religion, that of land ownership.

Mauriac belongs to that bourgeoisie. He knows it thoroughly understands it, is aware of its hypocrisy and hates it. His novels depict pitilessly the narrow-mindedness, the self-righteousness of this provincial milieu which almost stifled him and from which he sought to liberate himself all his life.

Despite his good intentions expressed on a theoretical level, when Mauriac actually introduces a Jewish character - Jean Azevedo in *Thérèse Desqueyroux* - it is a character who clearly reflects the author's own ambiguity towards Jews. On the one hand, Azevedo functions as a liberating element who introduces into Thérèse's stifling milieu the exhilaration of new ideas and who contributes to her liberation by exemplifying a person for whom spiritual and intellectual life is essential. On the other hand, he represents Temptation since he provides Thérèse with justifications to free herself from her husband by poisoning him. In this sense one can view this Jewish character as a diabolical figure.

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Sartre's case is extreme and shows the power of stereotypes in a French bourgeois milieu. Before 1945, Sartre does not create any Jewish characters because of his belief that the Jew only exists in the mind of the antisemite and that there is no specific Jewish identity. Since the Jew is a projection of the antisemite's prejudices, Sartre's interest in the Jewish question is limited to the antisemite and to the process of becoming an antisemite. In his 1939 novella, *The Making of a Leader*, he describes how a young bourgeois discovers and adopts antisemitism. All of this story is centered on Lucien Fleurier, a colorless, hesitant, frightened young man who is searching for an identity and who is always ready to accept the image of himself that his entourage provides and encourages. The Jew appears only as the frightened and innocent victim of right-wing thugs or, on another occasion, as the young bourgeois with whom Lucien refuses to shake hands at a social gathering. Although these two situations occupy very little space in the story, they have great significance and symbolic value in that they prefigure what the fate of the Jew will be in the period of the Holocaust: loss of his social status,

denial of his quality as a human being and physical elimination.

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Whereas Sartre provides us with a schematic representation of the birth of a bourgeois antisemite, Drieu's own life and work illustrate concretely the dramatic passage from philosemitism to antisemitism.

Initially, Drieu was not antisemitic. In his 1927 political essay, *Geneva or Moscow*, in which he advocated the unification of Europe, he warned his contemporaries to be on guard not only against the follies of nationalism but also against the temptation of racism.

In 1931, in another political essay, *Europe against Nationalism*, he proclaimed: "Races do not exist." In his 1933 novel, *Strange Journey*, the Jewish character Gabriel Cahen (who has many traits in common with Drieu's friend, Emmanuel Berl), although full of imperfections, is depicted with fraternal sympathy. Even in his 1934 novella, *The Battle of Charleroi*, when the narrator's Jewish friend is killed in action, the author pays homage to a patriotism which surpasses that of most Frenchmen: the Jew, being French by choice, has an added reason to die for France.

However, Drieu had already started to become very much interested in fascism. He situates in 1932 the political turning point in his life. While lecturing in Argentina on "the crisis of democracy in Europe," he became aware of the mounting power of Nazism which was confirmed by Hitler's accession to power in 1933. He realized that the western world was entering a period of conflict which was going to be dominated by the fascism/communism dilemma. While most of his friends like Aragon, Jean Bernier and Malraux, had already sided with communism either as party members or as fellow travellers, he already knew that fascism had more appeal for him and he sensed that he was quickly moving toward an active role in politics.

The year 1934 is a decisive one for Drieu's conversion to fascism. In January of that year, Drieu is invited to lecture in Berlin. For the first time he meets Otto Abetz who, since 1930, has organized yearly meetings of French and German youth associations to foster a Franco-German rapprochement. The ambitious Abetz is already on his way to the top positions of Nazi bureaucracy. At first a liberal in politics, he becomes gradually attuned to the new regime's ideology. His career, which will culminate with his appointment as German ambassador in Paris in August, 1940, is comparable to that of so many members of the German administration who became, out of ambition, the instruments of Hitler's policy and thus the accomplices of his racist measures.

The theme of Drieu's lecture is that in spite of the Mediterranean elements in the French people and the preference the country had shown for Latin culture and civilization, France was nonetheless rich in Germanic blood, culture and traditions. The importance of this common nordic heritage should facilitate a deep understanding between France and Germany. This was only the first step in the direction of a racist point of view.

Six years later, Drieu had openly become an advocate of a Europe united under Germanic rule. In his *Notes to Understand the XXth Century*, published in 1941, his racist message sounded exactly like German antisemitic propaganda: "Racism in Europe means aryanism. All Europe's ethnic elements are aryan as opposed to the Jewish, half Semitic or negroid elements. From that point of view, Germanism is the spearhead of Europeanism."

The case of Drieu's conversion to political antisemitism is thus very similar to that of many German bureaucrats. One of those "converts", Otto Abetz, who had been used by the Nazi propaganda machine, will in his turn utilize Drieu as an instrument of his cultural propaganda of collaboration.

Bernard Franck thinks however that Drieu also had a personal reason of a more psychological nature to embrace antisemitism: "Drieu knew that he was extremely weak and yet he fancied himself as a Viking. Instead of trying to change himself, he decided to amputate himself of his affinity for the Jews, because he had baptized his own weakness as Jewish. Drieu's antisemitism is a purely personal matter, a way of hating himself, a name he gave to his sickness." There is no doubt that one of the things which attracted Drieu most strongly to fascism is the exaltation of the values of action, virility, force, coupled with a scorn of intellectuality and reasoning, perceived as weak and effeminate. In the same way that the macho values of fascism attracted him all the more because he was very much aware of what he considered the feminine, weak side of his personality, his rejection of the Jews was all the more intense because he had felt strong affinities with them.

In any case, 1934 marks for him the real point of rupture with his friends of the political Left. He interprets the antiparliamentary riot of February 6, 1934, as a sign that a French fascist movement is possible. In 1934, he publishes a brilliant political essay, *Socialist fascism*, in which he tries to

show that the alliance of nationalism

and socialism is possible against liberal and parliamentary democracy.

From 1934 to 1936 his antisemitism increases and becomes virulent when Blum is named prime minister in June, 1936. The large number of Jewish ministers in Blum's Popular Front cabinet and the flow of refugees from Germany and Eastern Europe contribute to create a general climate of hysterical xenophobia and antisemitism among many French people. In June, 1936, Drieu joins Jacques Doriot's fascist party, the Parti Populaire Francois. He is going to write the weekly editorial of the party's newspaper until 1939. The writing of his autobiographical novel, *Gilles*, published in 1939, begins during this period of active propaganda writing.

Gilles is Drieu's only "fascist" novel. The historian Michel Winock, in his 1982 study of antisemitism and fascism in France entitled *Edouard Drumont and Co.*, considers that Drieu's novel should be required reading for historians of political ideas: "Better than most theoretical essays, *Gilles* presents in the apparent disorder of its plot but in the strict logic of the author's ideology...a rich catalogue of fascist ideas as they could be expressed in the French framework." According to Winock Drieu's fascism as it appears in this novel is made of a violent rejection of contemporary France, a nostalgia for an idealized vision of the Middle Ages seen as a golden age and a dreamy aspiration toward a "New Order".

Gilles provides us with a sweeping portrait of the twenty year period from 1917 to 1937 and at the same time, it provides us with a portrait of Drieu's evolution as a man and as a writer toward fascism and antisemitism. The novel covers the end of World War I, surrealism, the mad twenties, the antiparliamentary riot of 1934, the French political scene between the two world wars, and finally the Spanish Civil War. Drieu's ambition was that all his contemporaries would recognize themselves in the book, willy nilly.

Drieu's case, as Mauriac points out in an essay he wrote about him, is representative of his generation. Mauriac sees Drieu as occupying a central position, witness to all the major movements of his time and being "at the nervous centre, at the magnetic centre of all the attractions and temptations of a whole generation. Drieu felt deeply all the currents, all the powerful waves of his time." In this sense Drieu, because of his extreme susceptibility and receptiveness, acts as a weathervane or a seismograph recording the swings of mood and the winds of change.

Even Drieu's Jewish friends acknowledged the documentary and literary value of Gilles. Pierre Heilbronn, for instance, wrote in a letter to Drieu after the novel came out in December, 1939: "Your book held my interest from the first to the last line. This faithful description of a period and of people I have known very well, this loyal narrative of a tormented and often painful life moved me deeply. From a strictly literary point of view, I can only congratulate you."

However, Heilbronn is painfully surprised to find in Drieu an antisemite he had never suspected: "Your systematic antisemitism seems to me odious and absurd. As soon as a Jewish character appears in your novel, you try, without always succeeding, to give him unpleasant or ridiculous traits...I regret to have contributed to give you such a bad impression of the Jews...I remain very fond of you just the same."

Most of Drieu's Jewish friends, if not all of them, remained his friends after the publication of Gilles as if they could not believe he had truly become an antisemite. He, in turn, used his connections with the German occupying forces to help his Jewish friends when they were arrested by the Gestapo. He obtained, for instance, the liberation of his former wife, Colette Jeramee, when she was arrested in 1943.

In Gilles, one can see the ambivalence of Drieu on an artistic level: the tension in him between, on the one hand, the writer, the autobiographer meticulously analyzing his inner self, the passive and lucid spectator, and on the other hand, the polemicist and propagandist who aspires to be a man of action and who ends up embracing an ideology which exalts the wholly virile values of a fighting fraternity.

For Drieu, this tension between weakness and strength, self-analysis and propaganda, becomes, at the level of writing, an irreconcilable contradiction between being a creative artist and being a pamphleteer: the artist cannot bring himself to write straight propaganda. In a pamphlet or newspaper article, he can only adopt a position of opposition which makes an enemy out of his adversary. Whereas, if his fiction is to have the complexity of life, he must be able to present all points of view from within, from a position of identification, even of sympathy with the adversary.

Thus in Gilles one can observe the two contrasted images which correspond to the two sides of Drieu, man of action and man of reflection,

artist and polemicist. Gilles is a thesis novel but it is also

something more. Two novels coexist in Gilles: one which Drieu writes in an antisemitic mood, and another one which contradicts that mood because of the ruthless self-analysis of the decadent hero. The selfanalysis brings out the falsity of the antisemitic thesis. This is what makes of Gilles both a failure as a novel and Drieu's most fascinating work. Drieu paints the two sides of his divided self; he moves continually between these two selves, so that the reader keeps on wondering in this perpetual back and forth motion: where is Drieu? Drieu avoids making a choice and he leaves his reader in a state of uncertainty.

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In a thesis novel such as Gilles, where everything must be oriented towards a justification of the hero's choosing fascism, the character who, at a leftist political meeting, says to Gilles: "You are fascist, Monsieur Gambier," must embody all the negative traits which the positive hero rejects. This character is thus an intellectual, emblematically bespectacled. He is a Jew, and even more, he is "a little Jew"; his voice has to be effeminate and in fact he does not talk like everyone else; he "pipes". Calling Gilles fascist, is of course insulting in the context of a leftist political meeting, but for Gilles, because the insult is coming from an effeminate Jewish intellectual, it assumes the quality of an honor, even a consecration, as Gilles' response makes clear: "And how!" he exclaims.

On the level of self analysis in Gilles, the Stavisky scandal is viewed as a symptom of a collective disease in which Drieu-Gilles, as well as his leftist friend, Gaston Bergery, who is a transparent model for the fictional Clerences, accept their share of responsibility. For both of them, who have indulged in all the follies of the post-war period, this scandal is a brutal awakening and the occasion for selfcriticism. This interiorization of the collective guilt and the acknowledgement of personal responsibility in the national scandal, are much more moving than the manichean search for a scapegoat.

Here again the level of self-analysis contradicts the simplistic aesthetics of a thesis novel and gives Gilles another dimension: that of authenticity. The book thus juxtaposes two components: a polemical work of propaganda and an original creative novel, both of which

together constitute a testimony documenting a period of history.



Frederic J. Grover

Drieu was fully aware of the double nature of his book. After its publication, he wrote in his journal: "Gilles is the portrait of a decadent and a degenerate, reflecting on decadence and degeneration." He added: "This book is a pamphlet but also an entirely detached work of art."

The worst punishment for a writer like Drieu when he introduces antisemitism in his writing is that he writes bad literature. Drieu

knew it and antisemitism disappeared from his fiction after Gilles.

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After the defeat of France in 1940, he thought that Hitler would unify the continent and he urged his countrymen to collaborate with the Germans. He became the director of what had been the most influential literary review in France between 1920 and 1940, the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. He also wrote many propaganda articles in the French press. His *Notes to Understand the XXth Century*, published in October, 1941, are half literary, half political. The political part shows the total bankruptcy of Democracy and the emergence of the new type of man created by totalitarian regimes.

When he became disillusioned about Hitler and the Germans at the end of 1941, Drieu continued his journalistic activity but devoted most of his time to the study of religions and of oriented thought. The three novels he wrote during that period show that he was going through a new conversion which was the exact reverse of the fascist one ten years earlier.

The Man on Horseback, published in 1943, is his farewell to fascism and to the ideal of the leader/savior. At the end of the novel, the man on horseback is on foot. He sacrifices his horse and retires to the desert for a life of meditation. He is going to become a wise man.

The Straw Men, published in 1944, expresses Drieu's detachment from the world of politics. This novel, set in France during the German occupation,

shows that all political positions have become futile because France no longer counts as an independent political power. Frenchmen are all engaged in a civil war on a worldwide scale, a war of conflicting ideologies, in which they can only be agents of one of the superpowers. The only character in the novel who transcends the illusions and agitations of politics is an artist, a painter.

The *Memoirs of Dirk Raspe*, which Drieu left unfinished when he committed suicide in 1945 and which was published posthumously, is the autobiography of an artist, a fictitious painter named Dirk Raspe who is at the same time Drieu's fictional counterpart and a double of Vincent Van Gogh. For the first time in his fiction, Drieu identifies with a great artist. His hero discovers that he was wasting his time in all the other activities in which he had engaged. He discovers ~ rather late — that he was made to be a painter. It is the most ambitious of Drieu's novels and many critics consider that, even in its unfinished state, it is his best work. Needless to say, it is free from any antisemitism.

But it was too late for Drieu: History and his past sins were catching up with him. He was in hiding since the liberation of France. When an order to arrest him was issued in March, 1945, he decided to die.

Drieu's ill-advised commitment to political action in the early thirties, with its concomitant antisemitism, stems from his refusal to accept in himself what he considered to be the weaker, decadent part, the androgynous element, the contemplative and artistic tendency, the pure intellectual. The betrayal of his Jewish friends thus coincides for Drieu with another, deeper betrayal. It is the betrayal of the intellectual's mission, the very betrayal that Julien Benda had described in his 1927 classic, *La Trahison des clercs*: the role of the intellectual, according to him, is to uphold principles and defend truth at all cost against the lies or half-truths of political propaganda. The pure intellectual should never consent to put himself at the service of political aims.

If Drieu had been able to realize earlier not only that he was first of all an intellectual, but also that he could write as "a womanly man", as Joyce put it, he could have integrated the feminine and androgynous side of his personal make-up and used it in his artistic creation. He might have been able then to create in his fiction Jewish characters as authentic and original as those of Joyce and Proust. As it stands, his fiction constitutes a unique

document about the real personality of a French fascist of the 1930's and in a more general way, is a valuable contribution to the study of "fascist personality". What gives value to his testimony is that Drieu did not totally succeed in silencing the artist and the intellectual in him who continued to record faithfully his true evolution.

REALITY AND IMAGINATION PERCEPTIONS OF THE ORGANIZED JEWISH YOUTH DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Chaim Schatzker

On the eve of the Holocaust both the Zionist and non-Zionist organized youth had well-defined ideologies and fully developed institutions and procedures of operation.

In 1933 the Jewish youth movement in Germany was as old as the Weimar Republic. Its members, the Jewish adolescents of the third generation since emancipation, grew up as German citizens, deeply rooted in German culture and the German world of thought into which they had been born. Nevertheless, full and harmonious social and cultural integration was not achieved. Thousands of documents relating to that Jewish youth, including all its trends and sections, parties and organizations, project an image of increasing inner conflict between Jewishness and Germanity. Even representatives of the most extreme assimilationist wing had to admit that "... among the younger Jews we find many ill-adjusted and split personalities; they clearly sense that there are two different worlds that will not be united."

Brought together by the common experience of the search for "self identification", Jewish adolescents set up various types of organizations and movements. With few exceptions, all the Jewish youth organizations, driven partly by external circumstances, partly by an inner urge, underwent a gradual process of returning to the sources of Judaism, to their own innermost being. In embarking on this course the young people were as a rule not concerned with politics, let alone with political parties; it was a process of self-discovery by means of introspection in their striving for integrity.

Having accepted the aims, characteristics, symbols and forms of the

German youth movement, the Jewish youth movement underwent a process of transformation, in the course of which the patterns of thought and emotion and the educational methods of the German youth movement were transferred and adapted to the Jewish situation. This put the activities of the Jewish youth movement on the road back to Judaism, to Jewish nationalism and to socialism. The young peoples' emotional state of "being moved" and the experience, often their first, of life under the open skies, prompted them to reject "society", particularly Jewish society with its conventions and its "un youthful" and "unnatural" attitude to its own Jewishness. That rejection went hand in hand with a deep yearning for a "true" community, which, as the Jewish youth movement persuaded itself without too much rational discussions, could in the nature of things only be a Jewish community, just as it was a German one for the Wandervogel.

Thus, those young Jews were driven to the primary sources of a pristine Judaism, a Jewry not yet corrupted by "society". Moreover, applying the "Meissner Formula" ~ the declaration of intentions of the German youth movement ~ to their own situation, the activists of the Jewish youth movement were prepared to find and grasp the Judaic heritage within themselves by intuition, "in the spirit of inner truth." In the light of that introspective recognition they decided to "fashion their lives, charting their own course," rather than obeying external laws. Jewish youth, then, was more inclined to accept the Judaic heritage it had spontaneously discovered within itself as a binding commitment than it had ever been to respond to the guidance of the official Jewish educational institutions.

A small number of German Jewish youngsters remained devoted to the assimilatory conception and prepared to adapt the aims and characteristics of the youth movement — such as the yearning for a "true community" and "inner truth" — and were not ready to give up the belief in belonging to the German community. According to them the "inner truth" need not be of "Jewish" certitude, nor need the "real community" lead to Judaism.

Rather than interpret their ideologies in the light of political or party considerations both the Zionist and assimilationist Jewish youth movements spoke in terms of ethics, sentiments and beliefs, reflecting an attitude dictated by inner truth, and thus worthy of young minds molded by the youth movement.

As economic conditions deteriorated in the 1920's and antisemitism spread, the youth movement was gradually brought down to earth and

confronted with a situation in which decisions could no longer be avoided and action was called for. The socialist and communist parties demanded unequivocal commitment to politics and political activity in the service of the proletariat. Hechalutz, the Zionist pioneer movement, wanted the Jewish youth movement to place its activities in the service of turning the Zionist ideology into reality, to proclaim the young generation's return to the Jewish people and the Jewish world of thought, to organize vocational retraining and preparation (Hachscharah) and all this to culminate in moving to Palestine and becoming integrated with the mass of Jewish workers there. This demand was reinforced practically by the foundation of the German Hechalutz and Brith Hanoar organizations, which opened their ranks to Jewish youth and were prepared to lead them to the consummation of the Chalutz ideal.

In eastern Europe too, several Jewish youth movements were established and grew between the two World Wars. Although some of them were shaped by the model of the German youth movement, others by socialistic streams and Narodniki, there were significant differences between the western and eastern European groups and between them and the Chalutz organization. Jewish youth in eastern Europe had never moved as far away from the spiritual and intellectual sources of Judaism as their opposite numbers in western Europe. Therefore they did not need as much time or indirect symbolic educational means to arrive at the stage of Hagshama, commitment to and realization of Zionist and Socialist aims, as did their comrades in western Europe. In spite of further essential differences between Jewish youth movements in eastern and western Europe — social origin, their distinct perception of both Zionism and Socialism and of the social function of youth, in their wholly antithetical attitudes toward the significance of the concept of "vocation" and vocational training — both were "youth movements" and as such shared common features and characteristics.

Just as in Germany, the Jewish youth movements in eastern Europe, particularly the Zionist Chalutz youth movements "did not arise as a sort of youth adjunct to the political parties nor were they subordinated to organizational methods or ideological lines imposed from above." Beside the fostering of physical fitness, love of nature and youth values, "they saw their youth cells as the first steps toward a full life and a covenant of friendship." Those frameworks,

Gemeinschaft and Bund as they would have been called in western Europe, were "the creation of the young people themselves and they gave expression to the generation's revolt against the gray and depressing existence in which they found themselves, and to their yearning and striving for revolutionary change."

As in western Europe, "the behavioral pattern of youth combined with fresh and audacious thinking " leading to the "determination to translate the ideal into reality" was the linkage between the youth movements and the Chalutz Organization and their close collaboration.

It is important to observe that most of the institutions and activities common to the Jewish youth movement and Hechalutz — Hachschara communes and centers, training and administration of the branch offices of Hechalutz, arrangements for aliya to Palestine, and liaisons with the Labor movement and the various fractions of the Kibbutz movement, had already been established before 1933. Indeed, the success with which the Jewish youth movement in Germany was able to absorb great numbers of young people in 1933 and thereafter, train them and encourage them to emigrate to Palestine, cannot be properly understood unless we take into account the fact that the tools for this purpose had been prepared and perfected beforehand.

In eastern Europe, similarly, the fact that "the youth movement possessed organizational instruments and the human material which had developed and had been nurtured in the educational cells and which measured up to the special and most formidable mission," enabled it to take the place of a leadership missing after the German conquest.

Many articles and books have been written about the role that the Jewish youth movement and Hechalutz played in the time of the Holocaust, one of the most significant and responsible missions ever entrusted to youth, and about the greatness of their deeds, which "can be properly judged only against the background of the reality of those times."

Here I confine myself to one of the most significant phenomena that characterized the perception of the youth movement at that time, namely, the unusual, surrealistic interaction between the domain of reality and that of imagination.

During the time of the Holocaust those youth movements underwent a

gradual process of disassociation between their former patterns of ideology and educational work, and reality. Eretz Yisrael on the one hand, and assimilation in the national entity of their countries on the other, both became increasingly unachievable and unrealistic

ideals. Nevertheless they continued, now within the realm of imagination alone, to take a perhaps even more important part in the life of their adherents than they ever had before in the realm of reality. In order to understand this phenomenon we have to go back to one of the most significant characteristics of the youth movement.

The youth movement based its approach on the assumption that in education the relationship between cause and effect, challenge and response, is never a straightforward and direct one, but that human reactions and modes of behavior in real situations are determined by psychological predispositions, classified as *Gesinnung* and *Haltung* convictions, inclinations, and attitudes. These predispositions are in turn derived from certain value judgements.

Indeed, the youth movement had always maintained that the decisive element for man is not reality, but consciousness of inner truth and the mental attitudes that derive from it.

In concentrating on mental attitudes and the shaping of a model of existence in conformity with them, the Jewish youth movements were now able to reduce the role of external reality and, so to speak, dismiss it from consciousness. Believing that attitude of mind and individual choice overpowered external reality, they worked toward a complete disassociation between those two domains.

The Zionist movements directed the whole of their education away from the real world of the young people themselves. Physically they were in Germany, but in their hearts they were in Eretz Yisrael. Certainly it was unavoidable that they should have ties with their geographical environment, with their families and culture, with their studies and work, but it would appear that all these, though they may have occupied a significant part of their thoughts and actions, had not permeated to the deepest layers of their souls. That place was filled with the message coming from Palestine, which confronted them with a demand for the whole of their personalities, heart and soul.

The education provided by the Zionist youth movements assumed greater importance during the period of the Nazis' totalitarian regime. It helped each individual member find his or her way in the new conditions being rapidly established in 1933. Objectively, of course, their suffering was in no way less acute than those of any other Jew; subjectively, however, their total

devotion to Palestine served as a buttress and a screen against the calamities raging outside.

While Zionist movements sought to steer the mental attitude of their members in a practical and creative direction, the non-Zionist youth movement, too, was intent on ignoring a reality they found unacceptable and beyond bearing. But they chose to escape, as though to a remote island, in a sea of reality, seeking their refuge in a

state of intellectual narcosis that could offer no solution or way

out. In the tension between "reality" and "inner truth" they chose the latter and paid the price of abandoning the domain of reality. After all efforts of those groups to integrate into the "new order" of the Third Reich ended in failure and after they had to admit that their hope of joining the voelkisch German order was untenable, "to support it despite everything" was in perfect keeping with the movement's Haltung since it was "not external success but a person's inner choice which is decisive." The elimination of Gesinnung entirely from the domain of real events now took the form of surrender to a despair from which there was no more thought of escape, a despair that was like a "universal seal".

In eastern Europe, too, the Jewish youth movements stuck to their former ideologies. The newspapers of the Zionist and socialist movements with their various factions, continued to devote considerable

space to Eretz Yisrael affairs and to socialistic theory. Whereas at

the beginning the youth movements might have been "confident that the troubled times would pass and then the nation would need a young generation that was bodily strong and spiritually sound, which would be the g one to lead the Jewish masses to a different future, a better future," those hopes became increasingly unrealistic. Nevertheless the youth movements went on with their Zionist programs; "like a blind musician

plucks the strings of his harp, so do we pluck the strings of our dream. Since we are crushed by chains, we dream of flying. Since we are living as slaves we dream of a life in freedom. Instead of songs of sadness, let us give expression to our dream by crying, just as prisoners express their dream of freedom by weeping." 10 Reading letters from Eretz Yisrael became "a moment of forgetting, of disassociation from reality."

The second astonishing phenomenon which characterized the youth movement within the domain of interaction between reality and imagination but in the opposite direction, was the transformation of the

remotest and most unthinkable perception into reality. Conceptions which in normal times would have exceeded even the wildest nightmares were now perceived by organized youth as reality, long before this was the case with the adult Jewish world. Various Jewish youth groups and movements were among the first to see through the camouflaged activities of the Germans and to recognize the bitter reality of the Nazi plan to annihilate all the Jews, this at a relatively early date near the start of the gassings at Chelmno and the mass murder at Ponary. The youth movements' underground papers gave the first news about the mass killing and published the first call for resistance.

It was quite in line with the patterns of thinking and feeling of the youth movement that this conception was not perceived mainly on the basis of factual information, but on intuition and brutal inner realization, just as Jewish students and youth movements thirty years before had been among the first to recognize the real meaning hidden behind the slogans of modern antisemitism, or A-semitism, as it was called in circles of the German youth movement. Furthermore, the call to resistance that came from youngsters of pre-military age who had never touched any kind of weapon before, was based not on logic or any real prospects for success or victory, but on an inner decision in spite of reality.

The story of the deeds of the youth movement has been told many times. This paper has sought to show that certain reactions and patterns of behavior of the Jewish youth movement could not be explained by external circumstances only, or by the fact that its members were more flexible and footloose, not being burdened by familial responsibilities, but also by the nature of its being a "youth movement". It is true that young people are regarded as not being fond of rigid thought patterns, more open to new ideas and innovative ways of thinking, and more receptive to

revolutionary actions than adults. But as Gutman has pointed out, "In order to crystallize such an inner decision, people need both mental and spiritual daring and a sense of community with others of similar aspiration."

Both were anchored in their very being a "youth movement".

COMPREHENDING THE HOLOCAUST

Notes

1. On the Jewish Youth Movement, see: Herman Meier-Cronemeyer, "Juedische Jugendbewegung", in *Germania Judaica. Koelner Bibliothek zur Geschichte des deutschen-Judentums*, Folge 27/28, 8Jahrg., Heft 1-4, 1969; Chanoch Rinott, "Major Trends in Jewish Youth Movements in Germany." *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*. London, XIX, 1974.

Chaim Schatzker, *Tnuat Hanoar Hayehudit BeGermania bein Hashanim 1900-1933* (The Jewish Youth Movement in Germany between the Years 1900-1933). Unpublished Dissertation submitted to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1969.

2. Cora Berliner, *Die Organisation der juedischen Jugend in Deutschland*. Berlin: Verlag des Verbandes der juedischen Jugendvereine Deutschlands, 1919, p. 49.

3. On the characteristics of the German Youth Movement and their transformation to the Jewish situation by the Jewish Youth Movement see Chaim Schatzker, "Buber's Influence on the Jewish Youth Movement." *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, London, XXIII, 1978, pp. 154-163.

4. Israel Gutman, "Youth Movements in the Underground and the Ghetto Revolts, Jewish Resistance during the 'Holocaust'".

Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1971, pp. 262-263.

5. On the cooperation between the Jewish Youth Movement and the Hechalutz Organization see Chaim Schatzker, "Chalutziut Vehagshama Halutzit shel Tnuot Hanoar Hayehudiot BeGermania Hanazit" (The Chalutz Ideal and its Realization by the Jewish Youth Movement in Germany). *Yalkut Moreschet*, 30, November, 1980, pp. 59-82.

6. Chaim Schatzker, "The Jewish Youth Movement in Germany in the Holocaust Period (I) Youth in Confrontation with a New Reality" in Leo Baeck Institute Year Book, XXXII (1987), pp. 157-181.

7. Shaul Esch, Introduction to Yitzhak Schwersenz, *Machteret Chalutzim BeGermania Ha-Natzit* (The Chalutz Underground in Nazi Germany). Tel Aviv: Kibbutz Hameuhad, 1969, p. 6.

8. See Note 6, pp. 461-7.

9. See Note 4, p. 264.

10. The Jewish Underground Press in Warsaw. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, vol. 2, 1979, p. 491.

11. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 143-144.

12. Chaim Schatzker, "Hamusag A-shemiut Bitnuat Hanoar BeGermania" (The Term 'Asemitism' in the German Youth Movement), in *Mechkarim*

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Betoldot Am Yisrael VeEretz Yisrael (Studies in the History of the Jewish people and the Land of Israel), University of Haifa, 1970, pp. 267-285.

13. See Note 4, p. 276.

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THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP'S COMPREHENSION IN EAST- CENTRAL EUROPE DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Gyorgy Rank!

In her book, *The Holocaust and the Historians*, Lucy Dawidowicz tried to draw a balance between how the history of the Holocaust was treated by German and Polish historians. The same topic was dealt with by Peter V Erdy, a historian (Jewish, Hungarian, Dutch — I really do not know how he identifies himself) living in Holland when he studied the historiography of the Holocaust in Hungary. In spite of the different methodology, background and approach, the basic conclusion is very similar. Both found that the topic was inadequately treated. Vard/s conclusion mainly (not entirely) blames the Communist system in Hungary which for a good many years did not permit the issue to be placed on the agenda, because in some ways it would have contradicted the official ideology. Dawidowicz claims that "different national traditions or political situations accounted for the absence of the Holocaust from the history books in the different countries."

In her final explanation why historians failed to put the Holocaust in its proper place in human history, Dawidowicz refers first of all to Polybius' conclusion that "historians must show some partiality to their own countries." Nationalism is supposed to be one of the main architects, even in a milder form than national identity is supposed to be, and according to Dawidowicz this is one of the reasons that the truth did not entirely get through, particularly if it had revealed the moral shortcomings of their own country in war and peace. One may raise a number of questions regarding her statement from the point of view of her treatment of historiography. If this national sentiment in historical treatment can be partially applied in

the case of German

and Polish historians, one has to ascertain to what extent Dawidowicz's recipe explains why she found that so many British historians failed to put the Holocaust into proper place in the history of the Second World War. This was probably because despite the uniqueness of the Holocaust in human history, the Second World War still had a number of traditional features. It was fought between armies, and the armies which achieved victory and put an end to the Holocaust were British, American and Soviet forces.

Dawidowicz's misconception goes even further when she almost identifies Communist with Nazi historiography and does not distinguish between historiography which advertises racism and glorifies killing of Jews, and that which, due to its ideological biases, is not willing to accept the particular process of the Holocaust in the larger framework of Nazi ideology and inclines to forget about it. Polybius' statement certainly is valid to Dawidowicz's approach as well. I would not discuss her views here, had she not finished her book with some general statements which are also relevant to my topics.

Dawidowicz strongly criticizes those historians "who assign historical responsibility for the events of the past." Under the influence of German historicism and then of Marxist historical materialism... historians assigned responsibility for certain events not to the men of history who acted, governed and legislated, who made war and peace, inspired and revolted, who agitated and educated, who tyrannized and murdered but rather to "vast impersonal forces". She goes even further. "The historian who assigns causal responsibility to these 'vast impersonal forces' rather than to the movers and shakers who made events happen has abdicated his professional obligations." These are strong accusations. As regards the Holocaust, one of the major (if not the major) human tragedies in history, they sound quite convincing. I cannot assume that Dawidowicz, the author of a number of excellent books, is not informed adequately that during the last 30-40 years powerful and famous historical schools, from Braudel to Postan, are willing to attribute enormous importance to "vast impersonal forces". Can I assume that she is not familiar with the Annales school, that she never heard of the (non-Marxist) sociological approach, and that she did not encounter the political science, the structuralism and a number of other important trends in modern historiography? Did she eventually

mention those two schools because one is German (by the way, she is wrong in imputing this impersonal trend to nineteenth century German historical writing) and the other is Soviet? It is

certainly more popular to put the blame on them, to find them guilty of abdicating professional obligations, than to blame the French Annales school or the Anglo-Saxon sociological approach.

This introduction was necessary since in my short paper I should like to talk about Horthy and Tiso, and their personal role and contributions to the annihilation of the Jews in Hungary and Slovakia. But even given the necessary respect to the role of those who governed and acted, I shall have to put their activity in the framework of those "vast impersonal forces" without which their activity could not have been properly perceived, and of forces to which even Dawidowicz

made a number of references, tracing German and Polish antisemitism.

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One may take the position that traditions, ideology, social structure, the presence of antisemitic tradition or the absence of it made no difference, since Hitler's Final Solution had been carried out everywhere in reach of the German troops. A great deal of truth is undoubtedly contained in this statement. It is not difficult to prove that regardless of the strength of antisemitic tradition, and of personal motivation and feeling of the leaders of the so-called satellite countries, regardless of the size of active and voluntary collaboration in the Holocaust, the killing of the Jews as a part of well conceived mass murder was done by the Germans, and even the deportation was carried out under German pressure or even command. Nevertheless, I still feel it is important to see what images of the Jews had previously been formed in the relevant countries, since this may provide at least a partial explanation for the surrender to National Socialist antisemitism.

In a letter addressed to the Prime Minister of Hungary, BajcsyZsilinszky, the strongly anti German and formerly strongly antisemitic deputy, protested the presentation of the film of Jud Suess in Hungarian cinemas, by saying that under the given circumstances no honest person could be an antisemite any more. This was in 1941, long before Auschwitz. And we have to keep in mind that "antisemitism is a cluster of behavior with a

single name. It ranges from social snobbery to a program for systematic extermination."

The two key persons, Horthy and Tiso, have to be seen in the context of these different variations of antisemitism as it had developed in this area of East-Central Europe. Antisemitism was unpalatable and disgusting, but at the beginning of the career of the two leaders it

was more of the nineteenth century variety, and different from the National Socialist brand. The political rhetoric and the public sentiments must be viewed in the turmoil of the beginning of the twentieth century, which was burdened with far-reaching political changes, massive new economic and social trends, the dissolution of rural, traditional society and life, industrialization and urbanization, the decline of the social elite and the emergence of a new elite. The two began their political career in the historical period marked by the disintegration of the old Hungarian Kingdom, and the emergence and even formation of national identity and independence. Hungarian, Slovakian, Romanian nationalism were fighting against each other, trying to belong to the future, to escape from the entrapment of old values while seeking to acquire new ones. All this was complicated with the political paranoia of antisemitism, which had been successfully used by conservative politicians and professional demagogues in manipulating public opinion.

In some ways Horthy and Tiso had the same political, and in part social, background. Of course the question immediately arises as to what common features are to be found between the admiral and aide-de-camp of Francis Joseph, the offspring of a traditional Hungarian noble family, on the one hand, and the poor Slovakian priest, son of a Slovakian peasant, on the other. The common denominator should be the political and social atmosphere of Hungary around the turn of the century. But while Horthy was a supporter of the existing system, Tiso was an ardent opponent of it. While Horthy was enjoying the privileges of the Hungarian nobility and upper classes, Tiso belonged to those Slovaks who were deprived of their minority rights, and were strongly critical of the oppression of the Slovakian population in Hungary as well. He also opposed the ruling liberalism from the point of view of the conservative church.

No evidence whatsoever can be found that Horthy had any personal reason to be an antisemite. He might not have met many Jews personally, neither while serving in the Navy, nor while he was the aide-de-camp of Francis

Joseph. It is possible that his virulent antisemitism might have flared up only as a consequence of the revolutions. However, antisemitism was present in his thoughts long before, probably deriving from three different sources: the traditional antisemitism of the Hungarian gentry who, even while admitting that the Jews were fulfilling economically useful functions, despised their businesslike mentality, their behavior and their appearance; the

traditional antisemitism of the Habsburg officers who despised the allegedly cowardly Jews who were usually regarded as bad soldiers, and represented new ideas clearly opposing the traditional and hierarchical authoritarian value system of the Army; probably last but not least, after having spent a couple of years before the war in Vienna, it is very likely that he picked up some elements of the more virulent, more social oriented antisemitism which was fashionable under the leadership of Karl Lueger in the imperial capital. In fact, it is very likely that all these aspects of his thinking had undergone changes under the impact of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, under the shock of the collapse of the historical Hungary and under the influence of the revolutions. It is very likely that he felt that the challenge of liberalism was more dangerous in undermining the traditional order than he had ever expected. The old conservative assumption that any concession to liberalism would end up in anarchy and communism, seemed to be proven to him by the transfer of the Karolyi revolution to the revolution of Béla Kun and the hatred of communism as a mortal danger for the historical leading elite in Hungary. He also believed that the revolutionary regime expropriating his estate was Jewish since it was mainly dominated by leftist Jewish intellectuals. Horthy, like a large number of his fellow officers, was subject to the influence of more radical ideas, and those ideas were slowly emerging in the Szeged period.

Tiso, who was almost a quarter of a century younger, shared some of these roots of antisemitism which were present in liberal Hungary as well. However, concerning his personal experience, we may note that before and during the war he had spent several years in Vienna, with its very strong antisemitic political movement, like the Christian Socialists of Lueger. But his intellectual background and his spiritual education might also have included the anti-liberal Christian Socialist ideology — either in his Hungarian version in the People's Party of the early twentieth century, or in the Slovakian one, where the intellectual leaders, mainly local priests and teachers, combined what they learned from the church and from the

People's Party, with the emerging Slovakian national movement. To the young priest the Jews meant not only the incarnation of liberalism clearly fighting against the traditional Christian values but also a foreign race who entirely identified themselves with the Hungarians, that is, with the oppressive magyarization in the ethnically mixed regions.

At first Horthy eagerly accepted the antisemitic excesses of the White Terror. Later, however, he slowly started to issue public or private warnings against open atrocities against the Jews. Was he motivated by inner conviction, or by mere opportunism, as one who relatively early realized that to be a Jew-baiter does not help either his personal career or his compatriots' political aim to establish a Right wing anti-liberal Christian regime with international recognition? Certainly he was already the Regent of Hungary when the first anti-Jewish legislation, the numerus clausus (limiting the number of Jewish students at the universities) was introduced in Hungary. Nevertheless, as Regent he never publicly uttered any word which might sound antisemitic or anti-Jewish. There is evidence, however, that he held views regarding Jews, or a part of the Jews, as alien elements, dangerous for the security of his political system. When the great depression reached its height, and economic difficulties and political discontent became more and more dangerous in Hungary, he convened a meeting of the council of ministers, and put on the agenda of this meeting the illegal immigration of Jews into the country. He blamed the interior minister that in spite of his ban, "permanent Jewish invasion could be observed particularly in the eastern and northeastern part of the country."

During the 1930's right wing propaganda and ideology gained further ground in Hungary. Several right wing groups, among them the Arrow Cross Party, did emerge with very strong antisemitic tones. Even I do not share the view of Bela Vag6 (based on the report of the British Ambassador) that "one of the reasons for the government lethargy" towards the Nazis should be sought in the attitude of Horthy who was a "violent antisemite" and sympathized with them. It is true that the government displayed a strong indulgence toward the extremist movement. However, at this point it is very unlikely that Horthy's personal antisemitic view was the moving force which barred a stronger hand against the right wing movements. It seems to me more likely that explanation is to be sought in foreign policy reasons. Hungary was constantly seeking support from Germany for its foreign goal to revise the Trianon frontiers. Further explanation may be found in the middle class

and particularly the lower middle class where there were strong antisemitic feelings. The promise of spoliation of the Jews aroused new hopes in a country where social deprivation was extremely strong and where the educated youth saw little prospect of settled employment. These social problems had contributed at least as much to the

growing support of the right wing movement, as they had contributed to the massive hostility of the officer corps — so closed to Horthy — against liberal (according to them, Jewish) ideas.

Obviously anybody not inclined to antisemitism could probably have resisted the domestic pressure for antisemitic legislation more definitively. Had Horthy not been regarded as an antisemite, he probably could have more successfully limited the support of right wing ideas and its antisemitism to the lumpenproletariat and lower middle class. He also could have counteracted these ideas which, by the way, were openly rejected by Prime Minister Gombds, one of the firmer antisemites in the country, a couple of years before, but had gained ground in the ruling circles and among the political elite. Horthy himself refrained from making any openly antisemitic statements during these years. This was probably for political reasons, since he might have felt that as Regent he had to be above politics. But it has also been proven that Horthy's antisemitism underwent some changes during these years, and he more or less accepted the view shared by Teleki (and in some way even by Bethlen) and other top politicians, that proper distinction should be made between Jews and Jews. As Count Teleki put it in a speech delivered in the U.S.A. during the twenties: "The tinti-Jewish movement, which really existed and which still exists in Hungary" is not "against the Jewish religion or Jews in general". If I had to characterize it as a historian it would be rather with the

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words, "anti-Galician movement". The Galician Jew was the bad Jew. He was poor, uneducated, without loyalty to Hungary, and obviously a communist. This distinction, which served a very flexible framework if it was needed, certainly was accepted by Horthy, who became more and more convinced as well of the usefulness of the rich Jewish industrialists, bankers, highly educated experts and scholars, particularly if they were not involved in politics, and had no leftist inclinations.

The reports of the British Ambassador from Budapest constantly referred to Horthy as "violently antisemitic". Nevertheless, the introduction of the first anti-Jewish legislation must be traced back not only to the demand of the officer corps, more and more of whom were turning to politics, but to the foreign policy needs — as the possibility of territorial revision resulting from a stronger collaboration with Germany became more and more popular — and to the social problems, which made at least some redistribution of income more or less inevitable. Horthy's personal conviction might have contributed

but it did not have a decisive role. Early in January, 1939, after the second anti-Jewish Bill had been introduced, the British Ambassador reported a conversation with the Regent. While in a previous report he had referred to the three *betes noires* of Horthy, namely, the Jews, the Bolsheviks, and Trianon, now he reported "how far the Regent had travelled from his primitive antisemitism under the influence of neighborship with Germany". Besides making a few remarks on the Jews "his conversation was nothing but a sustained diatribe against Germany." A few days later he commented that Admiral Horthy wished to modify the most drastic articles of the Bill. Horthy's views about the Jews were clearly summarized in a private letter addressed to the Prime Minister in 1940:

As regards the Jewish problem, I have been an antisemite throughout my life. I have never had contact with Jews. I have considered it intolerable that here in Hungary every factory, bank, large fortune, business, theatre, press, commercial enterprise, etc., should be in the hands of the Jews, and that the Jew should be the image reflected of Hungary, especially abroad. Since, however, one of the most important tasks of the government is to raise the living standard (i.e., we have to acquire wealth), it is impossible, in a year or two, to eliminate the Jews, who have everything in their hands, and replace them by incompetent, mostly unworthy big-mouthed elements, for we would become bankrupt. This requires a generation at least. I have perhaps been the first to loudly profess antisemitism, yet I cannot look with indifference at inhumanity, senseless humiliations, when we still need them. In addition, I consider the Arrow-Cross men for example, to be by far more dangerous and worthless for my country than the Jew. The latter is tied to this country from interest, and is more faithful to his adopted country than the Arrow-Cross men, who, like the Iron Guard, with their muddled grains, want to play the country into the hands of the Germans.

Obviously, Horthy must have recognized the fact that the so-called Jewish question had become more and more a force utilized by the Germans to control Hungary or at least to blackmail or to push the Hungarian government in the required direction if it were reluctant to act. Nevertheless, he did not protest or prevent the introduction of

the third Jewish law. Was he doing this because of his inner conviction? In a letter written a couple of years earlier, he discussed the protection of the magyar race. Since formally the third anti-Jewish law had a so-called race defense purpose, he accepted the law as a necessary step toward reconciliation with the right wing political forces, whose strength and influence were significantly increasing during the first period of the war. On top of the successes and victories of the German army, antisemitism was a kind of common denominator for different political and intellectual groups which gained ground almost everywhere in the country, particularly among intellectuals, army officers and civil servants. Or Horthy might have regarded the third anti-Jewish law as a part of the price to be paid to Hitler for the Second Vienna Award, the return of Northern Transylvania to Hungary. Even during his interrogation by the Americans after the war Horthy emphasized that almost up to the defeat of the German army[^] in Stalingrad he was not sure whether Germany had really lost the war.

Nevertheless, no general anti-Jewish policy was carried out during this period.

During the fall of 1941 the deportation of 20,000 Jews who lacked Hungarian citizenship, the labor service and the treatment of the members of this service in the Ukraine, clearly demonstrated that things were getting more difficult for Jews in Hungary. In the summer of 1942 a new law was introduced that resulted in the confiscation of all landed property owned by Jews. Still, all German demands for deportation were rejected, and anti-Jewish measures were not comparable with the situation in Slovakia, or in Romania, where anti-Jewish measures reached the point of mass deportation or even extermination. In 1943, the German Minister in Hungary, Jagow, reported the election of two Jewish members of the Upper House to the Committee for Foreign Affairs: "These elections show clearly that the Hungarian government has no intention of adopting a policy with regard to the Jews that would be in line with ours." The fate of the Hungarian Jews became more and more a part of German-Hungarian

discussions and even quarrels. On April 16, 1943, when Hitler objected to the lenient treatment of the Jews in Hungary Horthy replied that he "had done everything that could be done against the Jews, but one couldn't murder them or let them die, after all. The Fuehrer replied that wasn't necessary. Hungary could place Jews in concentration camps, just as Slovakia had done." It is entirely possible that Horthy did

not know that the majority of the Jews of Slovakia had already been exterminated.

The Jews were again a topic on April 17. They were responsible for black-market activities, said Hitler. "As Horthy replied, what should he do with the Jews after he had withdrawn from them all means of livelihood; he could not kill them, after all — the Reich Minister of Foreign Affairs explained that the Jews had to be either destroyed or brought into concentration camps. There was no other alternative."

After this conversation Goebbels noted in his diary that the Jewish problem was being solved less satisfactorily in Hungary, and they had brought up a "number of humanitarian counterarguments which of course don't apply at all to this situation."

This situation certainly did not change significantly until the German occupation of the country. It is true as well that Hitler tried to stress that it was exactly the presence of a large number of Jews that made the occupation of the country inevitable. He even made some vague promises that after the Jewish question was solved successfully, the German troops might leave Hungary. Whether Horthy really believed in these promises or merely pretended to do so cannot be definitely ascertained. His recollections cannot be accepted as proof. There certainly was a written statement from the newly appointed Prime Minister, Sztbjay, presented at the meeting of the Council of Ministers that it was not necessary to ask for the Regent's approval for the Jewish laws, as the Regent had given him a free hand in this matter. Was this true? Certainly to the extent that during the following weeks when a large number of anti-Jewish laws were published, there was no sign of protest, direct or indirect, on the part of the Regent. Neither did he protest putting the Jews in ghettos. Possibly he may not have been aware of the commencement of the deportation. Had he known it, he would not have had any illusion about its real purpose. Even with his fading memory, he might have remembered his conversation with Hitler, just a year earlier. We can certainly dismiss his statement in his

memoirs, but he expressed almost the same view in his affidavit of May 27, 1947, when he repeated that he found out about the extermination of the Jews only at the end of June when the reports on Auschwitz reached him. When asked about his reaction to this news he answered as follows:

As long as deportations were carried out in the countryside, I

was powerless in any confrontation with the Germans, since my

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various protests to Wesenmayer had no effect at all. But as the deportations were threatening the Capital too, things changed somewhat. The Hungarian armed forces, scattered through the whole country, were so insignificant, that any resistance against the German rules seemed unthinkable. The armed forces in Budapest, too, were minimal, but they were under the orders of an excellent, reliable officer, General Bakay, whom I could trust; consequently, as long as the Germans would not bring about an open break, and did not yet want to destroy the farce of a sovereign Hungarian State, these forces could be used with some success.

Other testimonies certainly contradict Horthy's affidavit. A number of them indicate that the Auschwitz protocol reached Hungary long before the end of June. According to the report by the Swiss ambassador on his conversation with Horthy in June, the Regent was ashamed of what had happened to the Jews in his country. In another report, published after the war by the reformed church Bishop Ravasz, he called on the Regent on two occasions and informed him about the roundup of the Jews in the provinces. The Regent told him he would do everything against excesses, and though it is possible that a few hundred thousand Jews were deported from the country, "not a single hair of theirs will be twisted." All these statements are contradictory. On the one hand, his basic antisemitism, his belief that the Jews had to pay the price in order for him to remain in his post where he might eventually have the possibility of acting at a given moment, and on the other hand, the more and more frequent outside protests, his fear that the country would be punished for what happened to the Jews and his inner protest against the Holocaust as it had been carried out by the Germans, might have led him to act, but act very slowly and cautiously. At the outset he probably did this more to gain time than to achieve results. Nevertheless it is certain that his first protest, not open, of course, was on June 6, when he wrote the following lines to his Prime

Minister:

Above all it is clear that I was not in a position to prevent anything that was a German measure in this line, or a government measure enacted on German demand, so that in this respect I was forced to a positive attitude. Although in this way not only could I obtain no advance knowledge of the measures taken, but

even subsequently I was not informed of everything; nevertheless, of late I have received information to the effect that in many respects more had been done here than even by the Germans themselves, partly in such a brutal, and sometimes inhuman manner as has not been done even in Germany.

It is therefore my resolute demand that urgent measures be taken by the Government to halt [these steps] in branches of professions, e.g., and in particular in engineering and medical work, in trade in general, or in occupations where special learning or experience is required.... The Jews concerned should not be removed from their domiciles, nor should measures be taken hampering them in their work, nor should any obstacles be placed in the way of implementing the contents of this paper without delay.” 22

However no mention of the Jews was made in the letter written to Hitler on the same day. And it took another month for Horthy to be able to stop any further deportations. Almost half of the Jews deported to Germany were taken out during this month of hesitation and stalemate. It is well known that Horthy's intervention was a decisive factor in saving a large number of Budapest Jews. He remained silent when Jews from the countryside were brought to Auschwitz, yet he extended a saving hand when the Jews from Budapest were in imminent danger. There is a basic contradiction which might be explained by time factors, by foreign intervention and pressures, by the impact of the successful landing of the Allies in Normandy or by humanitarian feeling, but one cannot entirely dismiss the explanation that behind the changing attitude there was Horthy's deepest feeling, his changed attitude toward the Jews. The fact that he had been a hero of early antisemitism and White Terror was an asset for him and in the eyes of Hitler as well, but he partly modified his attitude to the Jews. He now disliked only the poor, leftist or even communist (or potential communist) Jews from the countryside, and was even willing to get them out of the country. This does not automatically

mean that he wanted to kill them. "All Jews who had made contributions in the fields of science, industry or finance must be regarded as patriots and must remain unharmed."

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Tiso's power, if it existed at all in the inter-war period, had no influence on the fate of Czechoslovakia's Jewish population. Czechoslovakia was the only country in Eastern Europe where democracy really prevailed, because of the significant spiritual influence of Thomas Masaryk, which did not tolerate any human discrimination. Antisemitism as such obviously existed, as it existed almost everywhere, but it played no significant part in politics, where its role was limited. Hlinka's party had certainly enjoyed significant popular support in Slovakia, but it did not represent the bulk of the Slovakian population. Its mainly conservative leadership advocated a strong nationalism and made no secret of their strong antisemitic feelings, but they did not yet have legislative or executive power. The situation certainly changed in the second half of the thirties for the following reasons: Firstly, the rise of Hitler increased the strength of the anti-Czech trends. Since the anti-Czech front composed of the Sudeten Germans was growing, the Slovakian People's Party felt more and more that its day was approaching. Secondly, the antisemitic trend, constantly present, now reached new heights, since it was a proper way to gain German confidence and capitalize on the spirit which seemed to be the order of the day. Thirdly, a new generation emerged in the Party, who held views more influenced by fascist ideology and therefore were able to abandon traditional anti-liberalism in favor of the new line.

Tiso did not formally belong to these young groups, but while Hlinka was number one in the Party, he certainly did move closer to this group, using them as well in the fight for succession as leader of the Party. In 1937-38 the more aggressive policy of the Slovak People's Party shifted slowly from autonomist to separatist, and included the idea of corporate system while also pursuing a more extremist anti-Jewish campaign.

Tiso, the professor of moral theology, played an important role in the People's Party as early as 1925. He belonged more to the moderates than to the extremists. The People's Party antisemitism could not be regarded as a mere tool for power, however. The Party was strongly influenced and in some ways even dominated by the Catholic church in Slovakia. The anti-Jewish trends in this church — Jews as the killer of Jesus — were strong,

since most of the priests were Slovaks who felt that the Jews, who mainly belonged to the middle or upper middle class, were still strongly magyar as they had been before the First World War. The Christian Socialist ideology was hostile to Jews and to

liberalism, yet during the twenties its antisemitism was more the traditional type than the Hitler brand. The links were clear, however, and that explains why immediately after they had access to power Tiso and his party were willing to introduce strong anti-Jewish legislation. Monsignor Jozef Tiso, a priest, became the President of the Slovak State, Chief of the People's Party and Supreme Commander of the paramilitary groups of the powerful Hlinka guard. There were other states at this time where the Catholic clergy had a similarly strong influence. This is not the place to discuss the serious differences between the extremists and Tiso, but Slovak National Socialism took over some key elements of the Nazi ideology: "One Nation, one Party, one Leader" in a racially pure nation where even intermixture with Jews was forbidden and the Jewish problem was supposed to be solved along the lines of the Nuremberg Laws. Tiso favored elimination of the Jews from the political and economic life of the country.

Tiso certainly followed the traditional antisemitic line, and might have been content with depriving the Jews of their civil rights, but he never identified himself with the idea of deportation. Yet he did not even resist the pressure of Germany and even of his fellow countrymen like Sanio Mach. The Zidovsky Codex, with its 270 paragraphs, was only the introduction to the labor camps and soon led to the transfer of 20,000 Slovak Jews to the East. As a politician^ Tiso agreed in spite of the opposition of the Slovak bishops. Several signs were given that some of the leaders, including some hard liners like Tuka, had misgivings and concerns, nevertheless, they were willing to accept at face value the German promise that the Jews were to be settled in Polish towns. It is true that Tiso was willing to extend many exemptions, mostly among baptized Jews, in this strongly Catholic country. It is not yet clear to what extent the possibility for 35,000 Jews to remain in the country was caused by the warning to Tiso that Jews were not being resettled in Poland, but killed there, or by the intervention of the Papal Nuncio, or by bribes given to Wisliczeny. But this is what happened, at least until the uprising of 1944. Once the German troops overcame the resistance of the Slovakian partisans, the Germans, now sole masters of the country, started the

deportations again, and were able to kill most of the remaining Jews, except the younger ones who disappeared in the mountains.

Tiso was certainly aware of the fate of those Jews, but apparently was no longer concerned with them. The approaching fall of his state now made him nothing more than a puppet in German hands. He was

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certainly not a murderer. A significant number of Jews actually escaped the Holocaust through his intervention. But his basic antisemitic feelings had contributed to the creation of the necessary political and psychological environment for the Holocaust. His desire to try to get rid of the Jews made him reluctant to intervene to save them from the alleged resettlement, and even when he was more or less aware of the real meaning of this resettlement his interventions were timid, lacking inner conviction. Even during his conversation with Hitler, Tiso boasted about what had been done against the Jews. He sought to strengthen his position and undermine that of Hungary by constantly referring to the fact that Horthy's policy toward the Jews was mild. He constantly emphasized that if the Slovakian troops were fighting well that could be attributed to the fact that the Jews, who allegedly would have undermined this fighting spirit, had disappeared from Slovakia. He even told Hitler a story which made the rounds in Slovakia. According to the joke, when the Fuehrer entered Vienna he met a former Jewish schoolmate, who asked for protection. The Fuehrer advised him to disappear, and not to be seen again. This Jewish schoolmate of Hitler then went to Prague where the same scene was soon repeated. Then the same happened in Brussels and later in Paris. Now this former Jewish schoolmate of Hitler lives in Budapest, Tiso concluded.

Neither Horthy nor Tiso regarded antisemitism merely as a political tactic. Obviously they never became so fanatical as to regard antisemitism as an evangelistic doctrine. The old idea of Lueger's, "It's for me to decide who is a Jew," was probably close to their views at the beginning. In Tiso's case religious views were still overwhelming, Horthy was more afraid of Jews as "a ferment of decomposition". For Horthy, after the first year of White Terror, antisemitism was obviously not the core of his system, even if it was an aspect of it, and it never became the central motivation for his policies. For Tiso, the case was different. Since his state was subject to the mercy of Hitler, and its survival seemed to be entirely dependent on

German support, antisemitism became a more organic part of his policy. It had an important political and social function for the so-called independence of Slovakia. During the war Horthy realized more and more that antisemitism was a tool for placing Hungary under German domination with the loss of its independence. For Tiso submission was not the issue since he was entirely created by Hitler, and the whole thing seemed to be part of the movement for Slovak independence. Was he more

an antisemite than Horthy? It is difficult to answer. Obviously during the interwar period Horthy made his peace with some strata of the Jewish population, and he felt that they were important for Hungary. Tiso never had the same experience. Since in political or cultural terms the Jews in Slovakia were either closer to Prague or to Budapest, but never very much to Bratislava. Tiso might have intervened to save some Jews for humane reasons, but certainly not for the independence of the country. Horthy's actions on behalf of the Jews were as well a part of Hungarian statesmanship. That explains why Horthy, talking to Hitler during the war, mainly defended the Jews. He felt that he was not ruling Hungary by grace of Hitler, and he and his country could survive Hitler as well. Tiso, on the other hand, was aware that he and his puppet state were entirely dependent on Hitler. This limited his scope of activity, and he had no choice but to comply. Because of the strong antisemitic traditions it was not hard to comply. Generations of antisemitism, economic theories about the role of Jews in capitalism, a long tradition of political antisemitism, aU joined with Slovakian nationalism and made a strong appeal. Under German pressure it was easier for him to come to the Final Solution; from peaceful antisemitism to the militant program, from harmless antisemitism to the pogroms, from discrimination to mass murders.

Kolakowsky is certainly right nowadays when he asserts that the various sorts of antisemitism contain only quantitative, gradual differences. The pre-conditions for pogroms, discrimination and later the Holocaust are to be found in those types of political systems which tolerate, or even more, support antisemitism even in its slightest form. Around the turn of the century one could still have believed in a harmless antisemitism. After Auschwitz can any one believe there is such a thing as a harmless antisemitism?

Notes

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12. *The Confidential Papers of Admiral Horthy*, pp. 150-151.
13. *Csak szolgálati használatra, Iratok a Horthy hadsereg történetéhez* (Only for Use in Service, Documents to the History of Horthy's Army). Budapest: 1968, p. 377.
14. Mario Fenyo, *Hitler, Horthy and Hungary*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972, p. 57.
15. Jagow's telegram is published in: *The Destruction of Hungarian Jewry*. Edited by Randolph L. Braham. New York: World Federation of

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17. *Vadirat a nacizmus ellen* (Indictment of Nazism), vol 1, Budapest: Magyar Izraelitak Országos Hitkozsege, 1958, p. 72.

18. *Fenyó*, p. 194.

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20. Peter Gosztonyi, *Magyarország a második világháborúban* (Hungary in the Second World War). Munich: 1984, p. 39.

21. Albert Bereczky, *A magyar protestantizmus a zsidóüldözés ellen* (Hungarian Protestantism against the Persecution of the Jews). Budapest: Reformatus Tractatus Vallalat, pp. 15-16.

22. *Fenyó*, pp. 198-199.

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24. *Vdg6*, p. 91.

25. See: Jan Havrdnek, "Fascism in Czechoslovakia", *Native Fascism in the Successor States 1918-1949*. Edited by Peter Sugar. Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 1971, pp. 47-62.

26. Jeshayaha Jellinek, "Clergy and Fascism. The Hlinka Party in Slovakia", *Who Were the Fascists?*. Edited by Stein, Ugelwick, Largsen, et al., Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1980.

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THE COMPREHENSION OF THE FINAL SOLUTION IN FRANCE AND HUNGARY: A COMPARISON

Asher Cohen

In order to briefly characterize the specific situation of the Jews in Nazi-dominated Europe under the Final Solution policies, I would suggest that the German decision to annihilate all the Jews was a policy independent of and above other economic or military considerations which relied on cooperation in those countries where local governments and administrations functioned.

Comprehension of the Final Solution might have been influenced by the way information was received and interpreted, while popular reaction should have reflected how the political situation was understood. In the following I shall try to analyze, on the one hand the way information on the Final Solution was received in France, and on the other, the popular reaction as known to us. This will later be compared to the same processes in Hungary, another independent state, and in many respects in a situation similar to that of France. Since the Final Solution policy was not implemented before 1942, the period after this date will mainly be under consideration. 1

In previous research, interest was restricted largely to the leadership. The present paper will attempt to examine how ordinary people could or did understand the Final Solution policy being conducted around them. In examining various sources, attention will be concentrated especially on information about the mass murders executed in Eastern Europe, as an indication of the fate which awaited the deportees; on the specificity and uniqueness of the German anti-Jewish policy; and on the role of the local governments and administrations in these respects.

In treatment of information available during the war, we must bear in mind

that the legal and official sources that denied rumors of mass extermination were regarded by contemporaries as State-controlled and thus unreliable. Other sources were by definition illegal, emanating from various underground organizations, personal experience or hearsay, and hence totally uncontrollable, but since only these provided genuine and true information, they will be extensively used here. Nevertheless, it is important that their specific character and their low credibility at the time should always be kept in mind.

Significant indications of the contemporary comprehension can be found in some printed sources of the period under discussion. We have at our disposal a great collection of underground papers from France, both Jewish and non-Jewish, that can indicate what was or could be known and what was understood or misunderstood. Since none of the traditional sources of public opinion existed, the regime created efficient mechanisms to keep itself constantly informed on the state of public opinion. The chief mechanism was centered around the Prefects' monthly reports, which were based on numerous first hand local sources. Official reports of a different character were those of the regional delegates of the Commissariat General aux Questions Juives (CGQJ). All these indicate trends in comprehension by the population, Jewish and non-Jewish. For additional information we shall also draw on contemporary correspondence, especially from the underground Zionist organizations, as well as irreplaceable memoirs and testimonies, written after 1945.

Each individual source poses difficulties of analysis, and is subject to interpretation. We can seek to balance these by simultaneously using several sources of information available in 1942-44, and also by studying popular reaction of the time. In this way we can describe tendencies in comprehension, but without quantifying our inquiries. Our conclusions must therefore remain tentative and suggestive, constituting a general impression.

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We begin with the memoirs of Georges Wellers, now a historian of the deportation from France, but at that time a physician and a deportee from Drancy to Auschwitz.

I was arrested in Paris, December 12 (1941), but deported to Auschwitz only two and a half years later.... Thanks to my

functions as chief of Drancy's miserable "hygienic service" I had free access to all quarters,... and I was one of the best informed on the mental state of some tens of thousands of inmates — deportees-to-be. I can categorically affirm that we had no inkling of the systematic assassinations which in reality awaited the deported Jews at the end of their voyage.

Further on, Wellers presents eight other published testimonies, all by deported French Jews, and all sustain the same thesis of total ignorance of the real meaning of the Final Solution. Very similar reactions can be found in many other testimonies of the death camp survivors.

Professor Robert Debre was also a relatively well informed person because of his contacts with the highest medical circles in Paris and his very early association with the resistance. In the few lines dedicated to the subject he writes: "It was only in the course of the Spring of 1945, that we pictured to ourselves what the camps were like.... Till then we could not believe the extermination of entire families, nor the tortures before annihilation."

Other testimonies present a different point of view. Anny Latour, a participant in the Jewish underground, wrote in her book on the Jewish Resistance that she and her comrades did receive information from Switzerland and from two escapees from Auschwitz about what was really going on, but they, the actual resisters, were unable to believe it. The same was heard from some Jewish Communist resisters as well. Some, like Wellers wrote expressly about information and knowledge; the others spoke of believing. Many similar testimonies were written by Jewish survivors after their liberation. Others rarely mention the Jews, and their comprehension during the period remains undefinable. Many French did not know any Jews, and this problem was certainly not at the center of the French public's interest except for a few months after August, 1942.

Although the deportations from France began in March, 1942, the first planned application of the Final Solution policy should be related only to the deportations that followed the big round-ups of July and August. Information on the first large scale German killing of Jews, which took place in territories conquered from the USSR after June, 1941, were reported nowhere in the French sources. Indeed, prior to April, 1942, the underground press paid very little attention to the specific fate of the Jews in France and none to those of Eastern

Europe. They did react to the imposition of the Yellow Star by the German authorities in the occupied zone in June. Some articles contain not only the resisters' condemnation of this visible discrimination, but also information — factually incorrect — typical of the way the German policy was seen and interpreted: "The Jews wear the imposed sign with no shame... but in Germany the French have to wear a sign with the letter 'F' and the Poles with a 'P' etc." 9 Thus, the Jews were presented as one of many cases of Nazi inhumanity, not as a specifically singled out group.

Only in June were some reports on the fate of East-European Jewry published in the underground press. One of the papers quoted General Sikorski's broadcast declaration that "the Jewish population in Poland is doomed to disappear. The slogan is: 'all the Jews have to be slain, no matter what the outcome of the war.' Tens of thousands of Jews have been massacred." This is the first and most accurate information that can be found on what happened at that time in Poland, although it seems that even the Polish Prime Minister was uninterested or ignorant of the fact that by that time nearly one and a half million Jews, mostly from the Soviet Union and the Baltic States, had already been murdered. During the second half of 1942 and in 1943 the source for all information on the East was in various publications that appeared in London, above all in the broadcasts of the BBC.

The deportations following the great round-ups of July 16 and 17, 1942, in Paris, and especially the inclusion of categories unfit for work, for the first time brought the problem of the Jews to the front pages of the underground press. Some papers wrote: "What profit might Hitler gain from this horror? Is this the rage of desperation?" Others commented: "One has to ask oneself: but why the old, the women and children? Why the sick people?"

11

In August, 1942, we also encounter for the first time the expression "extermination" concerning the deported Jews. One of the most outstanding documents on the appearance of this perception can be found in a report prepared by Rabbi Jacob Kaplan, requesting the intervention of the Primat of Gaulle, Cardinal Gerlier of Lyon:

Had it been to transfer them to Germany to make them work, I would not have made this request. These unfortunate deported people are unable to work.... What I came to tell you is that thousands of innocent people were sent to Germany, not to work, but to be exterminated.... For those who saw

the transport there

can be no doubt, the majority of them will not reach the end of the trip.

Rabbi Kaplan does not pretend to have any new information, although it is possible that some did reach him from the World Jewish Congress in Geneva. His analysis, or rather, his comprehension, that the deported Jews were doomed to extermination, derived from the same logic as the wonderment of the underground papers, "why the old, the women and children?" Still, the Rabbi thought these arguments strong enough to be presented to the well-informed Cardinal and on this basis to ask his intervention in Vichy. The same expression, "extermination", can be found in a very energetic protestation presented by the French Consistoire on August 25, and in several underground publications during these months.

A similar perception of the reality and a surprisingly comprehensive view of the German policy in Europe can be found in a sermon delivered by the pastor of a small town, Dieulefit (Drome), after the immigrant Jews had been taken away by the French police:

And what, are these events new? These things have been happening in Europe for several years, and you have been indifferent. They happened in Poland and in Czechoslovakia and they were, believe me, much more atrocious.... And we said with vanity: 'In France we will never see such a thing!' ... I even told you in my sermon, that which pained you, 'until something happens on Chatauras (the main square) you will not believe the distress to come' ... but the truth is that behind this drama, as behind many others, there

is a spirit, a system, an ideology which has not said its last

word.

The pastor's perception of the direct link between the persecution in Eastern Europe, the Nazi system and ideology, and the fate of the Jews in France in practical terms, was quite rare during this period, but, as seen, it did exist. The same impression appeared in the memoirs of Philippe Erlanger, a well known French intellectual and writer of Jewish origin, at that time a refugee and rescue activist in

the Nice region: "It is not hard to understand the fate reserved for

the deportees, even if no one has heard of the crematories.... I must say that informed people, like the Community leaders, Donati and

myself, never believed in these colonies where the Jews would be quietly left to work the fields, guarded by some bored SS men."

It seems obvious that Erlanger, like Rabbi Kaplan and the others, relied more on the overt facts and his own judgment than on any specific source of information. Nevertheless, one very well informed person — included no doubt in what Erlanger called "community leaders" — Raymond Raoul Lambert, seems to have been less alert. He was one of the outstanding French Israelites, deeply involved in social work before the war and the Director of Union Generale des Israelites en France (UGIF) in the southern zone. Lambert was arrested in August, 1943, and deported from Drancy in December. He died in Auschwitz, but left behind his diary which has since been published in full. This is a most revealing document, since it records the thoughts of the person more than his daily activities. After the Jews arrested in Paris were deported, Lambert wrote: "All the victims serve as slaves to build a Siegfried line (in the rear of the Russian front from Gemocitch to the Baltic). Only very few will return from this Gehenna."

16

Lambert was extremely critical of the leaders of the Consistoire at that time, both of the Chief Rabbi Isaie Schwartz and the President, Jacques Helbronner, with whom he had been in disagreement since the creation of the UGIF. He vehemently blamed them for not doing enough to save the immigrant Jews who were deported at the time. But not in this context nor elsewhere in the diary is there a word on the total destruction that awaited the deportees. There is not a hint that he knew of the Final Solution, even in his letters from Drancy where, with his wife and children, he awaited his own deportation. 17

In the beginning of August, 1942, he was in the camp of Les Milles, which served also as transit for those arrested in Marseille. He tried to save some of the Jews who had emigration visas or were engaged in the French army, often with 8 success. Special efforts were made to save children from deportation. One of the most active persons in this last minute effort to rescue the children was the Protestant pastor, Henri Manen, who was known to the camp inmates for his continuous efforts to relieve the severe conditions. Most of the parents, many of them refugees from Germany, had left their children behind. The welfare of children is known to be an

extremely delicate question in most Jewish families, and Jewish mothers would obviously not have left their children in the hands of the very unpopular UGIF had they not considered deportation a fatal journey. It is even more unlikely that they would entrust them to a priest, even to such an excellent perso

nage as Pastor Manen, unless it seemed to the parents as the only choice for the survival of their children. 19 The same was true, of course, in many other known cases of Jewish children rescued by priests. The best known example concerns the deportations from Lyon at the same period. The Jesuit, P&re Chaillet, saved some eighty children from the deportation train. This case became famous because the regional Prefect insisted on deporting the children but the Archbishop, Cardinal Gerlier, though at first hesitant, later backed the rescue effort of his priest. Many other similar cases are known in the literature and from numerous testimonies. 20

After the first roundups in Paris and even more during the roundups in the south, a strong and open public protest was observed. The Prefects in the south received abundant reports to this effect, and in turn they reported on the negative reactions to the mass arrests and especially to the fact that families were separated and handed over to the Germans. The public protest of some of the prominent Bishops of the Catholic Church in the south conveyed this negative public opinion to Vichy. The French government was criticized mainly for yielding to German exigencies, but the fate that awaited the deported Jews was seldom questioned, or at least no trace of such questioning was found during the deportations of 1942. Reports saying that atrocious horror stories were circulating among the "Aryan" population, concerning the fate awaiting the deportees, are to be found only in 1943. The reporters then added that these were "unlikely and certainly untrue antinational propaganda stories," and were caused by the inclusion of women, children, old and sick people in the deportations as well as by their brutal nature. Such reports can be observed especially in Nice after the departure of the Italians in September 1943. It seems that even at this stage popular disapproval of the deportation of the Jews was caused mainly by observation of realities, rather than from any information received.

Nevertheless, in 1943 the underground press already had a large circulation and its influence, although hard to measure, was important. By November, 1942, some news concerning the fate of the EastEuropean

Jewry was already being published. One could read for example: "One million men, women and children have been massacred since the occupation.... Among them are all the Jews of Norway and several tens of thousands of Jews deported from France and all the occupied countries of Europe." Some of these reports contained very detailed and most accurate information:

Of the 400,000 Jews of Warsaw no more than 40,000 remain. In Radom 228,500 Jews out of 300,000 were exterminated. In Vilno the entire Jewish population was massacred.... These are not the

crimes of some isolated, low-ranking officers, but the premeditated and organized actions of the Hitlerite government. In applying this diabolic plan, the men fit for work are subject to intolerable sufferings in work-camps, where they die after a short time. The women, the children, the old, the sick and the invalid are annihilated with a bestial savagery, unprecedented in history. All torments are put in effect: gas-chambers, shooting, mine-fields, electric current, etc.

At this stage it seems, at least from the pages of some of the

underground press, that the German extermination policy should have been more or less clearly and accurately understood, clearly contradicting testimonies by Wellers and many others. The reality was certainly much more complex, since we find on the pages of the same papers, relying on the same sources, some clear, even though involuntary, distortions. Already in July one of the papers claimed that

"fighting gas was tested with some 1,200 Dutch Jews in Germany."

This same misinterpretation is repeated several times and is one of the most striking examples of involuntary distortion of originally accurate information. One of these, perhaps the most elaborate one, was published in November or December, 1942, under the signature of the French Communist Party:

A New Crime of the Boches! [Germans] They Prepare

Gas Warfare!

... In effect, we learn from a reliable source, that the boches took 11,000

men, women, old people and children from among the deported Jews and experimented on them with toxic gases.... So the Nazis pursue a double objective which is to destroy physically the oppressed peoples, and prepare the criminal Gas Warfare. 2 *

Two notable distortions appear here: the use of the gas only as an experiment; and the destruction being directed equally against all the "oppressed peoples" and not exclusively against the Jews. While the Communist Jewish press, Notre Parole, stated that "the diabolic plan

of Hitler's bandits is to complete the destruction of the Jewish

population (in Europe) during the year 1943," and J'accuse reported that "the Hitlerites are completing the extermination of four milli on Jews in Poland," they also quoted testimonies of French workers coming back on leave, one of whom had "worked with the deportees in the camp of Oswieciny (sic!)," and relates the horrible conditions there,

without a single word on systematic destruction of the Jews, nor on the existence of the gas-chambers. Could it be possible that a French worker, after spending several months in Auschwitz, was still ill-informed? Or was it perhaps the paper's editor who suppressed the most terrible of the accurate information at their disposal? At that time, two escapees from Auschwitz arriving in Nice told the true story of the mass-murder to anyone ready to listen. No one believed them.

Some of the Christians, French and Americans, who were trying to save Jews through the well known Nimes Committee, have written their memoirs. None pretend to know anything of the Final Solution during the last months of 1942 nor in 1943. Most of them, as did some of the Jewish leaders, called on either Petain or Laval or both during the deportations. In these extremely important conversations neither hinted that total destruction was expected. The famous phrase of Pastor Boegner describing his meeting with Laval, "Je lui parlais de

massacres, il me repondait jardinage!", appears in a report written after the war, not in 1942, although it might well characterize what the president of the French Protestants must have felt after discussing the rescue of Jews with his Prime Minister.

The ignorance or misinterpretation of the facts are the most obvious where the intentions were the best. Such is the case of an article on the horrors of Auschwitz published as late as February, 1944, in the *Franc Tireur*: "The women have their heads shaven, they are beaten with spades, punishments abound: the inmates are sent to the salt mines, which surely signifies death, or they execute some prisoners as an example, and asphyxiate them in a gas-chamber." Although the gaschamber appears in the description, its real significance and function, like the whole specificity of the extermination camp, are totally misunderstood and distorted.

Equally interesting is the attitude of the underground press to Vichy's role, first in the anti-Jewish legislation and later in the deportations. In 1941 the legislation was systematically presented as a German diktat, shamefully executed by Vichy. When the French antisemitic press tried to picture the anti-Jewish policies as a genuine

French policy, it was not believed. The deportations were also presented as a French compliance to German exigencies. In this case it contained some correct assessments, but the fact that, at least in the deportation of the immigrant Jews, the French Government was happy to cooperate, and that the inclusion of children was on Laval's initiative, was unknown and even more, unthinkable. Exactly the same conclusions are to be found in the reports prepared by Prefects of the south or by the CGQJ delegates. Even in some letters written by French people during or after these deportations, the government was blamed only for complying with the German diktat, not for initiating any anti-Jewish measures.

A continuous and nearly uninterrupted two-way communication was held between the French Zionists and some of the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine) delegates in Geneva. This correspondence is especially important after the arrival in Switzerland of Marc Jarblum in the beginning of 1943. The letters were written by various people from Zionist parties, youth movements and the leaders of the Federation of Jewish Organizations, which was the most typical representation of East-

European immigrant Jewry. In them we find very detailed descriptions of the deportations and of the rescue efforts in France. The reports pertain mainly but not exclusively to the southern zone. There is not one mention of total destruction. Auschwitz is mentioned several times as the destination of the deportees, but it is clear that its full function in the destruction process was not understood. It was thought of as just another concentration camp, perhaps bigger and of a more dangerous nature than the others, but certainly not the symbol of the total destruction that it became when the war was over. In one case it was mentioned as one of the three places, together with "Birkenau-Silesia and Lwow", where Jews were still alive. 9

In London up-to-date and accurate information on the Final Solution was published and it included such details as the "gassing in Chelmno", the "extermination camps" of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka and the information that "the crematorium of Osviecim burns 3,000 bodies by day." In France these publications reached at least some active members of the Resistance, and thus could have been known to editors of underground papers. We still miss detailed studies on the diffusion of this information in France, and it is possible that it was more important than^ what the illegal press or the contemporary correspondence discloses.

During the fall of 1943 an unsigned report on the systematic and total destruction reached the Direction of the Central Consistoire from an unclear source in Switzerland. This was the body that a year earlier had written to Laved that the deported Jews were being "methodically exterminated." As no confirmation could be obtained for the report and it seemed so "totally unimaginable", it was unanimously discredited. Soon after* the President, Jacques Helbronner, was arrested and deported.

From all sources it is very clear that the immigrant Jews who wrote these letters were alert to the risks of the deportation, and that at least after the end of 1942 they understood the extreme danger, whether or not they had specific knowledge of the Final Solution or of its technical details. The immigrants, including the well organized Jewish communists, lacked the confidence in the French government headed by Pétain and Laval, a confidence which at this stage still characterized most of the French Israelites.

In 1943 enormous efforts were made to provide people with false Aryan documents. It is not in place here to describe these efforts and their

important achievements, but it is clear that such activities and the large subsidies that came through Switzerland to finance them indicate that the great peril was comprehended.

The fact that the immigrant Jews tended to comprehend the situation more quickly and more accurately than did the assimilated French Jews should not overshadow the fact that some important individual differences can be observed among the latter. In our examples we observe that Erlanger saw the dangers more clearly than Lambert. Perhaps this was only a question of temperament, since both came from French families several generations old; or it derived from the fact that Erlanger was engaged in illegal activities. A certain change, if only a slow one, can be observed in their attitude at the end of 1943 and beginning of 1944, when the Germans began to arrest and deport Jews indiscriminately.

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A technically different but in essence similar development concerning the treatment of information can be observed in Hungary. In August, 1941, some 16,000 Jews not recognized as Hungarian citizens were deported to Kamenets-Podolsk and massacred. The general situation and the fate of Jews deported from Hungary were reported by Hungarian soldiers in the region who had returned on leave, and even by some

Jewish Labor Service men who had witnessed the atrocities. Though the deportation was discontinued, information on total destruction continued to be brought by refugees. However, even after the massmurders in Galicia and Ukraine in 1941 became known, and after the arrival of the first refugees from Slovakia in April, 1942, there was still no indication of a policy of total annihilation. People in Hungary could learn from the tales told by the refugees of the terrible condition of the Jews in the neighboring countries and conclude that in contrast the condition of Hungarian Jewry was still relatively good. Indeed, during this period Hungary was an island of relative peace and tranquility.

The beginning of 1943 was a period of change in several respects. Kdilly's second year in power was even marked somewhat by an easing and a certain improvement in the attitude of the authorities to the Jews. This fact, together with the approach of the Red Army to Hungary's eastern border, gave the Jews very reasonable cause for hope and optimism. The faith that "Horthy would not permit any harm to come to

his Jews," appeared from day to day to be justified anew. This was the time when the second wave of refugees reached the country, many from Poland, among them survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto revolt. Reports of the revolt reached France via London. The information was brought directly to Hungary by the refugees. Those who fled from Poland were the last remnants of this Jewry, and they were under no illusions. Indeed, they were convinced that they were the last Polish Jews left alive.

All the refugees in Hungary must have numbered some 15,000, although accurate statistics do not exist. Their life in Hungary involved many complicated problems of controversial nature, but for the present we narrow our scope of interest to the use of the information they brought with them. The reports which streamed into Budapest, and from there to Istanbul and Palestine, were shocking. The mass slaughter of the Jews in Poland was already known by the end of 1942, but only the testimonies of the refugees who managed to escape in 1943, afforded first opportunity to realize the full scale of the Holocaust. After June-July, 1943, the messages included detailed information on the total destruction of Polish Jewry. That nearly no Jews remained alive was stated as a fact in numerous letters. Some emissaries were sent to Poland, and they brought back the same, reliable information. 34

For the refugees, the transfer from Poland to the Budapest of those days was a difficult and hardly comprehensible change. They found it

difficult to accustom themselves to the metropolitan character and the dimensions of Budapest, a city much larger than any they had yet experienced. They had not expected a place where there was no "yellow patch", and Jews could walk about freely and without fear. They were stunned: "How many kilometers apart are Budapest and Auschwitz? A whole world separates them. They could not believe our stories, which did not even pierce their consciousness." Thus did one of them describe the confrontation. They found a Jewish community in Budapest the likes of which they could not imagine existed at all in Europe at that time.

To the Jews of Budapest, the refugees seemed somewhat provincial, people from another world. This conception helped to call into question the trustworthiness of the information which they sought to transmit, information which Hungarian Jews did not want to believe. In most cases there was no common language, not only in philosophy of life, but in actual speech as well, and this made it even more difficult for the refugees

to convey their message. On the eve of the invasion there seemed to be no reasonable cause for a sudden worsening of the situation in Hungary. The German occupation was totally unexpected, and the fact that so many Hungarians would in such a short time be mobilized to carry out the deportations to the death camps could be even less anticipated. Furthermore, one should bear in mind two other allies of Germany, Romania and Bulgaria where, for various geographic and political reasons nearly all the Jews living there at the beginning of 1943 were saved.

Endless quotations from testimonies or from memoirs could be adduced to demonstrate that in many cases the so-called "horror stories of the refugees", or other information on the total destruction, were simply not believed. This is a logical result of the incredible character of the information and uncontrollable nature of the sources. Nevertheless, a distinction must be made between Braham's no doubt well founded claim that the Jewish population and community leadership failed to take advantage of the information brought by the Polish refugees, and the opposite result achieved among a few hundred members of the Zionist Halutz (pioneer) youth movements and the Relief and Rescue Committee, whose members also came under the influence of the

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refugees and the mission in Istanbul. After the occupation, the SS nominated a Jewish Council from among the leadership of the two communities. It failed to maintain contact with the provincial towns, and to convey the information available to it, even though the President

of the Council, Samu Stern, wrote after the war: "I was not taken in by the faked good will, hypocrisy and treachery of the Gestapo."

The members of the youth movements alone had a more realistic perception of the new situation, but it took them some three to four weeks to establish the first contacts with a number of the provincial towns. From the middle of April the Halutz youth movements sent out a few dozen emissaries, all very young and many of them girls. One of the objectives of these missions was to alert the communities and the local leaderships to the real objectives of deportation. The evidence available in this respect is unanimous: no one wanted to listen or pay heed. These attempts were a great effort for the small youth movements and extremely dangerous, as all travel by Jews was forbidden. However, relative to the size of the

Jewish population — some 500,000 outside Budapest — the effort was a drop in the ocean. Their greatest significance to our topic is that they too completely failed.

The Hungarian-born Elie Wiesel writes also that in 1944, "There is not a single capital in the free world where the existence of the death-factories is unknown.... Everybody knows that Auschwitz is more than a name — except the Jews who are destined to be shipped to Auschwitz." In another case he tells us that a Jew from Sziget, deported to Kamenets-Podolsk, returned to tell all the truth. Nobody believed him . A °

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It is impossible in either case to demonstrate in any scientifically acceptable way who actually did or did not receive information on the total destruction in Poland. In Hungary we have to take into consideration the lack of common language, not to speak of common background, between the refugees and the majority of the local Jews. This certainly was a barrier, but there was a relatively large number of refugees. Some of them had come several months before the German occupation, but others had been there for more than a year. They were all more than eager to warn Hungarian Jews of what had happened to their own families: for most of them it was a sacred task, an almost sole justification for the fact that they remained alive. In France not everybody read the underground papers, and certainly not regularly nor all of them, but information was passed on also by word of mouth. Above all, the deportations to the East were conducted openly and with ever growing brutality. Despite the information in the underground press in France and the shocking stories told by the refugees in

Hungary, one cannot claim that all the Jews heard of the Final Solution. Nevertheless, it seems established that this knowledge was widely available in both countries, and the major gap was between available information and the real comprehension of the situation.

In evaluating the existing oral sources, the student of this period has to take into consideration the possible lacunae. Psychological mechanisms[^] such as repression or denial could easily influence the testimonies. It is not always easy for the survivor who testifies sincerely, to distinguish in retrospect, between information received and its comprehension. People were bombarded at the time by uncontrollable rumors of all kinds. In most

cases they were hardly able to react to them effectively and in no case could they verify their authenticity. Under these circumstances, the negation of information on total destruction or on the existence of the death camps cannot be accepted uncritically. In some cases, information could be overheard and not fully absorbed, then repressed. Is not this the case of many, like Professor Debré, who writes "we could not till then believe," people who heard but could not process the information? After studying the tremendous efforts invested in rescue activities in France, it seems reasonable to assume that the actual number and proportion of those who heard of the total destruction was higher than appears at first sight. In a great number of cases, when information on total destruction was indeed received, it was either rejected or distorted.

In explaining this gap many additional historical factors have to be taken into consideration. The most universal and fundamental must be that the total, well-planned, deliberate genocide had no precedent. As a result, people had no point of reference, only uncontrollable, fragmentary and ever contradictory information, and were unable to construct a clear picture of the system. There is great doubt that even the best informed could grasp the extent to which the Jewish Question was a specific element in the Nazi Weltanschauung, and that the objective of total destruction of the Jews was independent and above any other consideration, separate from any policy concerning other "oppressed peoples." There is of course an enormous difference between the comprehension that "many" or even "most" of the deportees would not survive, and the reality of the "selection" in Auschwitz. The fact that the German policy was to kill all the Jews was at best only partially comprehended by certain people.

Even if one heard of the destruction of Polish or East-European Jewry, it did not necessarily follow that the same peril applied to one's own country. This significant gap was not frequently bridged. The existence of legal governments led by personalities who enjoyed great respect, like Marshal Pétain and Admiral Horthy, hindered and delayed the correct understanding of the information on the Final Solution. It encouraged the tendency, more among the well assimilated local Jews, somewhat less among immigrants, Orthodox Jews and Zionists, to believe that the anti-Jewish policies were only a German diktat. Even though the fact that the local governments had an important role to play in what was happening to the Jews was quite often well understood, it led to the wrong conclusions: that they had no choice but to comply to the German dictates, although

they would resist them to the utmost of their power. This misinterpretation was most obvious in the catastrophe of Hungarian Jewry.

Confidence in the Vichy government gradually evaporated after 1942, and not on the subject of the Jews alone. It is important to repeat that apart from the prefectorial reports and those of the CGQJ, and from some of the underground press during a limited period, we have at our disposal very few non-Jewish sources written during the Holocaust. It is quite clear that the problems of the Jews did not occupy an important place in French public opinion, except during the period of August-December, 1942. Later on, the STO (Service du Travail Obligatoire) attracted the main attention as the principal martyrs of the Nazi system. The influence of the official propaganda cannot be measured exactly, but in France it was inefficient and certainly losing ground after 1942. In the involuntary distortions published by the underground papers quoted above, it was null. In these cases it is clear that people tried to integrate an unknown occurrence into the framework of prior experiences.

In order to understand the comprehension during the war, it seems obvious that we cannot rely solely on a study of the information that was received. The proper analysis of actions, inactions and reactions is not only necessary, but might even be the main tool for research. In comparing both oral and written sources, the Jewish reactions and rescue activities, a relatively clear and consistent picture can be drawn of the comprehension of the total destruction in both countries.

In 1942/43 there was a greater awareness in France than in Hungary, even though the information was brought to Hungary by eye-witnesses and Auschwitz was no more than three hundred kilometers away. This difference results from the fact that deportations were not yet occurring in Hungary, whereas in France they soon included French Jews, too. Judging by the practical reaction of the Jewish and the non-Jewish population, we can even say that the awareness in Hungary, and supposedly also the comprehension, was during March-July, 1944, still less accurate concerning the Final Solution than it was in France a year earlier.

This leads us to conclude that though we are talking of large populations, there was only a weak correlation between information and comprehension. The implication that what happened "there" or in "the East" might or will happen "here" too, was rarely made. It was only imminent and manifest physical danger that created the necessary basis for

a more or less correct comprehension. In this process, time is an essential element. The information existed in Hungary but it remained unexploited, and when the actual and overt change in policy occurred there was no time for reshaping comprehension. The most important difference between the two countries is the fact that in France the deportations in 1942 created a partially correct comprehension, while this could not be achieved in Hungary by the refugees' warnings because of the discrepancy with local realities. The warnings of the young Halutzim came much too late.

The fact that some contemporaries could and did make the direct link between what was known of the Nazi anti-Jewish policies in Eastern Europe, and the future for the Jews of France and Hungary only shows, as all exceptions do, that the great majority of the people did not. It is quite clear that most of the people in both countries, Jews and non-Jews, continued to see the "Jewish Question" in the local national context only. It was not grasped as the problem of the separate and united Jewish people, nor as a universal question as presented, and to a great extent executed, by the Nazi ideology and policy.

Notes

1. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*. 2nd. ed., New York, London: Holms & Meier, 1985. On French Jewry, see: Michael R. Marrus, Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*. New York: Basic Books, 1981; *La France et la Question Juive*. Edited by Andre Kaspi, Serge Klarsfeld, Georges Wellers, Paris: Centre de Documentation Contemporaine (CDJC), 1981. On Hungarian Jewry, see: Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide, The Holocaust in Hungary*. 2 vols., New York: Columbia University Press, 1981. For some important remarks on the information available at the time and its relation to comprehension, see Yehuda Bauer, *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980, pp. 17-29.

2. Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980; Marrus, Paxton, pp. 177-280; Braham, pp. 691-731; Marcel Baudot, "Les mouvements de Résistance devant la persecution des Juifs," *La France et la Question juive*. pp. 292-294.

3. On the legal press during the occupation, see: Claude Lévy, Henri Michel, "La press autorisde de 1940 a 1944," in: *Histoire generale de la press française*. Edited by Claude Bellenger et al., Paris: Press Universitaire de France, 1975, v. 4. pp. 7-93; Jacques Polonski, *La press, la propagande et l'opinion publique sous Voccupation*. Paris: CDJC, 1946; Claude Levy, *Le Nouveau Temps et Videologie de la collaboration*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1974.

4. First important study that used the prefects' reports extensively see: Marrus, Paxton, pp. 182-301. Some of the reports concerning August 1942, are quoted in: Serge Klarsfeld, *Vichy-A uschwitz, 1942*. Paris: Fayard, 1983, pp. 383-391. Henri Amouroux's books, *La grande histoire des Français sous Voccupation*. 8 vols., Paris: Robert Laffont, 1976-1984, give some excellent insights into public opinion. A good summary of the author's point of view concerning French public opinion and the Jews, in his 5th volume, *Les passions et les haines*. pp. 149-345. On various contemporary sources on public opinion see also Notes 20, 21.

5. Georges Wellers, *L'etoile jaune a Vheure de Vichy*. Paris: Fayard, 1973,

pp. 4-5, 223-9. See other testimonies of the same character, Roger Arnould, *Les temoins de la nuit*. Paris: (F.N.D.I.R.P.), 1975, pp. 74-93. In Claude Lanzmann's film "Shoah", the women's barber in

Treblinka was also asked by them, "what is going to happen to us?" The complete ignorance of the deportees arriving at Auschwitz, Treblinka or other death camps is most typical in hundreds of testimonies,

including the French and Hungarian Jews who arrived in 1944. Such testimonies can be found in the Yad Vashem or other specialized archives. See also: Miklos Nyiszli, *Medecin a Auschwitz*. Paris: Julliard, 1961.

6. Robert Debré, *L'honneur de vivre. Temoignage*, Paris: Hermann et Stock, 1974, p. 289.

7. Anny Latour, *The Jewish Resistance in France, (1940-1944)*.

New York: Holocaust Library, 1970, p. 52. On the two escapees from Auschwitz who reached Nice, see, pp. 150-151. The same in: Philippe Erlanger, *La France sans étoile*. Paris: Plon, 1976, pp. 265-267. A. Rayski, one of the leaders of the Jewish Communist underground writes also: "At the beginning of November, 1942, we got a report from the Polish resistance in London on the total extermination of the deportees.... A special issue was published. People did not want to, could not believe.... Some of us even thought that if it was true, it

would be better to hide it." *La presse antiraciste sous l'occupation*

hitlerienne. Paris: Centre de Documentation des Juifs Pour la Résistance et l'Entraide (UJRE), 1950, pp. 25-27.

8. On the underground press, see: Claude Levy, "La presse clandestine de 1940 a 1944," in: *Histoire générale de la presse française*. vol. 4., pp. 97-176. On the attitude of the underground press to the Jews, see also: Asher Cohen, "La presse clandestine face a la 'question juive' de 1940 k 1942," *Le Monde Juif*. n. 117 (1985), pp. 1-17.

9. *J'accuse*, n. sp. June, 1942. This paper was published by the AntiRacist League, an underground organization of Christians, Communists and Jews. On the French Resistance and the Jews, see: Claude Levy, "La Résistance Interieur et les Juifs," Annie Kriegel, "La résistance communiste," La

France et la question juive, pp. 297-314, 345-370, and the discussions, pp. 371-400.

10. Liberation (zone sud), June 24, 1942. General Wladyslaw Sikorski, the head of the Polish government in exile, spoke on the BBC on June 9; see: Braham, p. 695. In a broadcast from London on July 1, 1942, Jean Marin talks of 700,000 Jews killed in Poland and mentions explicitly the gas chambers. On further broadcasts to France on this, see: Charles-Louis Foulon, "La France combattante devant la persecution des Juifs," La France et la question juive, pp. 331-341.

11. Liberation (zone nord), July 22, 1942; Liberation (zone sud), September 15, 1942. The two papers bearing the same name in the two zones were totally unrelated.

12. Report dated August 17, 1942. I received an authenticated copy from Chief Rabbi Jacob Kaplan, and express my deepest gratitude for his kind and patient explanations. The event is mentioned in his book, L'Epreuve de la persecution. Paris: 1952, pp. 88-95, and in: Marrus, Paxton, p. 525. See also: Kaplan, "French Jews under the Occupation," American Jewish Yearbook, 47 (1945-46), p. 108.

13. In the letter sent to Laval by the Consistoire it is expressly stated that the Jews are "methodically exterminated". La lutte des Juifs en France a l'epoque de l'occupation (1940-1944). Edited by Adam Rutkowski, Paris: CDJC, 1975, pp. 115-117. The term "extermination" appears often in September-December, 1942, in various underground publications. In one of them: "tens of thousands of Jews deported to the East are condemned by the Nazis to extermination." J'accuse, n. 14, June, 1943, n. spec. November 1943, Archives Nationales (Paris), AJ38-3618.

14. Henri Eberhard, Pendant l'orage. Toulouse ~ Dieulefit: Nouvelle Societe d'Edition, (n.d.), pp. 75-88.

15. Erlanger, pp. 228-9. Donati was an Italian Jewish banker, with excellent relations with the Italian occupation forces in Nice, who did much to save Jews in that area, and with whom Erlanger closely collaborated. Contrary to what could be concluded from this passage, Erlanger writes that "J'ignore naturellement que les Allemands ont adopte la 'solution finale', que tous les Juifs de France, fran^ais ou non, sont voues aux fours crdmatoires." (ibid. p. 219).

16. Raymond-Raoul Lambert, *Camet d'un témoin, 1940-1943*. Présenté et annoté par Richard Cohen, Paris: Fayard, 1985, p. 182, the parentheses in the source.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 176-180, 239-247.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 184-189.

19. On the deportation from Les Milles, see FIX, *Les camps en Provence, exil, internement, déportation, 1933-1942*. Aix-en-Provence, 1984, pp. 188-205. Henri Manen's testimony, *ibid.* pp. 206-218.

20. Marrus, Paxton, pp. 253-256. *Eglises et Chrétiens dans la 2^e guerre mondiale. (La région Rhône-Alpes)*, Edited by Xavier de Montclos, Monique Luirard, François Delpech, Pierre Bolle, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1978, pp. 141-218. Saul Friedlander, *Quand vient le souvenir...* Paris: Seuil, 1978. Claudine Vidal, *Je ne lui ai*

pas dit au revoir, Des enfants de déportés parlent. Paris: Gallimard, 1979. Several important testimonies can be found in Yad Vashem Archives, M-31 (the Righteous Gentiles department).

21. Marrus, Paxton, pp. 318-325; *La France et la question juive*, pp. 143-170, 261-406; A. Cohen, "Le peuple aryen vu par le Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives," *Revue de l'histoire de la 2^e guerre mondiale*, n. 141 (1986), pp. 45-58; "New Approaches to French Public Opinion Under Vichy — 1940-1942," *Contemporary Jewry*, 4., (in print).

22. *J'accuse*, December 15, 1942; December 25, 1942. There are many other articles that presented detailed information: "From Yugoslavia, Holland and Belgium nearly all the Jews were deported and exterminated," *Notre Parole*, February 1, 1943. See also *La presse antiraciste*, pp. 283-300, and also letters in Ghetto Fighters' House Archives, Z/1063/FC.43, 65, 73, 89, 89, 102, 141, 142.

23. *Université Libre*, July 5, 1942. The paper was under strong communist influence.

24. Undated leaflet, reproduced in: *La presse antiraciste*, p. 289.

25. *Notre Parole*, February 1, 1943; *J'accuse*, June 14, 1943, December 15,

1942.

26. Donald A. Lowry, *The Hunted Children*. New York: Norton, 1963, pp. 203, 220. Marc Boegner, "Rapport k l'assemblé gendrale du protestantisme," *Quelques actions des protestants en France en faveur des Juifs*. Paris: ed. CIMADE, p. 14. Both men had excellent sources of information and visited Switzerland several times.

27. *Le Franc Tireur*, February 1, 1944. It is quoted by Dominique Veillon, *Le Franc-Tireur, un journal clandestin, un mouvement de Resistance*: Paris: Flammarion, 1977, pp. 286; and also, "Franc-Tireur et Juifs," *La France et la question juive*, pp. 315-329.

28. On letters written to save Jews, see; A. Cohen, "Pour les juifs, des attitudes Philodmites sous Vichy," *Pardis*, (Paris), n. 1 (1985), pp. 138-149.

29. The Central Zionist Archives, L22/151, 381; S26/1193, 1452, 1538, 1545. L17/184, 889. The Ghetto Fighters' House Archives, Z/1063/Fr41, 92; /Be4, 18; /Ho22, 63.

30. On the material published in London, see for example: "Polish note," *Free Europe*, December 18, 1942, *Polish Fortnightly Review*, December 1, 1942, *La voix de l'Amérique s'adresse a la France*, May 31, 1943. All in *Archives Nationales*, (Paris), F a -3784.

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31. Wellers, p. 231.

32. Braham, pp. 199-221; We even know of several cases — for example Joel Brand of the future Rescue Committee in Budapest — where people bribed Hungarian officers to free relatives from the killing sites. Alex Weisberg, *Advocate for the Dead, the Story of Joel Brand*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1958, pp. 30-52.

33. On the general conditions in Hungary, see: Braham, pp. 192-254. On the influence of the refugees, see: Asher Cohen, *The Halutz Resistance in Hungary*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 16-51.

34. The Ghetto Fighters' House Archives, Z/1063/H.32, 42, 56, 60.

35. Fredka Mazia, Reim Besaar (Friends in Tempest), Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1964, pp. 270-271. We have numerous testimonies taken from members of Zionist youth movements in Slovakia concerning the Polish refugees' influence. Most of them said that in 1942 they had not already been warned of the Nazi extermination policies. See testimonies in "Center for Historical Documentation", University of Haifa, H3c21/4, H3cl9/3, H3c27. Nevertheless, some others, in a very similar situation and equally members of youth movements said that they had not heard of Auschwitz in Budapest before December, 1943 or even January, 1944, *ibid.*, H3c7, H3c22/3.

36. No Jews were deported from Romania to the death camps in Poland. From Bulgaria less than 12,000 from Thrace and Macedonia were deported in March, 1943, but none from Old Bulgaria.

37. Braham, pp. 691-692.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 705.

39. The Halutz Resistance, pp. 59-80.

40. See Elie Wiesel's Prologue, in: John K. Roth, *A Consuming Fire*, Atlanta: John Knox, 1979. p. 16. Elie Wiesel, *Entre deux soleils*, textes, Paris: Seuil, 1970, p. 19, where he writes; "Il racontait, racontait. Des histoires atroces, et vous faire dresser les cheveux sur la tête. Il relatait son voyage, son évasion, son expérience de la mort quelque part en Galicie. Et sa famille? Restée là-bas. Et ses enfants? Restés là-bas. Au fond d'une fosse commune. Fusillés. Tous. En plein jour. Lui même en était. Tombe une fraction de seconde avant d'être atteint. Protégé par ceux qui suivirent. Voilà comment il survécut. Il n'arrêtait pas de parler. Les gens, las et naïfs, ne voulaient, ne pouvaient croire. On disait: pauvre bedeau, il a perdu la raison."

41. Personal communication of Dr. Tikva Nathan, to whom I here express my gratitude for her professional guidance and advice, concerning some

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specialized literature, which need not be listed here. More research would seem to be advisable, perhaps of interdisciplinary nature, into the problems of handling and absorbing or rejecting information in both countries.

READING OR LISTENING: ON PETER WEISS'S "THE INVESTIGATION"

Irene Tieder

One notices in Germany the almost total absence of a theater of genocide. With the end of Nazism young playwrights, rather than showing the horrors of the death camps on stage, paid attention above all to the problem of the guilt of their fathers and countrymen. This was the case with Max Frisch in *Andorra* and Martin Walser in *Der schwarze Schwan* and *Eiche und Angora*. By way of exception, Rolf Hochhuth attempted to depict the universe of Auschwitz in his wellknown *The Vicar*, especially in Act Five of the play, entitled *Auschwitz, or Waiting for God*. His attempt is nevertheless an acknowledged failure, already expressed in the work itself, since all manner of language, whether naturalistic or metaphorical, is a priori insufficient to represent Auschwitz:

No amount of imagination is sufficient to picture Auschwitz.... Man is no longer able to even conceive what he has done.... No matter how great the suggestion issuing forth out of words and sounds, metaphors still hide the hellish cynicism of this reality which is already a monstrously magnified reality unto itself....

Indeed, critics have not failed to point out the shortcomings or to underline the artificial character of the above-mentioned plays. Nevertheless, none of them seems to have been the target of attacks as sharp as that which has befallen the work of Peter Weiss, *The Investigation*, performed and published in 1965. L. Marcuse, L. Langer and A. Rosenfeld, in particular, judge the play in very strong terms. Marcuse insists that the criminal abuse of the theme consisted of

exploiting Auschwitz for exclusively political ends and attributing the main responsibility for the genocide to the great German industrial establishment and to capitalism:

By introducing his concentration camp world into the East-West conflict, Peter Weiss has done the one thing that was forbidden, that is, to have Auschwitz serve the purposes of Ulbricht's State. It would have been just as reprehensible to have it serve the purposes of the German Federal Republic.... What has Peter Weiss revealed? That industry based on an economy depending on market forces leads to Auschwitz. But where has the industry of the Socialist Stalin and his numerous friends led to? Weiss has not revealed whether by any chance "good socialism" and "good capitalism" — which do not as yet exist — might be identical. "Capitalism as clientele for gas chambers" is bad, he is right about that. However, socialism as clientele for the extermination camps of Siberia is just as bad, though this second evil in no way justifies the first.

The same theme is taken up again, in even harsher fashion, by A. Rosenfeld, as shown by the very title of the chapter he dedicates to a large extent to the play of Peter Weiss: "Exploiting Atrocity". Like Marcuse, he accuses Weiss of having used the genocide theme for political ends, but in addition, of having twisted facts, "catalogued" the atrocity, removed the identity of the Jewish witnesses in order to plunge them into anonymity (indeed, the word Jew does not appear in the play) while the accused Nazis kept their family names, and finally, he made the executioners and the victims almost interchangeable. Furthermore, he reproaches Weiss for his aloofness, his language devoid of both expressiveness and emotion, "flat and empty". 5

All of the above criticism is certainly not without foundation, all the more since Peter Weiss himself endows it with a certain dose of legitimacy by his own declarations of principles. 6

The Investigation nevertheless remains a poignant and unsettling work, testimony about Auschwitz whose reading is almost unbearable for some. Perhaps this is due to the fact that a secret voice is overheard in this Oratorio in eleven cantos and that the very subtitle of the play invites us to listen to it.

It is indeed difficult to think that the writing of Peter Weiss on Auschwitz might be devoid of any emotional content if one recalls

certain excerpts of his previous work. We have already shown elsewhere how he had discovered and lived his "Jewishness" and how the themes of arrest, torture and wandering burst forth in a most unexpected manner in

his very first tales (das Duell, Der Schatten des Koerpers des Kutschers, and Das Gespraech der drei Gehenden). Similarly, in Marat/Sade, the tirade of a madman unleashing him self in order to stigmatize, in principle, the murders of the Revolution, evokes in haunting fashion the landscapes of the death camps:

Man is a demented animal
In a thousand-year-long life I have taken part in
millions of murders
A thick fertilizer

A thick fertilizer everywhere covers up the earth

The pulp of human entrails

... We the rare survivors

Walk upon a plashing swamp of dead bodies

Everywhere under our feet

Upon every step we take

We step upon putrefied bones,

Ashes, glued hair,

Broken teeth, split skulls....

In addition to these secret signs suddenly appearing in the works of Peter Weiss prior to his *The Investigation*, his autobiographical stories are just as revealing. *Meine Ortschaft*, an account of his visit to Auschwitz, tells us that, having been deeply affected by this pilgrimage, Peter Weiss henceforth considers himself as bound to this place more than to any city where he has lived:

These were places of transit which produced impressions, whose essential characteristic was the imperceptible, the rapid eclipse, and when I seek amidst all that what might be retained and boosted so as to constitute a fixed point in the topography of my existence, I always wind up with something that eludes me; all these cities become such as if they were fictitious, and only one place subsists, a place where I spent but one day.... That lone place, of which I had known for a long time, but which I saw rather late, is located in a place entirely away from an[^] other. It is a place

for which I was fated and which I escaped....

But it is especially in *Fluchtpunkt*, published in 1962, that the indelible impact of genocide upon Peter Weiss reveals itself with the greatest strength, together with his remorse for having survived the massacre of his brethren, for having abandoned his friends to their fate. Here is one of the most moving pages of this confession:

Then, in the spring of 1945,... on the screen blinding with light, I saw the places for which I had been foreordained, the human shapes among which I should have been. We were sitting within the shelter of a darkened theater and we were seeing what up to then had been inconceivable, we were seeing it within its dimensions which were so monstrous that we could never live it down during our lifetime... there were no words anymore, there was nothing more to say, there were no more explanations, no more possible exhortations, all values had been shattered.... Henceforth, just whom did I belong to, I, the living one, the survivor, was I really one of those staring at me with their oversized eyes and whom I had betrayed long ago; was I not rather one of the murderers, one of the executioners... It just did not seem possible to continue living with such indelible pictures in front of one's eyes....

In the light of these texts why should one not be led to think that if Peter Weiss has preserved the anonymity of the Jewish witnesses of *The Investigation* it is because it was impossible for him to do otherwise? It is doubtless due neither to callousness nor indifference, but quite the contrary, out of excess of self-involvement. How can one bestow a name on what is one's own self? Peter Weiss is one of those human beings bearing witness, and anonymity alone permits him to have them speak out. Were he not to keep such a protective distance, he would be doomed to silence. He eliminates any and all psychological and personal elements from the life of these beings doubtless in order to underline that in the universe of the concentration camp there remained only numbers, and also to make true "archetypes" of them; but above all in order to lighten their testimony somewhat by shedding some of their emotional overload. (He states as much in a note which appears at the beginning of his play.) The paradox has been noted whereby, in contrast, the accused Nazis each kept his name, whereas they precisely never ceased to seek refuge behind the pretext of

collective responsibility, and to proclaim their individual innocence.

Whatever the case may be, it is not certain that the anonymity of the witnesses harms Weiss's play to any great extent. The Jewish inmates of Auschwitz, given life by Rolf Hochhuth in *The Vicar* - such as Carlotta or Jacobson — are not necessarily more convincing.

Besides, *The Investigation* presents two remarkable exceptions: Canto 5 is dedicated to inmate Lili Tofler (an anagram of the word Folter, i.e., torture, as Erika Salloch has noted), and Canto 6 to Sergeant Stark. These two cantos are situated at the hinge of the play, which is composed of 11 cantos, a fact which underlines their importance. One might be tempted to see in Lili Tofler a projection of the memory of Lucie Weisberger, the Jewish friend of Peter Weiss whom he had tried to save and whom he often mentions in *Fluchtpunkt*. As for Sergeant Stark, he makes speeches about the humanism of Goethe, he is cranky about order and cleanliness, he ceaselessly washes his hands (just like Pope Pius the Twelfth in the play by Hochhuth), but he pitilessly fires upon the inmates. In the second part of Canto 6, he addresses a woman called Sarah:

And he was shouting

Go, Sarah, to the wall

The woman was begging him to spare her

Then he started shooting.

This young German "intellectual", shown as a typical case, has been recruited by the executioners; he has become but a cog in the terrifying system. Does he not represent what Peter Weiss might have become had the circumstances been different, as he himself already stated in *Fluchtpunkt*? So it might just be that these two characters, to whom an entire canto is dedicated and who represent an exception in the general structure of the play, are actually the two faces buried in the author's unconscious, both victim and executioner. The anonymity for which the play has been castigated would then be nothing more than defense tactics.

At the end of Part Two of Canto 4 (on the possibility of survival), witness number 7 declares:

I have survived the camp But the camp is not dead

The most commonly propounded interpretation of this sentence has been the following: The camp remains, that is to say, the system survives (the capitalist system, that is) and it is therefore necessary to fight it. But perhaps Peter Weiss was expressing through such words a deeper conviction: I have avoided the camp, but it remains within me, within us, forever. He thus feels the pressing obligation to bear witness for those who no longer can do so. In the tale *Das Gespraech der drei Gehenden*, only two years preceding *The Investigation*, the narrator suddenly had a vision of a mass grave filled with mouths demanding that he bear witness:

Now I must bear witness I must justify my life. 14

The Self of the writer is here directly involved. It therefore seems impossible to put Peter Weiss's play on Auschwitz, and the ones whose themes are Angola or Vietnam, on the same level. The extent of personal involvement is entirely different, and we deem it an obligation to take this fact into consideration.

But how is one to bear witness when the very language eludes one, when the debacle has carried away the familiar words, when the mother tongue has been contaminated by Nazism? After having been unable to express himself in German for years, Peter Weiss has succeeded in recovering his writer's tool but only in imperfect fashion: The language he uses swings most often between exaggerated precision and aberration. He himself clearly defines the limits of his available linguistic resources henceforth:

The words through which they had uttered his death warrant, as well as yours and that of others, were without strength or content. All they represented henceforth was nothing more than material for historical research.

The German language used in *The Investigation* is thus already a priori impoverished and suspect. Furthermore, it is the language in which Peter Weiss himself was condemned to annihilation, even though he miraculously avoided it. He is not just a stranger feeling solidarity

with the Jews of Auschwitz and testifying to their fate, like Riccardo Fontana, the admirable young priest in *The Vicar*. He considers himself as one of them.

Given the emotional involvement and the set of language problems

aforementioned, the only way for him to study the world of Auschwitz is to submit it to a strict analysis, a quasi-mathematical one. In his play Peter Weiss resurrects the Divine Comedy and transfers Dante's Inferno unto the Earth. The ternary rhythm of the Divine Comedy is picked up, the nine circles of Hell being represented by the nine cantos, all of them steps towards extermination. The characters are also three (or a multiple of three): three representatives of the judiciary, nine witnesses, eighteen accused. There is no more Paradise: those who might have deserved it have died in the gas chambers. But Hell subsists among us since the Nazi executioners are laughing, go around free, insolent and unpunished. To the survivors Purgatory is left, the realm of wandering and suffering.

We shall not go into the details of a structural or thematic study of *The Investigation*, but shall only mention some striking points which may confirm our assertions.

In addition to the rigorous division of the play into eleven cantos (each of which in turn is subdivided into three parts), the sheer amount of numerical indications is astounding: distances are precisely quoted in kilometers, the property seized from Jews is assessed in terms of its retail value (Canto 1: *The Song of the Ramp*), mention is made of the exact number of those executed by firing squad (Canto 7: *The Song of the Black Wall*), of the number of crates, boxes, the weight and price of the gas (Canto 10: *The Song of Zyklon B*), the precise dimensions of the cell (Canto 9: *The Song of the Bunker*). Such impressive precision regarding numbers all through the play may have appeared irksome or even shocking. It is doubtless a means of conjuring the abominable reality, to keep it at a distance even while tackling it. That is also the aim reached by means of free verse, which is often monotonous and devoid of till punctuation, which strikes us only by certain surprising syllabic carryovers or shortcuts. To quote but one example thereof, the tale of the barbaric murder of a newborn babe by Baretzki ends with the following laconic formula:

20

The child was dead.

Repetitions are sometimes painful: Witness number 5 repeats seven times within a single testimony the word-sequence "it was normal", or "such was the norm".

The bashful discretion of some witnesses is more impressive than a cry of pain:

Since that time I have always refused to have a child of my own, states in matter of fact fashion, the woman, who has witnessed Boger eating the apple of the little boy he had just savagely executed.

The long suffering and the oppression of the inmates are expressed only through the accumulation of past tenses and passive voices on the lips of witnesses. Certain scenes appear before our eyes, all the more terrible as they are depicted with more sobriety (such as the tattooing of the serial number, injections of phenol or the murder of the young girl in the red dress in front of the wall).

Reduction, brevity, normalization attempt to fight against the wave of emotion forever trying to drown out the writer and reduce him to silence. Horror is sometimes contained in a single word whose meaning has been distorted. In any event, language no longer exists; it is annihilated as such. There is no more exchange, nor is there dialogue between human beings. Words lie and kill (phenol injections are disguised as "preventive injections", to quote only one example).

The sequence of events is not always coherent, and parataxis is often used in the text, an excellent means of underlining the hellish chaos, the absurdity of behavior, the lack of causality for effects, the inconceivable world of Auschwitz.

In short, the conciseness of the writing in *The Investigation* is striking, especially if one thinks of the dazzling parade of Marat/Sade. Peter Weiss himself was perfectly aware of the audacity of his undertaking and of the limits thereof, as he stated during an interview:

To represent on a stage the Auschwitz camp, or any camp for that matter, is sheer impossibility. Yet, it is even presumptuous to attempt it. Today one can only observe such a thought-complex in retrospect and try to analyze what happened there. In the play, it is only from the vantage point of our own present that one

constantly gazes at this past and these events. One draws the mechanism of the camp, this death factory, in the same exact manner one would draw a blueprint. 23

Peter Weiss has therefore attempted to give an account of that hell, but we do not think that he has written his play on Auschwitz in the same manner as his other works called "documentary, nor do we think that his goal here has been only political and didactic. At the very moment when his political commitment was asserted in a decisive manner he seems to have wanted to settle a debt, a burdensome and imperious one; he wanted to testify on behalf of all his brethren exterminated in the camps. His involvement and his guilt when facing the genocide were so great that he was compelled to write *The Investigation* and he did so as he was able to, given the emotional load, an intense one, bound up with the very subject matter of the drama.

In the harsh criticism referred to above, A. Rosenfeld associates the play by Peter Weiss with the novel by William Styron, *Sophie's Choice*. Such a connection appears to us to be unjust, in spite of all the criticism one may quite obviously direct at *The Investigation* and which we have not denied. In *Sophie's Choice* the most complete and scandalous confusion reigns, to the point where the roles are totally reversed. The Jew, Nathan, brilliant and cruel, tortures a young survivor of the camps, Sophie, who is a Catholic and a Pole. He transforms her into his thing, beats her mercilessly and finally drives her to suicide. Nathan is portrayed as a sadistic and deranged being; the nice Stingo vainly tries to draw Sophie's love away from Nathan and toward himself. Furthermore, this book appears to be a true exploitation, of the erotic kind, of the theme of Auschwitz.

One is in any case quite far from such a falsification in *The Investigation*. Peter Weiss's play, with all its defects, continues to stir those wishing to listen to the secret voice ascending at times from this Oratorio, composed for his brethren by a surviving half-Jew.

Notes

1. Rolf Hochhuth, *Le Vicaire*. Paris: Seuil, 1963, Act V, Scene 1, p.

200 .

2. Erika Salloch, in her book, *Peter Weiss: die Ermittlung. Zur Struktur des Dokumentartheaters*. Königstein/Taunus: Athenaeum Verlag,

1972, supplies a long list (a non-exhaustive one, of course) of such criticisms. (Anhang. Die Sekundärliteratur ueber die Ermittlung p. 145 ff.)

3. Lawrence I. Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975. Chapter II deals with the play by Peter Weiss:

The result on the stage is singularly undramatic.... By duplicating the details of history without embellishing them, Weiss eliminates any perspective which might offer his audience an entry into their implications.... The result is not a new aesthetic distance, but an aesthetic indifference.... (pp. 31-32).

4. Ludwig Marcuse, "Was ermittelte Peter Weiss?" In *Kuerbiskem — Literatur und Kritik*. Muenchen: Damnitz Verlag, February, 1966, pp. 87-88. Underlined passages are in italics in the text.

5. Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *A Double Dying. Reflections on Holocaust Literature*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1980. Chapter 8: "Exploiting Atrocity". The following passage summarizes Rosenfeld's reproaches fairly well:

What is really on trial in *The Investigation*, in fact, is this system, itself unnamed in the play, but the true center of the author's attention. For apart from endlessly cataloging atrocity, which he does in a spare, unemotional language that conveys an austere detachment, Weiss is intent on exposing what he considers to be "the causes underlying" atrocity, the "system" that built and ran Auschwitz, (p. 156)

6. In particular in *Zehn Arbeitspunkte eines Autors in der geteilten Welt and Notizen zum dokumentarischen Theater in Rapporte 2*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971.

7. The original title is Die Ermittlung. It is curious to note that the translations of the title are by themselves already interpretations thereof. While the German word means "search, inquest, judiciary investigation", the English title The Investigation is slightly different. As for the French title, L'Instruction, it certainly bears more than one meaning.

Irene Tieder

8. Irene Tieder, "Peter Weiss: une judeité kafkaïenne après Auschwitz", in: Etudes Germaniques, January-March, 1984, pp. 44-50.

9. Peter Weiss: Die Verfolgung und Ermordung Jean Paul Marats dargestellt durch die Schauspielgruppe des Hospizes zu Charenton unter Anleitung des Herrn de Sade. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1964. Act I, Scene 15, p. 46.

10. Peter Weiss, Meine Ortschaft. 1964, pp. 113-124. In Rapporte I. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1968, p. 114.

11. Peter Weiss, Fluchtpunkt, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1962, pp. 135-136.

Passages are underlined by us.

12. Cf. Manfred Durzak, Duerrenmatt — Frisch — Weiss. Deutsches Drama der Gegenwart zwischen Kritik und Utopie. Stuttgart: Reclam Verlag, 1972, p. 287.

13. This is one of the rare instances in which the Jewish origin of a female inmate is clearly indicated in the play.

14. Peter Weiss, Das Gespraech der drei Gehenden. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1963, p. 109.

15. George Steiner has dedicated to this question his well known work, Language and Silence. London: Faber and Faber, 1958; See also, Rosenfeld, op. cit., chapter 7: "The Immolation of the Word".

16. Cf. Irene Tieder, "Peter Weiss or Laocoon Rising from the Dead", in: Dappim Besifrut, Haifa, 1/1985, pp. 159-173.

French version: "Peter Weiss ou Laocoon ressuscité", in: Les Nouveaux

Cahiers, Paris, 1987. nr. 89.

17. Peter Weiss, "Laokoon oder ueber die Grenzen der Sprache", 1965. In *Rapporte I*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1968, p. 184.

18. Peter Weiss explains his position on all this in his "Gespraech ueber Dante", 1965, in: *Rapporte I*, pp. 142-169.

19. This study has moreover been very well made by Erika Salloch, (note 2), or Walter Jens, "Die Ermittlung in Westberlin", 1967 in: *Ueber Peter Weiss*, Edited by Volker Canaris, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970, pp. 92-96.

20. Peter Weiss, *Die Ermittlung. Oratorium in 11 Gesaengen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1965. "Gesang von der Rampe", II, p. 24.

21. *Ibid.*, "Gesang vom lager", I, p. 38.

22. *Ibid.*, "Gesang von der Schaukel", I, p. 64.

23. *In Sinn und Form, Beitrage zur Literatur*, Berlin: 1965, Ruetten u. Loening, 17. Jahr. 1-6 Heft. *Gespraech mit Peter Weiss*, Wilhelm Girnus, Werner Mittenzwei. Peter Weiss, pp. 678-688.

24. William Styron, *Le Choix de Sophie*. New York: Random House, 1979. (French Translation — Paris: Gallimard, 1981).

PARADIGMS AND DILEMMAS IN THE LITERARY AWARENESS OF WEST GERMANY, WITH REGARD TO THE PERSECUTION AND MURDER OF THE JEWS

Jean-Paul Bier

The first task is to outline, in large brush-strokes, the development of literary awareness, as regards our topic, using a typological model, which doubtless holds good for other areas as well as Germany. I would distinguish between the autobiographical and literary testimony of the survivors; the work of "witnesses by imagination"; documents from the tradition of the struggle against fascism; and the German literature of narcissistic guilt.

To describe the parameters of what I have called here "literary awareness"

— a designation which I agree strongly resembles an intellectual fiction — I would emphasize two paradigms which delineate the undeniable rupture with public opinion: the subtle distinctions of the philosopher, Karl Jaspers, in *Die Schuldfrage* in 1946; and the abandonment of the over-inflated concept of *Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung* about 1967.

This step will allow us to bring into the open three moral, literary and epistemological perplexities, that is, three impossible alternatives, which have been the basis of German literary awareness for forty years.

Lastly, by way of illustration, I propose to comment on sample texts, chosen among many possible examples.

*

Largo sertsu, the inventory of the literature on what is described as the Holocaust can be typified into four distinct categories.

1. The prolific autobiographical documentation by survivors (memoirs, testimony, accounts coming from the oral tradition), of which very little is in German, (e.g., Zenon Rosanski *Muetzen ab*. Verlag Das andere Deutschland, Hanover, 1948). We have to wait for the trial of Eichmann (1961) before seeing such testimony or translations from the international documentation appear in Germany, (e.g., Gerhard Schoenberner *Wir haben es gesehen*, Ruetten und Loening, Hamburg, 1962). More problematic is the transfer from autobiographical testimony to the level of literary project. Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel, Anna Langfus, etc., were translated into German very early. (Wiesel, *Die Nacht zu begraben*, from 1958). It is a question here of a literature, conscious of the extra-territorial nature of the work in hand, clearly deriving from the ideal of realism, but which, as "Literature" cannot escape from the laws inherent in the game of creation. The audience for these texts is not humanity, but "the reader", that is, someone who knows what "Literature" is all about, and who is well-versed in his role of witness to the literary show. We are talking here about literary non-fiction; the producer can try as he may to bear doleful witness in the therapeutic manner, but as a producer of literature, he himself remains a "reader". It is a question of a special type of literariness, with a double, and doubtless contradictory, aim: mimetic and playful.

The only notable example of this type written entirely in German is the

work of Jean Amdry, starting with *Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne* in 1966, after the Auschwitz Trial in Frankfurt. Of Austrian origin, brought up in a Catholic atmosphere, like so many of his fellow countrymen of the same sort, Jean Amdry (real name, Hans Mayer) sought refuge in Belgium in 1938. He survived the deportation to Auschwitz-Monowitz with his taste confirmed for a logical and rationalist humanism, which he had first ingested from the philosophical school of Moritz Schlick in Vienna. After the war, this friend and admirer of Hermann Broch, found a philosophical master in Jean-Paul Sartre, whose *Reflections on the Jewish Question* influenced his position for a long time. Nevertheless, it was at Auschwitz that he learnt that for him also it was impossible not to be a Jew.

The little essay-novel, *Lefeu oder der Abbmch* (1974), which evokes *Somnambules* by Broch (*Pasenow oder der Romantik*; *Esch oder die Anarchie*; *Huguenau oder die Sachlichkeit*) reactualizes, in a fiction without endings, Amdr/s basic theme which one can reduce to the formula which made him famous in the West Germany of the 1970s,

Bewaeltigungs versuche eines Ueberwaeltigten". In summary form, Lefeu (his real name is Feyermann) is a surrealist and melancholy painter, and a fire-raiser (the name, Lefeu, is a pun in French); face to face with a Paris *changement* under the Pompidou regime, he hangs around his miserable garret despite the official demolition of the building he inhabits, and ignores as much as he can (with his *Aesthetic of Decay*) the siren-songs of the patrons of the arts in Germany who would like to lionize him in Dusseldorf.

In fact, the analytical account, with its multiple voices, reveals little by little the secret which he is trying to cover up, but which actually drips like sweat out of his every pore: in the time of the Nazis he abandoned his old Jewish parents in Stuttgart, and, a coward in his own eyes, is himself an escapee from the ovens. The aesthetic, and the absurd ethic of the Great Refusal, just like the fantasy painting that he persistently tries to shield from the laws of the marketplace, are nothing other than an attempt, necessarily abortive, to forget the unforgettable. Lefeu (the name can also be read *L'Efeu* — *Efeu* is "Ivy" in German) will fail in the suicide attempt at which Amdry himself did not fail, in 1978 in Salzburg, the home town of Mozart. This was after having proclaimed, in the book which made a great impression in 1976, *Hand an sich legen*, that it was the last real act of liberty which remained.

I have quoted at length from the painful figure who retained his concentration camp face, even though little known in Jewish circles, in which he scarcely ever moved, because this anti-Zionist, more and more preoccupied with the survival and future of the State of Israel, was the fascinating, intelligent and garrulous representative of the numberless victims of industrial extermination, not only for German literary awareness, but also, through television, for a much wider audience.

The first category of our typology poses a problem, in its twin aspects, of which Amery was perfectly well aware. Direct testimony is by its nature fragmentary, anecdotal, and sometimes confused; in contrast, the literary ideal postulates a finished entity even in schools of "realism"; that is, that even when the author regards writing as something fundamentally unfinished, a fortiori when it is a matter of a profound wound kept close within himself, he has an obligation vis-a-vis his potential readers to aim his efforts towards a finished product, for example structuring the literary output by using a narrative form having a beginning and an end.

In *Lefeu oder der Abbruch* of 1974 he tries to reconcile the double aim of a painful testimony on the one hand and literature on the other — reflection and the outward appearance of fiction, through the prism of the Auschwitz syndrome. For this reason he described the work (his dear child, as he once wrote to me) as an essay-novel, i.e., not just an essay into the field of the novel, but also a novel compromised by reflections in essay form. In my opinion, this book is the only document written by a survivor in German which is at the same time a genuine testimony, and also a representative work which has penetrated the German literary awareness of West Germany.

I now turn to the second class in my typology.

2. By comparison, German literary awareness has been very forcefully struck since 1945 by the lyrical, narrative and dramatic work of those literary figures writing in German, that I would describe as "witnesses by imagination", for lack of a better phrase. These are authors who avoided extermination by exile (Erich Fried), by going into hiding (Jakov Lind), or by accidents of birth, whether they suffered the ostracism of the Mischlinge (like Guenter Kunert, Ilse Aichinger), whether they were too young to be aware of their special predicament (Wolf Biermann, Hubert Fichte), or whether they were born after Auschwitz. Furthermore, one would want to distinguish between the poetic fixation of Nelly Sachs on

the Jewish dimension of the catastrophe, while she was surviving in Sweden, and a view of Auschwitz as the lowest point of human dignity, as a basic negative existential experience, holding good for all humanity, as in the work of Peter Weiss, also in Sweden. One must also make a distinction between the imaginary experience of Auschwitz used as a desperate appeal for a return to the Jewish faith as in Peter Jungk, born after the war (Rundgang Collection, S. Fischer, 1981), a childhood spent in the ghettos as with Jurek Becker (born in 1937), and a few months of slavery in an Arbeitslager, as in the case of the major poet, Paul Celan. Here arises the serious problem of those who survived by accident, and with difficulty avoided the guilt of a trauma, more imaginary than real. What to do with this inheritance, and how to give an account of it in such a way as to touch both the moral conscience and the literary awareness of German-speaking contemporaries? How to convey adequately, in the language of the murderers themselves, something, which, in the final analysis, they have only experienced through an intermediary person or imagination? How to formulate as

literature, something which on two accounts is unimaginable, between the special circumstances of the destiny of the Jews, and the universality necessary for any valid work of art? It is symptomatic that only these "witnesses by imagination" seem to have the right to waver between the ideal of lyrical beauty and that of violation, with regard to such a subject.

The "witness by imagination" who most marked the German literary awareness by his productivity and the radical nature of his position on the subject of genocide, was without doubt Peter Weiss, who recounted in his autobiography (Abschied von den Eltern, 1960, and Fluchtpunkt, 1961) how he discovered at about seventeen that his father was Jewish, and that therefore he could not belong to the Hitler Youth or the great Mass Movement, like his enthusiastic pals were doing; and that, in fact, it is by accident that one belongs with the persecutors or the persecuted. Peter Weiss did not only write The Instruction (Die Ermittlung) or, for instance, Marat/Sade, which was the first universal success of the German theatre. Viewing the survivors in the middle of their self-interrogation on the reasons for, and even the significance of, their survival, he threw into the debate two ideas with very considerable implications:

i) that taking everything theoretically, and referring to his own experience, victims and executioners are interchangeable.

ii) that in a historical perspective Auschwitz is transforming itself into something "unimaginable", which one must nevertheless attempt to imagine, since, as he says at the end of the account of his solitary visit to Oswiecim, it is not yet over.

Before the great shock of the long Auschwitz trial (1963-1965), the reflections of Peter Weiss emerge from a narcissistic experience fed rather on literary imagination than on reality, but it was the acceptance of his deepest identity face to face with Auschwitz, (*Meine Ortschaft*, "The Place for Which I was Destined", he wrote from 1961 on), that led him from the question "Who am I?" to the more concrete question, "What must be done?", or in this case, "What must be done with the heritage of Auschwitz?"

I can easily conceive that for those who experienced the genocide on their own flesh, and who still suffer from it, the approach and viewpoint of Peter Weiss (who died in Stockholm in 1982) would be unbearable; and I concede willingly that, from that standpoint, the absolute

sincerity of this "witness by imagination" may appear somewhat glib. Thus, the dangerous thesis of the interchangeability of victims and executioners, is not only blasphemous, but can be used as an ideological alibi. And on the other hand, the desire to make the heritage of Auschwitz universally significant led him to adopt stark political positions on behalf of all the wretched of the earth, with an intellectual generosity bordering on naivete. I would say of him, to be brief, that in my opinion, if the six million Jews did not all die for the sake of Judaism or Israel, they certainly died even less for the sake of the people of Vietnam or Angola.

However, the case of Peter Weiss remains a good example of the difficult position of these German-speaking "witnesses by imagination", who are permanently constrained to play the role of "representative" that German cultural life imposes on them. In this respect, one can say that in one sense Peter Weiss, like Jean Amery or Paul Celan were the willing victims of literary awareness in West Germany. From being symbolic representatives of a murdered people, they became the hostages of an industrial system that Hans Magnus Enzensberger described in his own time as *Bewusstseinsindustrie*. From then on, everything they wrote or said acquired, little by little, a special status with reference to Auschwitz. Another "witness by imagination", Erich Fried, realized very early the subtleties of the situation, expressed in a laconic little poem in 1948, but

which he only dared publish in 1958:

Markttag

Sie stellen sich an vor den Tischen wo Mitschuld verkauft wird sie zahlen
mit Blut mit ihrem

und auch mit deinem

Ich wende mich ab und seh

aus dem Augenwinkel vorn in der Reihe mich stehen mit Messer und Krug

3. I will pass over rather quickly the third class of Holocaust literature in Germany, made up of what is suitably termed the "pedagogy of Auschwitz", whose most active exponents were the Catholic Eugen Kogon, a survivor from Buchenwald, and Hermann Langbein the Communist, a survivor from Auschwitz.

As reminders, I quote *Der SS-Staat* by Kogon, issued in 1945, and the numerous books of Hermann Langbein, one of which was *Menschen in Auschwitz* (1980). The books have been issued by well-known publishers (Kindler, Ullstein), and many times re-issued in paperback. One must conclude that they have been widely bought, and even, perhaps, read. From a more political viewpoint, one should refer to the anti-fascist tradition, born in the Democratic Republic of Germany, and known there above all since the 1960's. Bruno Apitz's book of 1958, *Nackt unter Wölfen*, combines an authentic testimony, an attempt at literature, and the pursuit of a struggle considered similar to the anti-fascist tradition.

4. Lastly, the fourth category, which concerns us here more directly, and which, deriving from what we call "literary consciousness", is constituted, in its multiple varieties of theme and form, out of what we call "the German narcissism of guilt."

Here one must emphasize the fact that there are minorities of sentient writers (and, by extension, readers), who have not sought to avoid the painful ~ sometimes even masochistic — confrontation with the problems of collective and personal responsibility for the persecution and extermination of the Jews. This moral and literary confrontation with their

own immediate past, or that of their parents, has given rise to a constellation of approaches, whose symptomatic stages one can describe in a very precise way, beginning with the debate on the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

This debate, which was central to literary life — I cannot say to public life — allows a whole gamut to be outlined which goes from the ridiculous *Kollektivschuld* (collective guilt) in 1945, to the questioning of the conformity of remorse in 1967, passing by the attempts to establish an inventory of the various degrees and forms of guilt.

The idea of *Kollektivschuld* was resisted from the very beginning by several courageous men, among them the Jewish publisher, Viktor Gollancz. From 1949 on, the first President of West Germany, Theodor Heuss, bypassed this ideologem, a tributary of the collectivist reduc

tionism of the Nazi era, by diffusing the idea of *Kollektivscham*. This canny replacement of objective guilt with a collective feeling of shame, through semantics, was more realistic, and at the same time more constructive. It came to be associated with the policy of denazification, and with an aberrant bureaucratic practice, full of questionnaires to be completed by each individual German, with a stated objective of distinguishing the good wheat from the tares.

It goes without saying that the Germans never accepted the global and quasi-racist condemnation of *Vansittardism*; and this appears very clearly from the importance accorded to the tale of the "lonely righteous man" in the early literary works, such as *Jan Lobel aus Warschau*, by Luise Rinser (1948), *Wo worst du Adam*, by Heinrich Boll (1951), *Das Brandopfer*, by Albrecht Goes (1954) etc. But as well one finds the parody of this theme, which was to become such a genuine cliché, in the brilliant and cynical autobiographical novel, *Der Fragebogen*, by Ernst von Salomon (1951), a Prussian Junker from the extreme right. This challenge to the Allied questionnaire and its limitless manipulability, is at the same time an ironic fresco of the author's Nazi years, and an unbelievable piece of special pleading *pro domo*. At the end it is revealed that the woman at his side who so adroitly exploited the establishment of the Third Reich was in fact Jewish, and nobody any the wiser. Imprisoned, like himself, by the Americans, she got on like a house on fire with the ex-torturers of the concentration camps, who it turned out, were just little lost sheep who had done what they could for the detainees. This bestseller, which combines an

odiously ironic "summing-up for the prosecution" with a casual self-justification, is doubtless more representative of the public opinion of the time than of the new literary consciousness. Among other things, one can find the "some of my best friends are Jews" alibi: 'Jedem sein geretteter Jude' or even better, "seine gerettete Juedin"!

A first reference paradigm, which acted as a genuine conceptual matrix, was established by the typology of responsibility, thought out by the philosopher, Karl Jaspers, in *Schuldfrage* (1946). It is important to say that Jaspers was indeed relieved of his functions by the Nazis when he refused to separate from his Jewish wife. But it remains a fact nevertheless that his juridical, moral, political and metaphysical model kept well away from any allusions to the genocide.

There follows a brief summary of this very theoretical little book, issued a year after the surrender and the discovery of the crimes

against humanity. From the juridical point of view everything seemed quite straightforward in 1946: the crimes had to be punished. Moral guilt, by comparison, was more of a problem, since for Jaspers it was clearly first and foremost a matter of personal conscience; the liberal humanist proclaimed that one could not impose feelings of guilt on someone else, but the realist well understood that one will never make another person aware of, or responsible for, moral guilt, when the other rejects it or represses it. On the political level, declared Jaspers, ALL the Germans who had stayed in the country and who had therefore accepted the laws, regulations, and everyday rituals of a criminal state, were responsible for the country's past as well as its consequences. This radical position, by which he condemned even himself on the political level, ignored superbly the secret opposition, and the diatribe between those who had left the country and the representatives, genuine or not, of the "exiles of the interior" as they soon became conveniently known.

But Jaspers introduced a fourth category, at the same time vaguer and more interesting: the metaphysical responsibility lay with the creative and intellectual minorities. According to Jaspers, in the future they had a duty, by and in their work, to ensure that their lack of existential solidarity, which he had reported, bore fruit for human beings at large.

This reference paradigm becomes significant in an account of literary awareness in West Germany, from the moment that it is clear that Jaspers'

sincere search for a middle way between the medieval accusations of Kollektivschuld and the bureaucratic supply of alibis will give rise to an abundant literature demonstrating its inanity.

To reiterate the four categories: juridical, moral, political and metaphysical.

I. On the juridical level, it rapidly became obvious that Jaspers had made the job easy for himself: legal history in West Germany has shown to what extent sentences, penalties and their relationships were problematic. Must we really emphasize here that most of the notorious criminals had fled? or changed identity? that everyone seemed affected by generalized amnesia as far as they were concerned? and that when, late in the day, they emerged out of limbo, there were hardly any witnesses left who were credible in terms of German justice? One can

find traces of this group of themes in the literature of the 1950's, and I quote three well-known examples.

In 1954 the Swiss, Max Frisch, treated discreetly, and in almost anodyne fashion, the topic of disguised identity in *Stiller*. The novel of the man who has come back home, wearing a patchwork of names and pasts, real or imaginary, who tries to avoid his guilt by denying that he is Anatol Stiller, was considered the first great post-war German novel with an international destiny. Himself very sensitive about the persecution of the Jews (see *Andorra*), Frisch carefully avoided the slightest reference to the historical reality in which his parable has its roots.

Likewise in 1954, *Der Tod in Rom* by Wolfgang Koeppen, portrayed the archetypal SS criminal, angrily antisemitic, haunted by his absolute power of former days, contacting his shamefaced family with a view to getting back to Germany and the new society of peace and plenty.

In 1960 *Die Rote*, by Alfred Andersch, (made into a film which has left no trace) could defend a difficult, painful, and very dubious personal justice, executed in the old ghetto of Venice, a neighborhood haunted by memories.

From the end of the fifties (the Ulm trial, 1958) another theme further troubled the concept of "crime" in German literary awareness — the distinction to be made between the criminal hand, and the multiple

accomplices who made it work — and the executive of industrial death, and the numerous levels of such a well-organized system.

In 1960 Helmuth Heissenbuettel published a dazzling work which illustrates the replacement of the diabolic individual by the machinery of an entire system. By means of a sarcastic discourse deliberately confused by omitting commas and full-stops, *Kalkulation ueber das was alle gewusst haben* demonstrates the juridical concept of "crime" dissolving into the technological principle of functional efficacy.

Helmut Heissenbuettel

Kalkulation ueber das was alle gewusst haben

natuerlich haben alle was gewusst der eine dies und der andere das aber niemand mehr als das und es haette schon jemand sich noch mehr zusammenfragen muessen wenn er das gekonnt haette aber das war schwer weil jeder immer nur an der oder der Stelle dies oder das zu hoeren kriegte heute weiss es jeder weil jeder es

weiss aber da nuetzt es nichts mehr weil jeder es weiss heute bedeutet es nicht mehr als dass es damals etwas bedeutet hat als jeder nicht alles sondern nur dies oder das zu hoeren kriegte usw.

einige haben natuerlich etwas mehr gewusst das waren die die sich bereit erklart hatten mitzumachen und die auch insofern mitmachten als sie halfen die andern zu Mitmachern zu machen mit Gewalt oder mit Versprechungen denn wer geholfen hat hat natuerlich auch was wissen muessen es hat zwar vor alien verheimlicht wer den koennen aber nicht ganz vor alien usw. und dann gab es natuerlich welche die schon eine ganze Menge wussten die mittlere Garnitur die auf dem einen oder dem anderen Sektor was zu sagen hatten da haben sie zwar nur etwas verwalten koennen was organisiert war denen waren gewisse Einzelheiten bekannt sie haetten sich vielleicht auch das Ganze zusammenreimen koennen oder haben es vielleicht sogar getan aber sie trauten sich nicht und vor allem fehlte ihnen eins und das war der springende Punkt was sie haetten wissen muessen wenn sie wirklich usw.

die da oben wussten natuerlich das meiste auch untereinander denn wenn sie nichts voneinander gewusst haetten haetten sie es nicht machen koennen und es haette gar nichts geklappt denn soetwas musste

funktionieren und was nicht und wo einer nicht funktionierte da musste er erledigt werden wie sich schon gleich zu Anfang und noch deutlicher spaeter gegen Ende gezeigt hat usw. und natuerlich wussten die paar die fast alles wussten auch schon fast alles und wie durch Mitwissen Mitwisser und Mitwisser zu Mittaetern Mittaeter zu Uebelwissern Uebelwisser zu Uebeltaetern usw. denn die fast alles wussten waren so maechtig dass sie fast alles tun konnten auch Mitwisser zu Mittaetern Mittaeter zu Uebelwissern Uebelwisser zu Uebeltaetern usw. die haben es schon gewusst und weil sie es gewusst haben sind sie bei der Stange geblieben denn es war ihre Angelegenheit usw. und weil man sagen kann dass die es schon gewusst haben sagt man heute oft dass die es waren die dies aber das stimmt nicht voellig denn sie haben nicht gewusst obs auch funktioniert und das denn das hat natuerlich nur ein einziger gewusst aber wenn er es gewusst hat den springenden Punkt sozusagen dass es auch funktioniert und dass es weils funktioniert auch passiert und das ist ja auch genau passiert usw. das was alle gewusst haben das hat er

natuerlich nicht gewusst denn das konnte er nicht wissen er hatte ja keine Ahnung davon was alle dachten und sich ueberlegten usw. aber gerade daran lag es schliesslich dass es funktionierte dass alle was gewusst haben aber nur einer obs funktionierte aber nicht wusste dass es nur deshalb funktionierte weil er nicht wusste was alle wussten usw. die etwas mehr wussten konnten nichts machen ohne die die etwas wussten die schon eine ganze Menge wussten konnten nichts machen ohne die die etwas mehr wussten die fast alles wussten konnten nichts machen ohne die die schon eine ganze Menge wussten usw. aber weil alle bis auf den einen nicht wussten obs auch wirklich funktionierte konnten sie nichts machen ohne den der schon wusste dass es funktionierte aober nicht wusste was alle wussten naemlich dass sie nicht wussten obs auch funktionierte

und so hat das funktioniert

German literary awareness of the 1960's was haunted by the role, the psychology, and the probing of the Schreibtischtäter, of the criminal bureaucrats, and by the trickery of a mechanism which gripped an individual in its wheels and slid him from culpable irresponsibility to active participation in crime. German literature showed up the legal naivete of the philosopher Jaspers. Not only was individual crime not punished, but the whole concept of "guilt" was wrecked over the working of a system. After the Frankfurt trial (1965), Martin Walser (who in Unser

Auschwitz regretted that the word "Auschwitz" was likely to become merely a literary quotation) declared that, when all was said and done, the concentration camp murderers were perhaps nothing more than a criminal working-class, i.e., poor, wretched devils caught in an assembly-line industry whose final product was death.

II. The category of moral guilt, as Jaspers described it in 1946, derived from the Protestant tradition of the categorical imperative and the morality of intention that has been one of the sources of German literature for a long time. Since it seemed impossible to make appeals to the consciences of the criminals, as the Nuremberg Trial had already shown in 1945, it remained to be shown how these consciences worked. This was attempted by Alexander Kluge, the writer and film-maker, in *Lebenslaeufer* (1962); without commentary and without

irony he reproduced the tone of meticulous indifference, of pseudoscientific objectivity, of the bureaucratic murderers.

Thus was born in the German post-war novel the clinical eye of the narrator-archivist, taking its place beside the voluble novelist in the Guenter Grass style, and the dismantler of language like Heissenbuettel, but a clinical eye, which took the risk, because of its simple reproduction, of adding to the inhumanity it was seeking to bring into question. What fascinated the literary awareness at the moral level, was the appalling "normality" and the lack of imagination of these administrators of murder. It was no longer a matter of bringing into question certain German traditions (Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus*), or of making monsters out of the anti-humanist and stupid "petit bourgeois" (Guenter Grass, *Die Blechtrommel*), but of describing a psychological mechanism which found its first systematic application in the crime against the Jews. The hypertrophy accompanying this state of "inhuman normality" is a premonitory model, with the disquieting question underlying it: What would I have done?

III. In the philosopher's mind in 1946, Jaspers' third category — generalized political guilt which left no salvation outside exile or suicide — was really a call to genuinely democratic institutions in a rightist state. This being so, he seems to have ignored the many abortive forms of the clandestine resistance. No one paid much attention to Guenter Weissenborn's little work, *Der lautlose Aufstand* (1953), which revealed the existence of a minority, even sometimes solitary individuals, who

opposed the Criminal State between 1933 and 1945. Weissenborn quotes a small group of Jewish Communists who were beheaded in Berlin, in August, 1942. But one had to wait until 1985 for the appearance of works on the pockets of organized resistance in the Third Reich: Leon Brandt, *Menschen ohne Schatten* (Oberbaum Verlag), and Konrad Kwiet & Helmut Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand* (Christians, Hamburg).

It goes without saying that German literary awareness was scarcely sensitive to these forms of hopeless heroism. While public opinion focused on the conservative military opposition, or resistance by Christians, the literary milieu showed its predilection for paying attention to cowardice, opportunism and venality.

The literary scandal of 1959, *Die Blechtrommel*, by Guenter Grass, can be considered the symptom of the first split between literary awareness and public opinion. It is a parody of the literature of

self-justification, a grotesque and cruel retrospective of the immediate past, set principally in Danzig, written as from the lunatic asylum by a crooked mind, deceitful and full of guilty resentments. This was Oskar Mazerath, present at the pogrom of November, 1938, who witnessed the suicide of his old Jewish friend, Markus, and whose house was requisitioned after the war by the Russians and by Mr. Fajngold, a survivor from Treblinka. In a garrulous style he narrates a totally incredible past. At the age of three, he decided to grow no more, and hence no longer to have to accept the daily commitments of the vile petits bourgeois Nazis who make up his natural environment. But try as he may, he cannot avoid the political guilt that Jaspers described in *Die Schuldfrage*, which he quotes in passing.

With this bragging and hideous dwarf, Grass, the typical representative of the German narcissism of guilt, has created the only universally applicable character of post-war literature in West Germany, since he belongs in the domain of the retrospective Utopia of many Germans of his generation, with the proviso that avoiding political responsibility in such a way would have meant his liquidation in any case, by reason of being mentally and physically handicapped.

The place occupied by the genocide in this book, as also in the later ones, was a signal that the post-1945 generation, who were thus twenty at the

time of the Auschwitz trial, gave this responsibility a special meaning in their conflict with their elders, parents and the New Establishment with its roots in the "Economic Miracle" and the Cold War. The psychiatrists, Alexander and Margarethe Mitscherlich, helped by showing, in *Die Unfaehigkeit zu trauern* (1967), (published in 1970 under the title, *Eine deutsche Art zu lieben*), the mechanism of individual and collective repression hiding behind twenty years of contrition under the *Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung* formula. In the same year, the former young Nazi idealist, Gert Kalow, made the pathetic assessment of his slow path to enlightenment, and declared that the *Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung* was just a subtle way to get rid of the guilty past (*Hilfer ; ein deutsches Trauma*, 1967). On the contrary it was necessary to leave the wounds open, live with them like that, and not try to "get over" them or to cure them.

Faced with direct or literary testimony which was in the end very little known in Germany except in the sweetened and barely credible form of television "soap-operas" like Gerald Green's *Holocaust*; faced also with the pedagogy of Auschwitz with its very limited means, the second half of the sixties saw a wider acceptance by German literary

Jean-Paul Bier

awareness of the genocide of the Jews. From this era of the generation gap, it was suddenly confronted with an abundant literature of the "witnesses by imagination" which was no longer just of exotic interest, since it registered Peter Weiss, Wolfgang Hildesheimer, Erich Fried, Guenter Kunert in the mainstream of literature in general.

At this time, when the Graeco-Roman Americanism, "Holocaust", added a theological dimension where it was irrelevant (Emil Fackenheim), German literary awareness managed to do away with the semantic pretense represented by *Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung*. However, despite the discrepancy between, on the one hand the former victims and their descendants taking responsibility for a dubious word which gave meaning, and on the other hand the German abandonment of a term discredited by emotional erosion, by ideological misuse, and the inexorable passing of time, rendering the real imaginary, there appears a paradigm very similar to the "overcoming of the past". Now the past must stay in the present, the wound stay open, memory be ritualized in emotional, moral and political tradition, and thus none of this be evacuated into history, meaning distance, indifference and finally oblivion. On the other hand, the younger

generation, Germans as well as Jews, needed to keep their faith in life and in humanity, needed to keep their right to the quest for day-to-day happiness, and could not allow such a debt to encroach on their future.

IV. This paradox, and its treatment in German literary awareness from about 1967, marked a definitive split with public opinion, but once at this stage the literature was able to enunciate at least three basic dilemmas regarding the metaphysical guilt, which was the fourth of Jaspers' categories in 1946.

A. Any literature approaching the genocide of the Jews must, if only for elementary moral reasons, derive from the realistic ideal, since any lapse from realism would tend to harm the credibility of the work. But, the horror of the extermination, which was even too much for its victims to grasp (and doubtless also for German contemporaries), makes all authentic realism impossible.

The choice between fiction and reality is morally unacceptable for all who have not directly suffered the horrors of the genocide, and even more so for the retrospective writing of a German. Between a radical mimesis founded on documentation which brings projects of literature to a poor end (Hans Scholz, *Am gruenen Strand der Spree*, 1955), and the principle of aesthetic stylization losing all moral credibility (Rolf Hochhuth, *Der Stellvertreter*, 1963) there is no way

out. German literary awareness is excluded from direct testimony and cannot allow itself a representation in literature which in any case would be beyond its imagination. They would be wrong to write about the significant themes of day-by-day persecution, denunciation, indifference, and Jewish deportation to the unknown, and thus use a teichoscopic way out of a taboo.

B. Aesthetic representation can be set at nothing: one can close the book; turn away from the poem; ignore the play. Faced with such casual abandonment the repetitive representation of the horrors of massproduced death becomes a blasphemy; and even more so when all attempts at such formulation have a real meaning. Caught between honorable motives such as protest, warning, ideological questioning (with a range between pathos and cynicism), and the postulate that such an unbelievable massacre means nothing at all, German literary awareness is torn between the unacceptability of silence, and the impossibility of a literary dialogue on

the topic. Thanks to the re-discovery of the first Wittgenstein, this post-Auschwitz speechlessness became its own topic in German poetry, as with Horst Bienek (1976).

Horst Bienek

Sagen Schweigen Sagen

Wenn wir alles gesagt haben werden

wird immer noch etwas zu sagen sein

wenn noch etwas zu sagen ist

werden wir nicht aufhoeren duerfen

zu sagen was zu sagen ist

wenn wir aufangen werden zu schweigen

werden andere ueber uns sagen

was zu sagen ist

so wird nicht aufhoeren

das Sagen und das Sagen ueber das Sagen

Ohne das Sagen gibt es nichts wenn ich nicht das was geschehen ist sage
erzaehle oder beschreibe ist das Geschehen ueberhaupt nicht geschehen

das Sagen wird fortgesetzt

Stueck fuer Stueck

besser: Bruchstueck fuer Bruchstueck

Jean-Paul Bier

Niemals wird es das Ganze sein niemals also wird alles gesagt sein

C. Even more serious is that all literature which gives form to the murder

of the Jews, form which conveys sense and meaning, suffers an emotional erosion inversely proportional to its immediate impact. What starts as a painful trauma, becomes a literary theme, then secondary motif, then obligatory reference, and finally a well-worn cliché which provokes a new indifference or the irritation of something heard a thousand times already. What was once reality but escapes the realist ideal, equally escapes the symbolist ideal and the modernist ideal which all seek to suggest meanings and to name names. Auschwitz appeals to the new literary ideal described as "post-modernist", which lumps everything together without assigning a value (the entropy principle), excludes all transparent meanings (arbitrary assembling), and refers everything back to the reader's imagination (multiple choice principle).

Between 1) a backward-looking literature, whose legibility reduces the genocide to a common area of irritation, 2) a literature right up to date which aims to be anti-philosemite as far as this topic goes, (Gerhard Zwerenz, R. W. Fassbinder), and 3) the literature of indifference, deliberately navel-regarding — there remains for the German literary awareness this "post-modernist" ideal, which reproduces all the disorder and chaos in the world, and has no hesitation in giving a major theme a minor role. It seems that with *Die Maulwurfe*, by Guenter Eich (1974), we had the last insight into a grievous injury which will very soon cease to be an object of reflection for the writers of West Germany.

Faced with these impossible alternatives, it is incumbent on us to point out that the tolerance limits vary, depending on whether the German-speaking writer comes from among the former victims or the former executioners. At first sight, this distinction may seem glaringly obvious, yet it is by no means negligible as a real factor in the literary awareness of West Germany.

1. W T e postulated as first dilemma the need for credibility which was impossible to satisfy, and the way that any solely aesthetical treat

ment of such a subject takes on the nature of blasphemy. For one thing, as Adorno expressed, writing poetry after Auschwitz (i.e., poetry about the genocide) was an act of barbarism; for another, it would be madness to set down in writing a reality so abominable that no fiction could cope with it. However, the Romanian Jew, Paul Celan, burst into the literary awareness of Germany in 1952 with *Die Todefuge*, revealing a black and fascinating beauty which moved generations, and which became in Germany a kind of

Wiedergutmachungsgedicht, charged with almost as much emotional intensity as Anne Frank's Diary.

And indeed, there exists the Jewish tradition of self-parody — cruel and cynical, ill-conceived, ill-written, placed somewhere between revolting farce and the aesthetics of ugliness; this group goes from Robert Neumann (*Die Kinder von Wien*, 1945), to Edgard Hilsenrath (*Der Nazi und der Friseur*, 1977).

For German literary awareness, the fantasy, iconoclasm and grotesquerie of this withered world was a special domain, with "No Entry" on the gate, as was the transfiguration of the Jewish martyr through aesthetic pleasure; the paths both of lyrical poetry and of violation remained forbidden. However, these approaches seem no longer to be excluded in recent times, where it is a matter (as with the young Kurt Bartsch) of attacking the morality of contrition itself. Gerhard Zwerenz' novel, *Die Erde ist unbewohnbar wie der Mond* (1973) and the nasty play by R.W. Fassbinder, *Die Stadt, der Tod und der Muell* (1976), were the signs of this mutation.

I sincerely believe that the political interpretation of this recent literary phenomenon has been misunderstood. To the extent that the split between literary awareness and public opinion has itself become a moral and political factor — i.e., that German writers, supported by a massive "conscience industry" (*Bewusstseinindustrie*) gave themselves the task of bringing into question the clear consciences of the new Germans cozily ensconced in their "Economic Miracle", (*Wirtschaftswunder*) — one can understand that they might develop an aesthetic of violation, with the aim of confronting the Germans with their own repressions, lies, and strategies for oblivion. It is this last idea that I brought out in my chapter on the subject in *Jews and Germans after the Holocaust*, (Holmes & Meyer, 1985), edited by Rabinbach and Zipes. However, since the 1970's it is not the genocide itself which has become taboo, but the way of treating the topic.

2. The second dilemma posed the problem that there was no way to treat the subject of the genocide adequately, but that it was equally impossible just to ignore it. Wolfgang Hildesheimer has revised this problem, calling it the "new Auschwitz dimension" without which reality can no longer be conceived. Contradicting Adorno, Hildesheimer declared, in his Frankfurt Conference, *Die Wirklichkeit des Absurden* that only art and literature

were still capable of bearing witness to this increase in our awareness due to the possibility of genocide. Thus the "Auschwitz dimension" appears to be becoming a parasitic phenomenon, unavoidably invading and perverting all manifestations of contemporary consciousness. A striking example of this unavoidable co-existence is the extraordinary confrontation between the problems of a revolutionary Utopia conceived by the paranoid Marat (described by the way as a hergelaufener Jude) and the cruel, exaggerated imagination of the Marquis de Sade, skeptic and libertine, as dramatized in the chaotic, turbulent, iconoclastic play, *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung Jean Paul Marats, dargestellt durch die Schauspielergmppe des Hospizes zu Charenton unter Anleitung des Herrn de Sade*, by Peter Weiss in 1965, that is, immediately after the Frankfurt Trial. Before the appalled eyes of the new high society of 1808 (i.e., the new establishment of the Bonapartist regime), the asylum patients, mingled with political dissidents imprisoned as lunatics, re-enact on an improvised stage the murder of Marat in 1793, fifteen years before. The text is by de Sade, himself a prisoner, who shares in the cathartic experience although absent at the time of the crime, plays himself in the drama, and paradoxically rejoices in a crescendo of triumph as the control of the actors further and further eludes him. Foremost in the mind of the frightened public of 1808, is a phenomenon which can be suitably called a dramatic form of *Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung*. The endless problems posed by the mechanics of individual and collective repression are brilliantly presented in the pathetic attempts by the public of 1808 on stage to censor the progress of the play, and thus to confine the imaginary within acceptable limits of tolerability. However, the generalized chaos, which violates all bearable limits, also threatens the serene rituals of the German audience in 1965, and it was necessary for a heavy iron grill to protect the public, at the last minute, from the excesses of the stage.

Considering the numerous allusions to contemporary reality and the immediate past in Germany, Marat/Sade is first and foremost a complex and provocative metaphor which brings into question the concept of

reality as a tactic of repression faced with what we have since Hildesheimer called the "Auschwitz dimension" of the imaginary. In this regard, it is symptomatic that the debate in West Germany over this play crystallized into views on libertarian individualism versus the goals of revolution. The other texts of Peter Weiss during this era, especially *Die Ermittlung* or *Meine Ortschaft*, show that the fundamental postulate of his

work is of a moral and epistemological order: it deals with the guilt complex of the survivor by accident, relegated belatedly to a position as imaginary spectator.

Our third dilemma bore on the unworkable forms and modes confronting the literary consciousness faced with the withering of emotions and themes that happens so quickly at this time. The tender anarchist, poet and sinologue, Gunter Eich (died 1972) from 1968 onwards published little subversive texts, which at the same time showed his constant refusal to take part in any positive cultural action in postAuschwitz Germany, and his hatred of the unmentionable abomination. He treated the theme in different ways, from his radiophonic piece, Die Maedchen von Viterbo (1952), which became a classic of contrition — thus in the final analysis completely without effect — to the incomplete and laconic poetry, like that of Lemberg. These 'Maulwuerfe' which defy any one single interpretation were seen, wrongly, as a late and German form of nonsense, whereas under the apparent casualness of the discourse, the author systematically sidesteps the facile role of a producer of meaning which can be easily salvaged. One must take Die Maulwuerfe in the animalistic sense (the subterranean activity of moles - multiple, subversive and complex), in the modern political sense (like John Le Carré, but also as Maul ~ (mouth) Wuerfe (throws) ~ "Hurling from the Mouth". By way of example, here is the Maulwurf, Telephonisch (Greek: a distant call). The problems are typical of a text (textum; textile) which deliberately slides away from traditional communication since it turns the potential reader back to the widest possible freedom of interpretation, which illustrates the continuity of Auschwitz in this post-modernist writing. The rapid modulation/demodulation as regards our subject is limited to an approach to the horizontal and vertical semantics, which will bring to light associations, connotations, and hidden quotations.

Telefonisch

Ein kalter Draht zum vierten Schuljahr, niemand antwortet, der man sein koennte, man muss sein Leben erfinden. Baumlange Kerls ueberall und wenn man hinsieht, ist es ein Wald. Da lohnt sich eben noch ein Schluckauf, aber man hat Mumps und bittere Mandeln. Und was sind Messerschnitt und Vergiftungen wert? Alles nur Buehndolche, eine Knollenblaettertrilogie, ein wilhelminischer Doppelmoerder. (Er gait als begabt, verschrieb sich aber der Natur und wurde Wunderschaefer im Lippischen, heilte mit Spucke). Und andere Beispiele.

So vergeht die Zeit, wenn auch die Spucke geblieben ist. Hinter den offenen Fenstern zeigen sich die Sprichwoerter und alles hat auch sein Gegenteil. Man sucht nach Gewissheit, faehrt eigens nach Heisterbach, aber auch da ist die Zeit nicht. Manchmal (aus dem kalten Draht) spricht es einen cm, glaubt man jedenfalls, aber es ist zugleich ein Rauschen in der Leitung. Man fragt wie bitter und notiert sich dann, dass Heimbuchen unwiderleglich sind, wenn auch verhaeltnismaessig selten. Oder man soli zwischen den heissen Kuechentoepfen nach dem Herdbuch suchen, — ein Herdbuch fuer jeden Herd, das ist zuviel, da zieht man sich auf seinen Mumps zurueck und auf die wilhelminische Dramaturgie (die Geschichte eine moralische Anstalt).

Unsere Aufsatzhefte lagen unten im Stoss, werden aber noch von teutoburgischen Schaefern als Orakel benutzt. Ober dem Dache sas die Kaze und schaute zu. Vorlaeufig imgenuegend. Aver man wartet auf den kalten Draht, harnaeckig, waehrend die Revolutionaere Speck ansetzen.

The situation in the first paragraph is relatively clear; using a sort of internal telephone, the speaker is trying to contact again the child he was in fourth-year primary school, which for Eich (born at Lebus-on-Oder in 1907) takes us to about 1917-18. But the attempt to remember is doomed to failure: "kalter Draht" compared to the expression "heisser Draht" (but which also suggests Stacheldraht) seems to indicate that the phone is dead. "Niemand antwortet, der man sein koennte". Which German recognizes himself in 1968, at that distance? One's identity has to be re-invented. "Baumlange Kerls ueberall" hale and hearty chaps, the military ideal of the Prussian kings, who are like a forest thick with trees, a reference known in

the Germanic

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tradition, with the extra idea that, by an echo of the inverted phrase "vor lauter Bäumen sieht man den Wald nicht mehr", only a vague mass is seen, with no details distinguishable. "Da lohnt sich eben noch ein Schluckauf; so there's a lot more point in remembering childhood ailments — hiccups, mumps, tonsillitis. But for post-Auschwitz literary awareness, "bittere Mandeln" also refers insidiously to a painful Jewish theme by Paul Celan. In the same way "Messerschnitt" and "Vergiftungen" recall the association "Messerschmidt" and "Vergasungen".

Then come some examples and reminiscences that it would take too long to analyze here; keep in mind, wilhelminischer Doppel-moerder, which may suggest the neologism "Massenmoerder", or the arch aim "Wunderschaefer" originally from Lippe-Detmold, which became very early a bastion of Nazism.

The second paragraph emphasizes the ideological components of the connotations brought out up to now. The idea of dread in the currently used phrase, "Da bleibt einem die Spucke weg", acts as a link between the "Wunderschaefer" — the shepherd-healer using saliva (Spucke-im Lippischen; Lippe — lips) — and the revealing inversion of the phrase "So vergeht die Zeit, wenn auch die Spucke geblieben ist": despite the passing of time, the reasons for dread are still there. Sayings and proverbs are still there too, but they no longer transmit the ancestral wisdom "alles hat auch sein Gegenteil". Absurdly, they look for safety in Heisterbach, a small town of Siegerland, made famous by the legend of the Monk of Heisterbach who, lost in a wood, found a reality forgotten for thousands of years. This obscure medieval tale had its hour of glory at the beginning of the century, thanks to the PanGermanic writer Wilhelm Schaefer, absolute stereotype of the literary Schreibtischtäter under the Nazi regime. From 1922 onwards he had propagated a Bible of German nationalism entitled Die 13 Buecher der deutschen Seele, a monumental "tragic" poem to the glory of German imperialism. In essence it was a re-interpretation of German history after the defeat, written with the express intention of becoming THE book to be found in every German home, ~ ein Heimbuch or Herdbuch fuer jeden Herd, an obligatory success only experienced by Mein Kampf after 1933 for the reasons we know. But it is too much, says Eich, "ein Herdbuch fuer jeden Herd, das ist zuviel, da zieht man sich auf

seine Mumps zurueck, und auf die wilhelminische Dramaturge". The little insertion in brackets is already a conclusion. Schiller wanted to give a moral function to the theatre: das Theater als moralische Anstalt.

Jean-Paul Bier

However, if history makes dreadful theatre, it is naturally anything but "moralische Anstalt".

The third paragraph explains this in a rather casual way, but this detachment scarcely masks the dread and guilt of one who would go on the quest for the bygone time of his childhood in 1917-18. Our exercise books are still used today as oracles by the new "teutoburgische Schaefer" — other bad, Germono-manics like the wretched Wilhelm Schaefer. Then comes a childish quotation in bad German as the little ten-year old Guenter Eich must have written it, but the correction necessary by the reader of today suddenly takes on the value of a retrospective oracle. "Ober dem Dache sas die Kaze und schaute zu": On the roof sits the cat and looks at the show. Leaving aside the dialect, "Ober" for "Auf, there are two premonitory mistakes: "sas" should be written "SA SS" and in "Kaze" a "t" is missing which must be placed correctly, otherwise it becomes "Kazet" - KZ. Hence the teacher's comment, "vorlaeufig ungenuegend". It goes without saying that this "vorlaeufig ungenuegend" — unsatisfactory for the time being — must be understood on other levels:

- I) the individual anamnesis of the speaker has not yet gone far enough,
- II) the traumatizing collective anamnesis of the Germans, called Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung has remained a dead letter (ein kalter Draht),
- III) from the moral point of view, the theatre of German history deserves no more than "Unsatisfactory for the time being."

Beneath the apparent frivolity of a laconic or garrulous nonsense, the majority of Maulwuerfe refer back to the "Auschwitz dimension", as defined by Eich's friend, the "witness by imagination", Wolfgang Hildesheimer, in his poetic discourses in Frankfurt in 1967. Seen in this light, the last great work by Guenter Eich declares, to those who will listen, that it is Auschwitz that is eating us away inside, like the moles who ravage our gardens.



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CHRISTIAN YOUTH ASSOCIATIONS IN FRANCE FACE THE HOLOCAUST DURING WORLD WAR II

Yves-Marie Hilaire

I have agreed to treat this subject for several reasons: firstly because in France at the present time, a research group — GRECO No. 2 — under the supervision of Professor G. Cholvy and P. Bolle, operating within the framework of C.N.R.S., is dealing with the Youth Associations in the twentieth century.

Further, I have personally been an active participant in three symposiums about Churches and Christian people during World War II: in Grenoble (Rhône-Alp region, in 1976); Lille (North of France, Nord and Pas-de-Calais, in 1977); Lyon (on a national level, in 1978), all dealing with the French scene. I also attended the Warsaw symposium in 1978, dealing with the attitudes of the Christians in Europe during World War II; as well as the one in Paris, organized by the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (C.D.J.C., in 1979) and the one in Grenoble, in 1984, about spiritual attitudes and Resistance, centered on Père de Montcheuil.

Lastly, as a member of J.E.C. (Christian Student Youth) from 1941 to 1949, I was given information which proved to be essential even if limited in some respects. I have gradually found out the horrible truth and this knowledge has greatly contributed to changing my ideas and giving me a clearer conscience.

So, recalling my memories and looking back through notes that I jotted down in April, 1943, during a meeting of J.E.C., I thought I might present my testimony, at times quite accurate, about the spreading of information about the Holocaust that reached a young

teenager (from 14 to 17) living in southern France until July, 1943, and

afterwards in the northern part, in Paris.

In this field of Youth Associations, apart from what the above mentioned symposiums have given me, I must also refer to several other sources: the work bearing on the action of CIMADE (Comite Inter-Mouvements Aupris Des Evacuis) under the supervision of Jeanne Merle d'Aubigne, *Les Clandestins de Dieu*, CIMADE, 1939-1945, (Fayard, 1968), and the intervention of Madeleine Barot, at the Lyon Symposium, on that same subject; the two theses written by two men, both named Alain Michel, one about the Jewish scouts (*Les Eclaireurs Israelites de France pendant la Second Guerre Mondiale*. Paris: Edition des E.I.F., 1984), the other about J.E.C. from 1934 to 1944, which is to be published quite soon under the title *J.E.C. Facing Nazism and Vichy*. (*La Jeunesse Etudiante Chrdtienne face au nazisme et k Vichy 1938-1944*). Finally, the remarkable book by Rende Bddarida, *Les Armes de l'Esprit, Temoignage Chretien (1941-1944)*, (Editions Ouvri&res, 1977), and the complete republication in facsimile of *Cahiers et Courtiers clandestins du Temoignage chretien*, (Paris, 1980).

I am sorry to say that *Temoignage chretien*, which between 1941-44 had aroused Christian conscience by exposing antisemitism and telling the French about the crimes committed by the Nazis, has, unfortunately, betrayed its origins by becoming strongly anti-Zionist since 1967.

As to the information gathered in Free France about the genocide, my references are the five publications of *Documentation Franqaise*, *Les voix de la v^riti*, ici Londres, in which the texts of the formal statements and news are to be found reported daily. But we must bear in mind that this privileged source gives only limited information about the genocide, and moreover that this information was not always immediately believed. The truth in all its horror was revealed at last through the people freed from the camps and the deportees coming back to France in May, 1945.

The fight of a few Christian Youth Associations against antisemitism and racial persecution is that of prophetic and active minorities whose role has been so beautifully brought out by Jacques Maritain. It corresponds to the Christian Resistance which was active as early as 1940, before the Communists. Yet it had an originality of its own as we shall now try to show.

I Who did the Youth Associations represent in 1939-40?

As early as 1939 the leader of the Nazi Hitler Jugend, Baldur von Schirach, realized how highly representative they were:

- 3500 Jewish Boy Scouts, in France and Algeria, one tenth of the age groups considered.
- 20 to 25,000 young people affiliated with Protestant Associations (an estimate by Georges Casalis, a former leader), constituting one third or one quarter of the age groups.
- Catholic organizations with a great number of members, especially the movements connected with A.C.J.F. (that is, J.O.C., J.E.C., J.A.C.) and created between 1927-34. At the time, the local statistics sometimes gave impressive numbers. For example, in the Manche (one of the French departments), one young country man out of three was a member of J.A.C. Yet the numbers varied with the regions. In 1942, for its 15th anniversary Congress, J.O.C. and J.O.C.F. managed to gather more than 150,000 young people in the southern area alone. At the beginning of 1943, J.E.C. sold 70,000 calendars in both areas, of which 40,000 were in the southern area. Thus, one out of four school boys and girls bought one. During the summer of 1942, 200 "sessions" were held for young militant school boys.

We may therefore reach the following conclusion: In 1942, insofar as the "specialized" movements are concerned, the estimate for both male and female organizations may be about 600 to 700,000 young people to whom must be added the scouts (boys and girls) who numbered about 150,000, and various other organizations. All together we reach a total of one million. This estimate roughly corresponds with that of Secretariat d'Etat a la Jeunesse of the Vichy government with 15% of the young people belonging to movements mostly Catholic. Despite what may have been written, this is a considerable proportion, for these movements covered the whole of the French territory. It made the Christian movements the necessary contact with the government insofar as youth was concerned. The attempts of certain milieux in Vichy to create one unique youth movement, politically favorable to the National Revolution, even to the point of collaboration, was checked by the real power embodied in the Christian organizations, which could not be broken without shocking public opinion. Their existence was a

guarantee against a complete totalitarian drift by the Vichy regime. Those

who favored imitation of Nazism were aware of this, and consequently aimed to create a single youth organization that would embrace all young people, as Hitler Jugend did. Between 1940 and 1942, the leaders of the Christian organizations, backed by their pastors or their bishops, were led to oppose the partisans of totalitarianism under a slogan drawn from one of Marechal Pdtain's own formulae: "Yes to united youth, no to unique youth."

Two good examples of organizations ready to convey clandestine information instead of official propaganda were the Protestant movements and the J.E.C., which were the most advanced organizations.

The Protestant movements were composed of five organizations which, on July 24, 1940, were grouped under the name of Conseil protestant de la Jeunesse, under the presidency of Pasteur Boegner, acknowledged by the government as the President of Eglise rtformte de France and therefore recipient of financial help. The five organizations were as follows:

- Federation des Etudiants chritiens, in the southern area, comprising 300 to 500 students and 1000 school boys and girls attending high schools
- Unions chretiennes de jeunes gens
- Unions chretiennes de jeunes filles
- Eclaireurs unionistes
- Eclaireuses unionistes

The various groups met in congresses or camps on a regional level. A great number of foreigners, chiefly Jews, took part in the meetings of the Federation before September, 1942.

These organizations were close to their vicars, as indicated by the "resistance" preaching by Roland de Pury in the Temple of Rue de la Lanterne in Lyon, which many students listened to. They were also connected with Switzerland (R. de Pury being Swiss) and with the international Protestant humanitarian organizations. But one influence was prevalent in their intellectual development. It was the dogmatic, anti-Nazi teaching of Karl Barth, whose disciples included Georges Casalis, and Andr6 Dumas in Lyon.

In Lille there is similar proof of this influence in a group around an older man, Reverend Nick, the members of which were already aware of Barth's ideas before the war. This was in keeping with a sense of

solidarity with the German church confessante siding against Hitler (cf. Barmen's theses, 1934) and, for some of them, with a Huguenot faithfulness, symbolized in the rhyming of maquisard and camisard. In the meetings and camps of that time the Bible played a prominent part, and in it the "prophetic arms", as de Pury put it, were made prominent, inducing them to resist and fight oppression. What also characterized these Protestant organizations was the help they extended to the evacuees through CIMADE which had existed since 1939 for the people from Alsace-Lorraine.

The second example is that of a Catholic organization, J.E.C., created in 1929 and belonging to A.C.J.F. Here we are faced with a movement that strengthened its hierarchical organization during the war. On different levels its papers and magazines sent information abroad, for instance, Messages, which reached all the militants, and Cahiers de notre Jeunesse (1941-43), which cited many quotations from such men as André Mandouze, G. Dru and J.M. Domenach. Circular letters were sent to the leaders (cf. Gortais).

Even before the war numerous warnings were repeatedly voiced against Nazism, such as Lettres à Jean-Pierre, by Father Victor Dillard (1938), which were re-edited during the German occupation. This priest died at Dachau in 1945. In dealing with the Hitler Jugend, there was a call for the young people to raise Christianity against neo-paganism and to set the Cross of Christ against the Swastika; to be Christians, more courageous, more exacting, more dynamic than the young Nazis.

In 1939, a Guide de lectures appeared, with a long bibliography (De Reynold, L'Europe tragique; d'Harcourt, L'Évangile de la Force, Catholiques d'Allemagne; F. Perroux, Mythes hitleriens). These books were actually read because of the confidence the young people placed in the movement. In 1938, during the antisemitic persecutions in Germany, a tract issued by the Paris Federation of J.E.C. declared: "We are all German Jews."

II — A criticism of the antisemitic legislation and the help extended to persecuted people

The antisemitic legislation of Vichy (October 3, 1940, June 2, 1941, etc.) provoked a reaction. Whereas the Churches limited their interventions and remained quite discreet (the most critical and determined figure was Pasteur Boegner, the President of the Protestant churches), some youth organizations, following the 1940 defeat, continued to

disseminate anti-Nazi information, denouncing antisemitism. They were essentially the Protestant organizations and J.E.C. belonging to the Association catholique de la Jeunesse française (A.C.J.F.). It should be noted that the Protestant and Catholic scouts rejected antisemitism on October 1, 1940 at the Camp of the Oradou in order to set the foundation of the French Boy Scout movement. The Jewish scouts were recognized by the convention of July 24, 1941, and the French Boy Scout movement continued to recognize them and help them, despite the two dissolutions decided by Vichy (cf. the visit of General Laffont, in March, 1942, to the Maison des Enfants, in Moissac, where he was greeted by the Jewish scouts singing, "Lift up your heads, people of Israel").

The rejection of antisemitism appeared clearly as early as November,

1940, in the texts of the Correspondance Federative (the newspaper edited by the Federation in the non-occupied area) in an article written by Pasteur Lestringant, the Dean of Facultd theologique protestante de Paris, then settled in Valence. After asserting that, marked by God's election, Israel was the greatest of all peoples, he also said that it was not the only guilty people. For God there were neither Aryans nor Semites, but only sinners. In the New Testament there was no listing of the Jews' sins. Lastly, he underlined the contradiction existing between a possible Final Solution and Christian faith. The Christian believes, he said, that even if it were decided that all the children of Israel should be destroyed (if this were possible) such solution, though tragic, would merely last a short time since God raises the dead.

A few months later, confronted with the second statute of the Jews, July 23, 1941, the five Protestant organizations sent a joint memorandum to the Secretariat d'Etat a la Jeunesse: "Nobody, whatever his/her race or origin may be, can be refused as a member of one of the five organizations." Pasteur Charles Westphal, the President of the Federation in the southern area, who had protested against the new statute of the Jews in a letter sent as early as June 2 to the Board of Education, insisted that this decision should be put into operation, particularly in the camps and meetings of the

Protestant students, largely attended by young Jews.

Lastly, there was the meeting in Pomeyrol on September 16 and 17,

1941, attended by well known persons belonging to French Protestantism, among them Madeleine Barot, leader of CIMADE, Suzanne de

Dietrich, secretary of the Universal Federation of Christian students, Rend Courtin, a law professor in Montpellier University, Pasteur Visser't Hoft, secretary of the ecumenical Council of the Churches in Geneva, Pasteurs Casalis, Gastambide and de Pury. The meeting adopted the eight Pomeyrol theses, of which the seventh read:

Having the Bible for its foundation, the Church recognizes in Israel the people elected by God in order to give a savior to the world and to be among the nations a permanent testimony of the mystery of his faithfulness. Therefore, though recognizing that the state is confronted with a problem to which a solution must be found, the church raises solemn protest against any statute that would reject the Jews outside human communities.

The history of the CIMADE is well known, thanks to the book written by Jeanne Merle d'Aubigné. Let us review its essentials:

- CIMADE was created in 1939 to welcome the refugees from Alsace and Lorraine. It was composed essentially of women (since the men were soldiers at that time) belonging to Protestant youth organizations. Such assistance was then extended to all the refugees, among them foreign Jews.
- Autumn, 1940, at the camp of Gurs (in Basses-Pyrénées) where there was a team of people from CIMADE, with J. Merle d'Aubigné and M. Barot. Jews from Baden and Palatinat (7200) were received on October 24, 1940. A terrible winter followed during which 1100 Jews died.
- In Vichy, CIMADE negotiated in order to set up other teams in other camps in the southern area: Rivesaltes, No6, R6c6bedou, les Miles.
- International assistance intervened; a committee was created, with Donald Lowrie, a member of the Y.M.C.A., as President, to be in charge of the coordination of the assistance in the camps.

- Centres were organized for the reception of Jews, women with young children, old people and the ill. CIMADE opened four centres in the spring of 1942 at Chambon sur Lignon ("Here Jews are loved," Phillipe Boegner); Pomeyrol (Bouches du Rhone); Vabres (Tarn); Marseille: Foyer Marie Durand.

For a minority of members and quite a good number of leaders this experience was a preparation for Resistance.

In the summer of 1940, a memorandum from the J.E.C. was included in the documents of Assemblée des cardinaux et archevêques de France. It insisted on a necessary resistance to the invasion of paganism. The anti-Nazi ideology spread widely on several levels:

1. That of most of the young people. About 70,000 calendars were sold in 1943, containing quotations from Bergson and St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: "There are neither Jews nor Greeks."

2. That of militants with the magazine, Messages, and its Ligne chrétienne (between 1940-43).

- December, 1940 — A quotation from Peguy struck them: "There is something more serious than the military invasion, or the territorial occupation; it is the occupation of the self, the invasion of inner life.... Has not the God of the stadium been noxious in my heart to the God of Golgotha."

- January, 1941 — The text by Pasteur Lestringant criticizing antisemitism was widely reproduced.

- Easter, 1941 — "We have not declared war in order to obey the Jews and the English; we have not been cheated... we remain faithful to our pledged word. Those who are responsible for this war are not Daladier, Gamelin, but Hitler, Goering, Goebbels, Ribbentrop. This kind of remark, forbidden in newspapers, can be printed in Bulletins. It is the time when racism is explicitly condemned by the Pope... The Jews are our brothers exactly as other men are." Pius XI said in September, 1938: "We all are Semites in spirit."

October, 1941 — An account was given in Messages of the Declaration of the Cardinals and Archbishops, in which stress was laid by the French

prelates on the defense of faith against any erroneous ideology and some deviations of the human mind. Young people were invited to read the "Pontifical Document de base" to be found at the General Secretary's office of the movement. It was communicated in the Lycées, at the University and in fact everywhere (Mit brennender Sorge), although Vichy sought to check its dissemination. They were also invited to read Cahiers de notre Jeunesse, launched by A.C.J.F. in June, 1941, with such contributors as JM. Domenach, A. Mandouze and A. Gortais. *

3. The level of the leaders, Maurice René Simonnet and Henri Chambre. A circular letter written by Gortais was sent to the Federal Secretaries in the spring of 1941. Nazism was ranked among goods for export — a doctrine that must be spread through the whole world. Wherever they were the masters, the Germans imposed it, and in such a clever way that nobody realized it. Gortais denounced the Nazi propaganda instruments: Gringoire, VEmancipation, Vllustration, Signal.

The Cahiers de notre Jeunesse (1941-43) proposed that their readers mount a strong opposition against totalitarianism. Several meetings were organized, such as in:

Ariège (August, 1941), where the leaders of the Bordeaux group denounced the Action Française as being a means to spread antisemitism.

- Ariège (August, 1942), where a brochure, Pour un christianisme de choc, was produced by Father Beirnaert, the chaplain of Ecole de Sciences Politiques, well known for his anti-Nazi positions.

- Ariège (April, 1943), where a meeting for regional leaders was held in contrast to previous meetings intended for the militants. One session was devoted to the Nazi doctrine and to antisemitism; A. Mandouze delivered a speech on culture, and unobtrusively circulated Temoignage chrétien.

The path to Resistance led through various centers:

Paris: the Jésuits, P. Beirnaert, in Ecole des Sciences Politiques; P. de Montcheuil, letters against antisemitism and pleading for an anti-Nazi attitude; P. Riquet, later the chaplain of medical students; Ecole Normale Supérieure, with René Rémond, among others, leading the students to Resistance;

Lyon, where in May, 1941, some dozens of students noisily protested the projection of the film, "Jew Suss". "No Nazi films," they said. Among them were JM. Domenach, G. Dru, Renee M61y, later to become Mme. Bddarida. There was a riotous atmosphere and the police interfered.

- Toulouse, where Mgr. Sallege and those around him, such as Mgr. de Courage and Mgr. Bruno de Solage took an uncompromising attitude together with such organizations as C.F.T.C. and J.E.C.

to which anti-Nazi Christians belonged. Later they all joined the Resistance movement.

Ill - From Summer, 1942, to Spring, 1943 — the partial discovery of an unimaginable truth

- From the spring of 1942 the Jews were compelled to wear the "yellow star".

- Vilodrome d'Hiver, on July 16, 1942: various news reports were received about foreign Jews being delivered to the Germans. This was a real tragedy for CIMADE.

- As it tinned out, the Jews who were not in camps but in centres, either Protestant or Catholic, were generally saved. Most of the time they were not there when sought for, but the Jews kept within camps were trapped. In his ignoble bargaining Laval decided to hand over the foreign Jews (he even added the children). Laval and Boegner had a long talk on September 9, 1942.

- Those were "nightmarish days" for CIMADE, the leaders of which tried to save as many Jews as possible, for they knew the threat of deportation and even of death that hung over them (cf. Radio London: in July announcement was made of the slaughter of 700,000 Jews since the beginning of the war).

It was reported that some categories of foreigners might be excluded from the transport: people more than 60 years old, pregnant women, men wounded in the war. Others sought to escape and CIMADE found accomplices.

Parents and children were separated (cf. Vdnissieux, near Lyon).

It was a time when channels were set up to make escape possible. Welcome centres for evacuees and temporary refugees were established. Passing into Switzerland or Spain was one of the ways out, but Switzerland, even less than Spain, did not acquiesce readily. Boegner intervened and visas were granted, the numbers of which the children learned by heart. The young people of CIMADE and the Jewish scouts were the guides for those seeking to pass the frontier. There were many victims.

The J.E.C. and the distribution of the Bishops' texts, and of Temoignage chretien.

- The action of CIMADE and of Catholic "Assistantes sociales" (Mlle. Dauty) was well known to Mgr. Saliege, the Archbishop of Toulouse.

- Mgr. Saliege's text of August 23 was simple, direct and accurate. Nearly all the vicars read it to their congregations from their pulpits.

- Seven days later came a text by Mgr. Theas, the Bishop of Montauban: It was more severe insofar as ideology was concerned, though less striking. It was delivered by the militants.

- These two texts had in common that they were both defenses of the Rights of Man and not only of Christians or of citizens. The Pope had referred to a more abstract natural right; Mgr. Saliege protested against concrete facts.

- Two other addresses proved effective: those of Cardinal Gerlier and Pasteur Boegner. Their impact was particularly great among young people. The Prefets began to notice a change in public opinion, so that for Laval the deportation of Jews became a problem of internal policy during the ensuing months. The leading authorities were taken aback.

The opinion of some of the members of Catholic or Protestant movements was prepared by the large circulation of Temoignage chretien. The fate of the Jews was widely treated by publications such as: Cahier "Antisemites", (spring, 1942, against Xavier Vallat), Cahier "Droits de l'Homme et du Chrétien", (June — July, 1942), Cahier "Collaboration et Fidélité", (October — November, 1942), Cahier "Defi" ("The Challenge", January — February, 1943), with two passages about the Jews mentioning massive shootings and gas poisonings particularly in Oswiecim, as well as the

slaughter of 65,000 Jews in Vilna.

Among those who read the paper *Temoignage chretien*, (according to Renee Bedarida) 52% were young people who mostly belonged to J.E.C.: three-fourths of them were actively committed in Resistance. At the same time many people, even those who considered themselves well informed, hardly believed the full import of the extermination. For instance, Pasteur Visser't Hoft, though in the know, stated: "I must confess that it took several months before I became fully aware of this information.... What Hitler had done was unimaginable, hence his

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power." Rabbi Rene Samuel Kapel, who had several times met the Prelates from Toulouse, declared that he had heard of the extermination scheme for all the European Jews for the first time in December, 1942. Thus, the best informed people became aware of the situation in the period between July-August, 1942, and the spring of 1943.

IV - 1943-44

Driving the Germans away was a pressing business for the committed militants of the organizations. At the beginning of 1943, the S.T.O. brought about a public debate, and as a consequence *Messages* and *Cahiers de notre Jeunesse* were no longer allowed to be printed. Men were provided for the Maquis, as well as for the armies in North Africa. Some of the militants and leaders became soldiers. The "Resistants" took up an underground struggle against the Germans; for the volunteers it was a military fight.

Radio Free France from London and *Temoignage chretien* publicized the Nazi cruelties against the French (for instance at Ascq (near Lille) or Oradour, in 1944), but they provided little information on the genocide. A good example of the truth getting through was in *Voix de la Liberté*, on July 8, 1943, a testimony about the slaughter of Jews, provided by a Pole who had witnessed a massive execution in the camp of Belzec. He gave a description of the extermination carried on in vans with either quick lime or chlorine fumes. On November 29, 1943, there was a report on the massacre at Babi Yar, near Kiev, where 70,000 Jews died in a furnace. On July 16, 1944, there was an allusion to the massacre of Hungarian Jews who were led to gas chambers.

So we may say that quite a large amount of information did possibly circulate, but there was no exact idea of how heavy was the toll in the genocide. We may wonder why the information about the genocide was so limited. We have the testimony of Rend Cassin on London French Radio to the effect that they were given orders not to separate the Jews from the other persecuted groups of people.

In the House of Lords, on March 23, 1943, Lord Cranborne, in reply to questions from Bell, the Bishop of Chichester, declared that the problem must not be considered as specific to the Jews. The answer was the same on July 28, 1943.

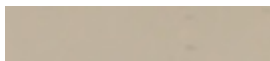
The Jewish question was thus not brought to the fore, but meanwhile Jews in great numbers were dying.

Yves-Marie Hilaire

Conclusion

I first take up the very words of Pasteur Visser't Hoft: "In the face of such a crime and tragedy, the weight of what has not been done is far heavier than that of what has been done." In spite of all these weaknesses, the young people played a great part in the opposition to totalitarianism and many of them lost their lives in so doing.

But I also focus my attention on a kind of concrete ecumenism that laid groundwork for the future. As early as 1938, the religious leaders of the three main confessions protested against antisemitism and organized a Committee for Help to the Refugees. From 1940 to 1944, minorities, both Protestant and Catholic, fought side by side against antisemitism, in order to help the persecuted Jews, and both rediscovered the Jewish roots of Christianity, as is shown in Pasteur Boegner's and Claudel's texts, and in *Temoignage chretien*, which quote Peguy and Pius XI. It was a discovery which, in time of persecution and distress, had deep significance. Today, neo-paganism can no longer assert its power to destroy Judaism and then Christianity, one after the other; what they attack may be termed Judeo-Christianity (cf. a remark made by Ren6 R6mond).



A DEVICE FOR THE FALSIFICATION OF HISTORY: THE STAGING OF THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN EXECUTIONER AND VICTIM

Charlotte Wardi

While being interrogated by General Davout, "a man renowned for his cruelty," Pierre "felt that every passing second might cost him his life." Suddenly "Davout raised his eyes and stared at Pierre. For a few fleeting seconds their eyes met. It was within that mutual stare, outside of all questions of war and justice, that human relations were established between these two men. At that particular moment both felt, however indistinctly, many, many things, and they understood that they were both sons of mankind, that they were brothers." ¹ This discovery, which saves Pierre in the humanistic outlook of Tolstoy, implies death in the world of the concentration camp where, as Robert Antelme writes, "everyone carries his eyes as if they constituted a danger."

By denying his victim the right to existence, and challenging his essence as a human being, the Nazi destroys the essential basis for any true exchange which demands reciprocity and mutual respect for the freedom of the other person, one who is accepted in his very otherness. "I know quite well that dialogue becomes possible with the SS when the SS is dead," notes the narrator of *Le grand voyage* by J. Semprun. The word of the Nazi who wants to be master of sense and action aims at effecting a double metamorphosis: That of the prisoner into vermin to be exterminated, and his own into a New Man whose superiority would be vouched for by the degradation of the other person. It is not a question here of the discovery of the "I" through contact with the "Thou" mentioned by Buber, not one of birth but one of destruction, of implementing, through the death of man, two

criminal creations born in twisted minds. The perverted dialogue established by the Nazi executioner exploits the meaning of language whose knowledge he shares with the victim and which he undertakes to corrupt. It also implies a concept of the human which he aims to destroy.

As for the victim, he quickly learns that any encounter with the killer means that what is at stake is not only his life but also the very sense of the meaning of man. Being deprived of physical freedom and consequently of the true word and act, what remains to him is the freedom of the spirit and of imagination which he uses in order to preserve his individuality, to fight the primitive instincts which the concentration camp regime attempts to awaken in him, to foil the ruse, to guess the forthcoming lie, and above all to give back to human beings their true nature as well as their meaning to words. Consequently the executioner and the victim dwell in clearly separate spheres and the non-dialogue opposing them takes place on two mutually exclusive planes, two antithetical ones: That of the "expressed" wherein the Nazi is the master of language as a carrier of lies and of death; and that of the "unexpressed", in which the prisoner is the master of the meaning of life and of the language of truth. The survivor knows that it is dangerous to declare that the latter is a priori meaningless, to strip it of its semantic content, because such a policy results in all kinds of perversions. That is because not only "is language always knowledge, a means of knowing for him who listens to it in its unraveling of the syntagmatic chain of communication..." as Julia Kristeva says, but it is also a choice whose point of departure is a meaning commonly referred to by speakers and listeners, authors and readers.

Historical novelists who care about authenticity respect such a fundamental opposition between executioner and victim, but others neglect this, attempting to tear down the wall separating them, and transforming the perverted dialogue into a true dialogue, one that falsifies the described living, historical experience. Authenticity, that is the ability of the text to convey both understanding and imagining by the reader of what the living experience actually was, or else the falsification thereof, depend not only on the choice of the words expressed but also and especially upon their staging. Whether they appear normal or carry outright Nazi characteristics, such words will only be authentic to the extent that the "unexpressed" will either reveal their abnormality or will not twist their meaning.

In *Sophie's Choice*, by William Styron, gathering as it does, it seems to us,

most of the devices of staging which lead to a falsified representation of history, we shall study the dialogues between Sophie and Hoess as well as those between Sophie and Doctor Jemand von Niemand. In order to show the differences between the devices utilized we shall compare their staging to that of other texts, especially from dialogues excerpted from Jakob der Luegner, by Jurek Becker, and from Quel beau dimanche! by Jorge Semprun. 5

The dialogues generally fall into place within depictions of known historical situations or referring thereto, each element of which adds something to the meaning of the history as told. They take place in locations whose very name is sufficient for purposes of evocation, or which it is easy to reconstitute by means of a few details which have become symbols immediately decipherable by the reader, such as the Umschlagplatz and the ghetto houses in Jakob der Luegner, or else the Buchenwald camp in Quel beau dimanche! These are places where the Nazi holds sway; they point to the corruption of discourse and reveal the extent of the latter. There is agreement between the sense of the dialogue and the nature of the events which are thus symbolized. The function of locations in Sophie's Choice is double and ambivalent. On the one hand, the Auschwitz railroad platform lends reality to the fatal encounter between Doctor Jemand von Niemand and Sophie; on the other hand it is to attest its authenticity, since there is incompatibility between the meaning of the historically true to life experience associated with this place and the one that Styron endows it with. Similarly, when he describes Hoess's house, Styron accumulates precise, concrete details so as to make the reader believe in the authenticity of the dialogues between the commandant and his prisoner, which are a pure invention of the author. These conversations take place in Hoess's private office, "... his sanctuary and hideaway, also the place where he executed his most personal, confidential and momentous work. Even the adored children who swarmed at will through the other three floors of the house, were not permitted here." 6 The choice of such a closed environment, a strictly private one, is hardly an innocent one. It allows the novelist to reveal the misery of him whom he depicts as "poor Hoess" and to lend verisimilitude to the intimacy developing between the man and the woman, as well as the connivance which he imagines between the executioner and the victim.

Creating the characters who face each other presents the problem of the balance between the general and the particular in an historical

novel. If the character be too highly individualized, he is no longer historical; if he is too general, he lacks substance, he loses his complexity and renders identification by the reader more difficult. Therefore the question is how to imagine beings capable of simultaneously incarnating an individual and a collective destiny. But, starting with a certain degree of bestiality, it becomes a perilous task to imagine differentiated personalities. One of the dangers stalking the novelist is to attribute to a SS character some extraordinary personality, to transform him into an interesting case which would illustrate the SS archetype, whereas his task, as well as that of the historian, consists of accounting for the specific and not the singular. If his goal is the representation of the real-life experience of the concentration camp and not the tale of the life of any one Nazi, he will have to create characters for whom the act of killing constitutes the norm, daily practice, and he will have to establish nuances within such limits. He will not be able to explain his psychology because in such a case he would have to bestow at least some degree of approval on the SS; this is inevitable and constitutes a betrayal of the victims.

The same care is mandatory for the representation of the latter; it is even more delicate than that of the executioners. Starting with a certain degree of suffering, the establishment of nuances demands an enormous amount of finesse and skill. One scarcely finds any novelists who, not having lived through the events themselves, manage not to confuse physical and moral downfalls, or are able to resist the attraction of evil on one's imagination. V. Grossman, for instance, in his *Vie et Destin*, a broad fresco teeming with various and sundry negative and positive figures, sometimes yields to such fascination. These writers forget that to have the SS engage in dialogue with a wreck is tantamount to espousing, in fact, the point of view of the executioner, to convey his vision of the victim, and to carry out, by means of the act of writing, the metamorphosis which he desires. Once again the question will be to grasp the specificity of the life of the inmates, not to describe the exceptional adventures of just one of them; to go from the general to the extraordinary, and not to transform the latter into the former. All particular considerations and conflicts disappear when the adversaries face one another. The only thing that remains is the silent fight, the pitiless pitting of man against beast, of life against death, which leaves no room for pseudo

Freudian and other psychological speculations. This sort of combat is admirably depicted by V. Grossman in the following dialogue:

"Scharfuehrer Elf demands that one not speak of bodies but, instead, of pieces: 100 pieces, 200 pieces, but Rosenberg continues talking of persons, a man assassinated, a child executed. He says it quite softly, for himself, otherwise the Scharfuehrer would kill him but he is stubborn and he mutters. "‘What is the matter with you, muttering like that?’ ‘Me! Nothing, it just seemed that way to you.’ And he keeps on muttering, he is fighting, it is his fight!" 7

Novelists whose aesthetic preoccupations do not override ethical demands manage to imagine convincing characters of persecuted people. Jacob Heym and the Jews of the ghetto of J. Becker, the inmates of Buchenwald of Semprun, are all individuals possessing their own personality and sharing a collective fate. As for the Nazis, they blend into their functions: "The noncom of the SS is called Kurt Kraus. There is nothing else that can be said about him /" writes Semprun. Nevertheless, once this limit has been determined, these writers invent varied and contrasted patterns of behavior. But as killing constitutes a choice committing the entire person, they never separate the man from the functionary, nor do they describe any internal conflict. They avoid such a reassuring solution which, by bringing the executioner closer to the reader, yields a false interpretation of reality. Thus, beneath politeness, courtesy or the culture of such or such an individual there is always perceived the mentality of the executioner, made perceptible by the staging of the "unexpressed".

As for Styron, he takes the chance and undertakes to explain the general by means of the extraordinary: Auschwitz ceases to be the symbol of the genocide of the Jews and becomes that of universal evil, through the yarn of Sophie's destiny. To that end he imagines a survivor character, one which is strongly particularized. He admits to having always been attracted "by a certain morbidity" and to having, all his life, shown an irresistible tendency toward the didactic. The demands of demonstration, the Christian conception of suffering, of redemption, as well as the view which he harbors of woman, all lead him to create a paradoxical heroine. A Pole, a Catholic, an antisemite, a masochist, Sophie winds up in the camp for having smuggled some food fraudulently. The beauty of this "sex object" constitutes a constant invitation to aggression, and the perverse attractiveness

emanating from her stimulates the adventures which happen to her before, during and after Auschwitz. On the one hand these adventures are too

exceptional for Sophie to incarnate the concentration camp victim in general, and the fact that she is not Jewish, as George Steiner points out in his article in *Le Monde* of March 6, 1981, does not in any way modify matters. On the other hand, the piling up of misfortunes which befall her, their convergence into an individual destiny and their very nature make them quite unlikely.

Two executioners — and they are no small fry — face her: Doctor Jemand von Niemand and a real historical character, Hoess.

In her article "Roman et Histoire" (*NRF*, Oct., 1972) Zoe Oldenbourg points out that the historical novelist must beware of staging historical characters because any direct resemblance might shock the reader. The opinion of Marguerite Yourcenar is that inventing a real character demands no less faithfulness to history than the depiction of a fictitious historical character. In his Introduction to his *La Semaine Sainte*, Aragon claims the right to introduce data from his own experience under the name of an historical character, provided the true and the false are clearly separated. Styron prefers to follow the advice of Lukacs and to abstain from depicting central figures such as Himmler. He chooses marginal figures such as Hoess whose personality, he says, "would be still little known." This allows him to give free rein to his fantasy, to interpret documents as he sees fit and to create a personality in which imaginary and subjective elements are far more important than historical ones. As shown by A.H. Rosenfeld in his work, *A Double Dying*, he picks up, without checking their veracity, the affirmations of Hoess who claims that he had never been an antisemite, and that "he would never have lowered himself to the point of torturing". He would order, but not execute! This is a curious identification of the narrator and of the author with his hero! These are indeed strange nuances, and they are in no way ironic! Their aim is to persuade the reader that Hoess was, in spite of everything, "made of flesh, as you or I," and the function of the staging of the dialogues with Sophie is to prove that point. Styron chooses to ignore, or actually does not know, that Hoess, as early as 1922, had already been condemned to hard labor for life as an accomplice to the murder of a teacher.

As for Doctor Jemand von Niemand, he represents the problem of the use made by the author of the "clued character" (i.e., one who is real but whose name is fictitious), a problem all the more important since

one is dealing with an historical figure of the scope of Mengele. The clued

character invites the reader to discover the reality behind the fiction. Styron therefore presents as real the purely imaginary and false characterization of that sinister individual. The Doctor, having been made unassailable though not unknowable through his fictitious disguise, is changed into an "Anybody*". Starting with a few details known to all — the man was an intellectual, he was handsome — plus manifold invented traits, he builds a character in whose authenticity he believes and which he seeks to have others believe in, and superimposes it upon the historical person. The deliberately transparent mask allows him, once again, to incarnate and interpret history his own way. One might object that Jemand von Niemand is neither Mengele nor a creation representing him but rather a case study, a human mystery he is trying to elucidate. Nevertheless the fact remains that he moves around within a framework, a situation which reconstructs history and his actions unhappily imitate well known historical deeds. Inevitably the reader will substitute the real person for the fictitious figure, which is what Styron desires. Fascinated by the mystery that they represent in his eyes, the author studies the souls of the executioners and invents a psychology suiting them in the light of his own preferences and obsessions. Moreover, since he is conscious of the prestige enjoyed by the heroes of a story in the eyes of the reader, and far from distrusting them the way Flaubert would have done, he uses them as a mold into which he pours an interpretation which bears

but a distant relationship to the nature of the events.

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The choice of the narrator and of the point of view play an important role in the determination of the sense of the dialogue and reveal the prejudice of the author. Semprun's narrator describes the confrontation with the SS from the point of view of the victim who is in the act of going through it. From the very first sentence of the novel the reader penetrates the mind of the prisoner, one who, returning from a work detail, stops outside the fence of Buchenwald in order to admire the beauty of a beech tree covered with snow:

Time would pass. The beech tree would shed its snowy mantle. With a muffled quivering, the branches of the tree would allow the porous and crumbling clumps, time would do its work, and so would the sun. They were already doing it. Time was boring into the

winter, its gleaming splendor. But in the very frozen heart of the serene season, a forthcoming green bud was already feeding upon nondescript saps.

His reflections, interrupted by the arrival of the brutal SS pointing his gun, prepare the ground for the perverted dialogue which would remain incomprehensible without them. The stare of both narrator and reader follow that of the prisoner observing the gestures of the executioner. They share his anguish and his hope. The SS utters but four words during the entire long scene: "Was machst du hier?". "Der Baum," the inmate finally said, "so ein wunderschöner Baum." The noncom was looking at the beech tree, at the landscape, with an eye that had become blue. Everything seemed innocent, or at least there was a vague possibility to that effect, at least. The noncom might have come back towards him, nodding his head. "Tatsächlich, ja Mensch, ein wunderschöner Baum," he would say. But nothing of the sort happens and the gun comes back aimed at the chest of the prisoner who snaps to attention, in the manner imposed, and cries out the formula required by regulations: "Haftling vier und vierzig tausend neun hundert vier." And thus are the mentality of the two adversaries and the unbridgeable gap separating them sketched. The quiet smoke, back there, was that of the crematorium." The last look taken by the narrator in this scene takes in the real detail which has become a symbol, closes the scene and summarizes the sense of the perverted dialogue.

The narrator of Jurek Becker imagines the life of Jacob Heym. Just as in Semprun's novel, he follows the thought of the hero meditating upon the role of the tree in his existence. The tree, a symbol of life, is associated with death within the enclosure of the Nazi ghettos from which it is banished. As Heym hurries home the soldier on guard in the watchtower stops him under the pretext that it is eight o'clock, which later turns out not to be true. Without the meditation preparing the dialogue and telling us that curfew is at eight and that the Jews have no right to own a watch we would guess neither the cynicism nor the sadism of the game hidden behind the good-natured words of the SS. Similarly the thoughts of Jacob explain the meaning of his words and allow one to realize the danger he is in.

"Am I wrong, or is it forbidden to be found in the street after eight o'clock?"

"It is forbidden," said Jacob.

"And what time is it now?"

"I do not know."

"And yet you ought to know."

At this point Jacob could utter "That is true," or else he could ask, "How?", or he might ask, "but what time is it?" Or else he might keep silent and wait. That is what he does because it seems to him to be the most appropriate course of action.

The narrators of Semprun and Becker, whose omniscience is limited, cancel the distance between the reader and the true experience of the victims with whom they identify. Sometimes, however, they stand at a distance in order to make clearer the behavior of the executioner but without ever adopting his standpoint.

There is nothing of the sort in the complex technique elaborated by Styron in order to make the transition from the historical to the imaginary, from the true to the false, an imperceptible one. Stingo, the narrator with whom the author himself identifies at times (Styron wishes to be recognized in the character Stingo), sets forth some quite unsubstantial confessions gathered from Sophie's lips twenty years before. He judges characters and events, introduces dialogues, cuts up the latter with long comments interwoven with points of historical information whose accuracy must vouch for that of invention. This narrator conveys sometimes the point of view of the victim, sometimes that of the executioner, not in order to oppose them one to the other as is done, for instance, by the narrator in *Wo worst du Adam?*, by Heinrich Boell, but rather to fuse them together.

The temporal, spatial and affective distance thus created makes it easier to use a language and a style stripped of the characteristics imposed by concentration camp subjects. Stingo-Styron, the omniscient narrator and apprentice writer carried away by his imagination, fascinated by the sick and the monstrous, observes the victims with the eye of an aesthete. Thus, side by side with a New York which is supposed to be the "Kingdom of the Jews", he depicts a practically Judenrein Auschwitz where genocide is unceasingly mentioned but is only incarnated in two Jewish seamstresses, "grown complacent and plump... perfectly good-humored" who "ate... face to face as over a kennel pail," and this calls forth the "fetid sinkhole of her

past" in

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Sophie. The omniscient narrator of Vassili Grossmann, out to get

aesthetic effects, sometimes yields — as is often the case among novelists who have not lived through the events — to incongruous descriptions. While imagining the poor wretches thrown out of the freight cars onto the Auschwitz platform he sees "... a poodle-man with frizzy hair in the act of lapping up the water in a puddle... a hunchbacked woman who had pulled up her skirt in order to fix her garter... while, without so much as a glance, the SS go by, haughty and dreaming." The association, born in the mind of the author, between the victim and the poodle belongs to a set of two realities which that of the camps does not allow one to bring together. The purely spiritual image in normal life becomes a concrete one and designates a perverted reality within the context of the concentration camp. To make use of such images to depict it is tantamount to considering the victim with the outlook of the executioner and to inviting the reader to do the same. When writing on concentration camp subjects any aesthetic choice carries with it ethical implications. Therefore aesthetic considerations cannot, in and of themselves, guide the choice of images, comparisons, metaphors, epithets. The necessity of satisfying the demands of ethics prevents the free play of language and invention. For instance, Semprun and Becker do accept the constraints involved. As for Styron, whose narrator rules over history just as he does over fiction, he ignores them and lets him self go, without qualms, wherever his imagination will carry him, as we hope to

show by examining the dialogues between Sophie and her jailers.

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No danger threatens her in Hoess's house, except for rape by lesbians, who seem to be teeming in the Auschwitz of Styron. And while the letters and the reading material of the Commandant deal with the extermination of Greek Jews and the problems of occupation in Poland (especially the incident involving the theft of candlesticks in a church, which reminds Sophie of *Les Miserable*[^], an evocation which invites the reader to effect a strange bringing together of the Nazis and Jean Valjean) a true exchange is born between the man and the woman. One also finds dialogues with a

normal appearance in the works of Semprun and of Becker. Thus the words exchanged between the Hauptsturmfuehrer Schwarz and his prisoner, whose bourgeois origin and German culture he has discovered, show nothing unusual. It is the

situation and the ironic comments of the prisoner which remind the reader of the difference in mentalities:

Now there is Schwarz's problem. He wonders how I have managed, in spite of such a good social background, to find myself here with all these ruffians, these terrorists, in short on the wrong side of the table.... He does not understand that I might be interested in Goethe, it does not jibe with his idea of a Spanish Red imprisoned for resistance deeds.

The behavior of Preuss in the house of Professor Kirschbaum and his sister appears to be courteous, even prepossessing. Nevertheless in the novel by Becker, as in that of Semprun, the very situation: the attitude of the sister of the illustrious cardiologist, their thoughts and actions, the unexpressed in the SS Preuss, all give this almost commonplace picture its tragic truth. In that work of Becker, as in that of Semprun, the staging of the unexpressed underlines the artificial character of the normality of the "expressed". With Styron, on the contrary, it is used to show the double transformation which brings the protagonists together and constitutes the *raison d'être* of the dialogues. Stingo quotes the words of the Nazi in his own language as well as in English. The second person plural of the polite form, marked by the use of italics in the French translation (one approved by the author), stresses even more the courtesy of Hoess toward Sophie, a courtesy already indicated by the suppression of German. As for her, on the other hand, she expresses herself in the careful German learned in her family of antisemitic Polish intellectuals, of which Hoess sometimes repeats the wording. While the German language lends reality to the situation, it suggests yet another link between executioner and victim and sketches out the reversal of roles towards which the encounters lead.

In order to lend more verisimilitude to the progressive subversion of Sophie's psyche, Styron exploits a current device consisting in having the narrator adopt the point of view of the victim who herself takes notice of her downfall: "... articulating a concept which, a mere six months before, when she first arrived, would have been so monstrous as to surpass belief but now registered in her consciousness as a fleeting commonplace in this new universe she inhabited, no more to be remarked upon than (as in the

other world she had once known) the fact that one went to the baker's to buy one's bread." 22 The

heroine of *Vie et Destin*, the medical doctor, Sofia Ossipovna, is amazed by the rapid downfall of her traveling companions: "... A few days had been sufficient to travel in the opposite direction along the path leading from the dirty and miserable beast, deprived of name and freedom, to man, and yet the path to man had taken millions of years." 23 Vassili Grossman contrasts Ossipovna, the incarnation of his ideal, to the passive Jews he disdains. But while she feels pity and love for the "fallen", the heroine of Styron maintains her distance

from the others who, in her, eyes are henceforth no more than "the

swarm of diseased and dying ants," and prefers viewing the landscape where the Commandant's thoroughbred gambols within sight of the railroad platforms of Birkenau. Even the kitsch portrait of Adolf Hitler "seemed irreproachably benign." When she adduces her antisemitic antecedents in order to prove her innocence, thus becoming the accomplice of the Nazi, her metamorphosis is complete. Sophie's feelings evolve at the same time as her mentality. Hoess's compliments on her stylistic suggestions, her beauty^her scarf, make her feel "a glow of satisfaction, almost pleasure," and his caresses do not

leave her unmoved. In order to show that her evolution is a natural

one Styron takes care to describe it before the idea occurs to her to take advantage of her power over Hoess in order to see her son again.

A parallel to that of the victim, the transformation of the executioner, follows a reverse path. Sophie observes Hoess and notes his physical appearance, the fingers yellowed with tobacco stains, which are symptoms of nervousness, his courteous attitude. Details about clothing, such as the unbuttoned tunic, add to the homelike climate of the scene. Little by little she discovers a pitiful man, snowed under worries about his career and suffering from atrocious migraine headaches, symptoms of his internal conflict. She sees him in ecstasy when watching the perfect gallop of his horse, sensitive to her charm and dreaming of escaping his carnal shell. While Boell and Borges, for instance, denounce the alliance of fascism and aestheticism, Styron picks up the theme, by now a fashionable cliché, in order to normalize Nazis. Affective and erotic relationships slowly unite

the two characters who wind up exchanging confidences. He offers her chocolate and "with infinite daintiness, he picks up the crumb which has remained attached to her lip". This gesture moves Sophie, who bursts into sobs. This upsets Hoess so much that he justifies himself: "But what have I done wrong?" he cries out. It is the unskilled initiatives of Sophie which will put an end to the melodramatic love

affair. The commandant makes fun of her antisemitic theses and by refuting them he acquires a certain degree of innocence at the very moment when she loses hers.

The staging of the dialogue between Sophie and Doctor Jemand von Niemand, which supplies the title of the novel and ends the evocation of the survivor's past, leads through analogous devices to the production of a feeling of guilt in one and to the disappearance of guilt in the other. If reduced to the expression and the actions of the Doctor, the scene would represent a fairly faithful picture of the event. The low-level German spoken, the thee-thouing, the violence of the words of the Nazi, his questions^ each of which is a trap, carry the characteristics of SS discourse. Similarly, the words uttered by Sophie in her disarray also ring true. But as in the preceding dialogues the representation of the mental and affective universe of the victim, the details which individualize the characters, the intervention of the narrator, all alter the nature of the meaning of what is expressed. That is the reason why the scene, when reduced to the visual dimension only in the film, gains in strength while the historical experience shown gains in truth.

Once he reaches the pages of the book dealing with the process of selection, the reader knows enough about the personality of the heroine to attribute to what she says and to her thoughts the meaning sought by the author. While an official text on the extermination of Greek Jews and the description of Hoess's office had preceded the first encounter with Sophie, and the second had been preceded by the rape by the lesbian, Stingo-Styron apparently assumes the role of narrator to present the sinister Doctor: "I have christened him Fritz Jemand von Niemand because it seems as good a name as any for an SS doctor — for one who appeared to Sophie as if from nowhere and vanished likewise forever from her sight, yet who left a few interesting traces of himself behind." The narrator then goes on to comment at length upon the first words addressed to the victim: "Ich will mit dir schlaen," insisting upon the unusual character that these

words bear, coming from the lips of "a doctor and a gentleman (perhaps even an aristocrat)... Prussian, perhaps...." The good looks "of a delicate and disturbing sort" of the SS suscite strange associations of ideas in the mind of the victim. Such entirely erotic evocations, described in detail, are quite unlikely given the place ~ the platform of Birkenau — and the situation — Sophie clutching her two children in the middle of a crowd, exhausted by the trip. Such unlikelihood does

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not in any way bother Styron, for the only thing of importance to him is the relationship woven by these memories between the perverted sexuality of the Doctor, that of Sophie and that of the Junker she had met in her youth, who bore an "extremely close resemblance" to the SS, and who moreover "looked... like... Leslie Howard." She remembers "thinking about him... rather disturbingly: If he had been a woman, he would have been a person I think I might have felt drawn to," she says. She then notices the drunken state of the Doctor as well as "the boiled rice grains... shiny with moisture still" on the lapel of the uniform, details which, just like the clothing of Hoess, give a touch of humanity to the character. She then recognizes the music "with its erotic sorrow" which accompanies the scene.

The second phase of the dialogue starts with the interrogation by the Doctor: "Du bist ein Polak. Bist du auch eine Kommunistin?" He then wanders off, but not before the narrator has reminded us of his drunkenness. What follows is a series of reflections by Sophie, sprinkled with historical information which, as in the entire novel, seem glued to the dialogue for the sole purpose of lending it verisimilitude. All of a sudden she becomes aware of the danger she is in because, she notices, contrary to most Jews, she actually knew what a selection meant. Panicking, she attracts the attention of the Doctor, who in the meantime had already gone on his way, by starting the dialogue again: "I am not Jewish; I am a Christian, a good Catholic...." These words, while true, nevertheless carry derogatory connotations for the reader who is aware of her antisemitism. The choice of these words, just as that of the first sentence of the Doctor, is not fortuitous. They must remind the reader of the resemblance between him who utters and him who receives.

"What folly! She sensed... that everything she was saying, far from helping her, from protecting her, was leading somehow to her swift undoing.... The

Doctor was a little unsteady on his feet... meanwhile absorbedly picking his nose.... He turned back to her..." and forced her to choose which of her two children was to remain alive.

As in the scenes with Hoess, Sophie, drawn by some irresistible force, is the cause of her own misfortune. By showing that without her intervention the Doctor would not have thought of forcing Sophie into a choice, Styron makes her guilty. Guilty, but not responsible, just as Doctor Jemand von Niemand.

The third phase of the dialogue conveys with truthfulness the horrible separation but ends with a passage downgrading its horror and

again underlining its exceptional character. While the "total, deranged disbelief of Sophie is believable, that which was "reflected in the eyes of... young Rottenfuehrer, the doctor's aide...", and hence used to these scenes, may hardly be said to be, nor "the careful gentleness that Sophie would try without success to forget", with which he "tugged at Eva's hand and led her away into the waiting legend of the damned." The subject matter of this scene is neither — contrary to what one might think — the reconstitution of the selection process nor that of the "choice" but rather the presentation of the Doctor as a character. The background, the realistic details and the deeds refer the reader to history, whose task in Styron's technique, as we have already seen, is to attest authenticity of invention and the long ramblings which follow the dialogue:

The Doctor must have waited a long time to come face to face with Sophie and her children, hoping to perpetrate his ingenious deed... upon... some tender and perishable Christian.... He was not a good man or a bad man... and his strivings were essentially religious.... I have always assumed that when he encountered Sophie, Doctor Jemand von Niemand was undergoing the crisis of his life....

In addition to an entirely fabricated analysis of the personality of the executioner, Styron supplies an explanation of the choice imposed on Sophie. He would have us believe that we are dealing here with a nonce action, one improvised by the Doctor who was drunk, and thus irresponsible, at a point in time when he is going through a deep religious crisis. Such a stupefying interpretation of odious acts, oft repeated and perpetrated by numerous SS, constitutes a coarse falsification of history.

With the help of his staging, Styron draws a continuous line through the Polish childhood, the concentration camp past and the New York present of his heroine. The characteristic details create chains of correspondence between the characters of the novel, each of whom in turn is both victim and executioner. For instance, Hoess's migraine headaches are followed by those of Nathan, the Jew, whose good looks and sexual perversion correspond to those of the Doctor and of Sophie, whom he torments in Flatbush. She drowns herself in alcohol, just like the Doctor and the woman of Blakstock. Nathan and Sophie commit suicide by swallowing cyanide, just like Goering, etc.

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In *Sophie's Choice*, the various elements of the staging set up scenes which, instead of representing with authenticity the confrontation of executioner and victim, pervert the meaning thereof. The "unexpressed" no longer reveals the corruption of the "expressed", and there is nothing in these dialogues, constituting the highlights of the novel, signifying any longer the combat between man and beast, between truth and falsehood, between the victims and the Nasos; they are all drowned in a wretched human community, a guilty one and therefore innocent.

Contrary to Semprun or Becker, who attempt to convey events with authenticity, Styron brings in a mass of factual information and precise historical details, not for the purposes of historical reconstitution, but rather to impose upon the reader a metaphysical and historical view of the world which falsifies the nature of the data.

It is the privilege of a writer to interpret history as he sees fit, but an interpretation of Auschwitz is only legitimate if it does not affect the ethical aspects of the events which took place there. forgetting that "what was human in the Nazis was their inhumanity," as Romain Gary reminds us, by giving these words an anti-humanistic meaning, by dehumanizing the victims and humanizing the executioners, Styron falsifies history.

Notes

1. L. Tolstoy, *La Guerre et la paix*. Paris: Fernand Hazan, 1950, vol. 2, pp. 1251-1252. (traduit du russe par Elisabeth Guertik.) Our translation in English.

2. R. Antelme, *L'Espece humaine*. Paris: Gallimard, 1978, p. 241.
"Chacun porte ses yeux comme un danger."
 3. J. Semprun, *Le grand voyage*. Paris: Gallimard, coll. Folio, 1963, p. 93.
"Je sais bien que le dialogue devient possible avec SS quand le SS est mort."
 4. J. Kristeva, "La productive dite texte," in: *Communications*, no. 11, 1968, p. 61.
 5. J. Becker, *Jakob der Luegner*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969, pp. 10-11.
- W. Styron, *Sophie's Choice*. London: Transworld Publishers' Ltd.,
Corgi Books, 1984.
- J. Semprun, *Quel beau dimanche!* Paris: Grasset, 1980.
 6. Styron, *Sophie's Choice*, p. 299.
 7. V. Grossmann, *Vie et destin*. Paris: Julliard/L'age d'homme, 1983, p. 186; (traduit du russe par Alexis Berelowitch avec la collaboration de Anne Coldefy-Faucard.)
 8. Semprun, *Quel beau dimanche!* p. 15.
 9. Styron, *Sophie's Choice*, p. 150.
 10. M. Yourcenar, *L'Oeuvre au noir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1968.
 11. L. Aragon, *La Semaine sainte*. Paris: Gallimard, 1958, Introduction.
 12. W. Styron, An interview with William Styron by Valarie Meliotes Arms in: *Contemporary Literature*, Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, vol. 20, Winter 1979, p. 10.
- cf. also: A.H. Rosenfeld, *A Double Dying*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1980.
13. *Ibid.*, *Sophie's Choice*, p. 201.

14. Semprun, Quel beau dimanche! p. 13.

"Le temps passerait. Le hêtre se déprendrait de son manteau neigeux. Avec un frémissement sourd, les branches de l'arbre laisseraient s'écraser sur le sol des touffes poreuses, friables. Le temps ferait son travail, le soleil aussi. Ils le faisaient déjà. Le temps s'enfonçait dans l'hiver, sa splendeur rutilante. Mais au cœur même, glacé, de la saison sereine, un futur bourgeon vert se nourrissait déjà des seves confuses."

15. Ibid., p. 15.

"Le sous-officier regardait le hêtre, le paysage, d'un œil devenu bleu. Tout semblait innocent, c'était une possibilité confuse tout au moins.

Le sous-officier pouvait revenir vers lui en hochant la tête.

Tatsächlich, ja, Mensch, ein wunderschöner Baum, dirait-il.... La fumée calme, 14-bas, c'était celle du crématoire."

16. Becker, Jakob der Luegner, pp. 10-11.

"Irre ich mich, oder ist es verboten" nach acht auf der Strasse zu sein?...

"Es ist verboten," sagt Jakob.

"Und wie spaet ist es jetzt?"

"Ich weiss nicht."

"Das solltest du aber wissen" sagt der Soldat.

Jakob könnte jetzt sagen "das ist wahr", oder er könnte fragen "wie spaet ist es denn?" Oder er könnte schwiegen und warten und das tut er, das scheint ihm am zweckmässigsten.

17. Styron, Q. "Does it disturb you to hear as a criticism that the

author is very much in evidence in your recent work, that its intent is obviously autobiographical?"

A. "Not only does it not disturb me, I wouldn't feel happy unless they immediately identified Stingo as a man who is masquerading as Bill

Styron. That is central to the whole strategy of the book." An interview with William Styron by Valarie Meliotes Arms in *Contemporary Literature*, op.cit. p. 1.

18. Styron, *Sophie's Choice*, pp. 339-340, 342, 291.

19. Grossmann, *Vie et destin*. p. 507.

"... un homme-caniche en train de laper a quatre pattes l'eau dans une flaque; une bossue qui avait retroussé sa jupe pour arranger l'astiche de sa culotte... Deux soldats SS... passerent reveurs et hautains..."

20. Semprun, *Quel beau dimanche!* p. 185.

"Voila son probleme, a Schwarz. Il se demande comment je me suis debrouille, malgre d'aussi bons antecedents sociaux, pour me retrouver ici avec tous ces voyous, ces terroristes, du mauvais coté de la barrier^, en somme... Il ne comprend pas que je puisse m'intéresser a Goethe, ça ne cadre pas avec l'idée qu'il se fait d'un Rouge espagnol detenu pour faits de resistance."

21. Becker, *Jakob der Luegner*. p. 197-207.

22. Styron, *Sophie's Choice*, p. 285.

23. Grossmann, *Vie et destin*. p. 183.

24. Styron, *Sophie's Choice*, p. 300.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 360.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 300, 306-307.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 366.

28. See A. Meher: "Anti-parole et Parole, le camouflage culture! dans le langage nazi," in *Foi et Vie*, Paris: 1985.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 639-640.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 641-642.

31. Ibid., p. 643.

32. Ibid., p. 644-645.

Charlotte Wardi

33. R. Gary, *Les Cerfs volants*. Paris: Gallimard, 1980, p. 279: "Ce que les nazis avaient d'humain 6tait leur inhumanit6."

LAUGHTER AS A PARADOXICAL IMPACT OF THE SHOAH

Joe Friedemann

"Nothing is more serious on this earth than laughter," noted Gustave Flaubert in a letter dated 1852. In spite of this asserted gravity, the association of the tragedy of the Jewish people and the apocalypse of Auschwitz with the apparently frivolous notion of laughter seems unbearable, or even sacrilegious. Yet, in post-war literature, there is much evidence of such a strange and paradoxical combination. This conclusion has been confirmed in a previous research project on the works of Elie Wiesel and Anna Langfus. The present paper aims at studying this same motif in *The Last of the Just*, by the French-Jewish recipient of the Prix Goncourt, Andre Schwarz-Bart.

As a preliminary step in approaching the subject, the semantic fields of laughter, smiling and tears were compiled. The results seem to suggest that the essential reaction to affliction and suffering stands, for Schwarz-Bart, on the plane of laughter, which might be defined as an expression of freedom. Similar to Elie Wiesel and Anna Langfus, we see, through this topic, both explicit and implicit opposition to helplessness and despair. To the outer world, imposing its mad aggression and its demonic arbitrariness, the victim, or rather the survivor, will react, less through tears, screams or silence, than through irony and humor. The phenomenon is all the more remarkable, since neither laughter nor the smile is absent from any, not even the last chapter of Schwarz-Bart's novel. This suggests a deliberate thematic intention by the writer, and not at all the expression of chance or linguistic whim.

Irony, humor, black humor, sarcasm, derision, sneer — so many fluid concepts ~ accompany the plot in a pluri-tonal representation. The

thread of this motif, through the landscape of the author and his

characters, constitutes the fundamental aim of this study.

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As has been pointed out already, the ironic expressivity is part of the very structure of the novel. Obviously, the choice of the correct tone was one of the crucial problems the writer had to face. On the one hand, he wanted to avoid excessive sentimentalism and to prevent the novel from gushing into the edifying, the apologetic and the tedious. And on the other hand, he had to elude a style of severe objectivity and of dryness, which would have spoiled the character of the text as fascinating fiction.

Therefore, following Freud, Schwarz-Bart adopted the concept of gallows-humor : "In fact, he says, the irony was a kind of protective mask, a way of bearing the unbearable on the level of writing."

From a structural point of view, one might say that the author develops his narrative on three principal levels: irony, humor, and at the end of the novel, a disincarnate tragic laughter, mingled with bitterness, in which the writer's expressivity is dissimulated within that of his characters.

In sections I, V and VI, the irony appears essentially pointed, sometimes ferocious and close to sarcasm, when assaulting the persecutors. The sword is somewhat Jewish, but it also reminds one of the Voltairian thrust. We see here implied allusions, comical simplifications, the pretense of the serious and of indifference to torture. This attitude leads to a reasoning by the Absurd, from which thought gushes out with irresistible naturalness. For instance, among many significant passages which could be quoted: the trial of the Just Manasseh Levy in London of the Middle Ages (p. 8/14); or the episode in which the writer seems to be willing to convert Morde'hai, the central hero's grandfather, into a Leibniz and Pangloss-like character, after Ernie's attempt of suicide (p. 259/241). Both passages recall well-known chapters of *Candide*.

However, as stated, irony does not dominate the whole text. In fact, it serves as a frame, within which another level of laughter operates: humor. This humor is specified by a more generous and less aggressive formulation, and discloses a less harsh judgment than that of irony. Sections II, III and IV depict the Jewish Central European World between the two great antisemitic persecutions, the Middle Ages and the Shoah. The intermediate period, particularly the nineteenth

century, constitutes a relatively peaceful Jewish historical time. This gives the writer an opportunity to focus on a description of the Jewish social and religious environment. He does so in a generally subdued style. Using at the utmost a lightly mocking tone which is closer to humor than to irony, he thus expresses the deep tenderness that he displays for his characters.

Although proclaimed a work of fiction, *The Last of the Just* remains a chronicle inspired essentially by Jewish History and traditional sources. It is remarkable that like Wiesel, Schwarz-Bart refers to the Patriarch Yitz'hak; this bases and structures the Lamed-Vav's thought, diachronically as well as metaphysically

For myself, if I note that Yitz'hak, which is Isaac, means, above all, "He will laugh in the future," and if I observe that Sarah had seen the son of Hagar, Ishmael, when he was metsa'hek, which is to say, "laughing", I conclude humbly that the sons of Abraham - Ishmael and Isaac - are distinguished by the fact that the first knew how to laugh in the present, while it was reserved for Isaac, our father, to weep until the coming of the Messiah blessed be he! - who will grant eternal laughter to all. And tell me, brethren, how a truly Jewish heart could laugh in this world if not at the thought of the world to come! (pp. 47/48-49)

The phenomenon of laughter, through its human and divine nature, relates deterministically to the advent of Messianic times. It is for Ishmael, the non-Jew, to laugh on this earth. Israel's destiny, on the other hand, is to suffer stoically in exile, with profound suffering, resulting from the clash between Substance and Spirit, between Absolute and Relative. Projected by the external, it belongs to the ephemeral. This suffering, Israel knows, is not inherent. Happiness and beatitude will come to the Jew with the arrival of the Messiah. It is only in this perspective that he may laugh.

The above quote and its exegesis seem to constitute one of SchwarzBart's starting points. It certainly contains divine coherence acceptable to the Believer to whom it is addressed. But obviously, it does not reflect the writer's opinion, for, unfortunately, divine logic and its understanding by humans, sometimes show themselves irreconcilable.

Irrationality and pain, even under the cover of esoteric humor, are far too shrill. Whereas Wiesel goes so far as to state that God has created Man in order to make Him laugh, in order to make of him His

"favorite toy", 9 it appears — but is it really different? — that Schwarz-Bart interprets God's whim, at the limit, as the intrusion of the Absurd in world affairs.

"God is enjoying Himself," says the Just 'Hayim Levy, in order to establish delightfully the complicity of Lord and of Man, in their common struggle against the deadly sense of the serious (p. 34/37). "God is enjoying Himself," repeats the poor president of the Paris Association of Old Zemiock, a few days before being deported (p. 313/288). This enjoyment seems to have developed into a "mysterious and terrifying irony" of a Lord, from whom Ernie Levy will consider him self ultimately and definitely disconnected (p. 315/290) ... God's humor has displayed itself finally, as not at all harmless; it has turned out to be black humor!

The Lord's absence, His silence, but also His will to punish a creature considered as refractory, provide good reasons and pretexts which the self-anointed persecutor will adopt while torturing the victim. This pseudo-ethical apology, added to the will of power and to the sadistic pleasure supplied by the suffering of the persecuted, are at the origin of the tormentor's sneer. His glee appears first as a consequence of the victim's fear, having become a comic object for the executioner (pp. 76-77/75). Malevolent, narrow-minded, this joy finds also reflexive and ideological support in religious psychodrama. The trial of Jesus, in which Ernie Levy is involved by chance, is accompanied by enormous roars of laughter; it announces, through the children, the horrors looming in the twentieth century world of European civilization (pp. 136-137/127-128). With the horrifying years approaching, mirth takes on a symbolic significance which progresses towards Evil, assumed willfully and cold-bloodedly. Leaving nothing immaculate, neither spirit, soul, nor body, the persecutor's smirk reaches its utmost at the arrival at Auschwitz. Devilish and incomprehensible, laughter dehumanizes itself. As such, and up to the end, it will remain an insoluble enigma, for the victim and for the survivor (p. 368/339).

The ways of God are unfathomable, and those of the tormentors border on the incomprehensible. A corollary of this attitude or aggression, the direction followed by the victim presents also a mystery which ought to be cleared up. In order to prevent excessive dramatization, but also to fit fiction on reality, the author seems to have striven to make his characters not figure-heads of rudimentary Voltairian psychology, but human beings

in flesh and blood, for whom existence is

first and foremost an expression of hope and happiness. To be born a Jew does not imply, from the outset, a misfortune (p. 17/23). This implies that the Jewish condition is by no means inconsistent with humor. 'Hayim Levy's adventures, Judith's and Morde'hai's love, mingled with laughter, and a source of endless pleasure, constitute a very clear proof of this.

To God's doubtful humor, to the persecutor's corrosive smirk, the Jew, refusing despair and helplessness, responds with a controlled consciousness of his experience. The episode of the ritualistic slap, given to Rabbi Israel Levy by the Earl of Toulouse in the cathedral, seems to imply a definition of what could be understood as SchwarzBart's conception of a certain kind of Jewish humor:

When he arrived at home, his right eye smiled with a reassuring 10 sweetness. It is only a matter of habit," he told his wife, "and I am already entirely accustomed to it." But over the cheek marked by four fingers, his left eye wept, and during the night that followed, his aged blood turned slowly to water...." (p 10/17).

The right eye and the left eye, the one smiles and the other weeps. Pure despair and full detachment are neither structural nor ideological parts of the Jewish historical destiny. Truth in matters of Jewish affliction and happiness may be located on the spectrum somewhere between these two extremes: "When a Just smiles at a baby," says Morde'hai to Judith, "there is as much suffering in him... as in a Just undergoing Martyrdom... and half of his heart cries out while the other sings" (p. 57/57).

Consequently, in this initiating journey followed by the heroes of the novel, the register of laughter does not develop in a truly monolithic direction. In spite of optimism and hope, tenaciously close to Man's heart, the soul-destroying suffering attacks the dynamic energy of the Self. Circumstances and introspective thought assisting, the joy of life may be perceived as progressing on various levels towards a plurality of nuances. That is to say, towards a more restricted humor, turning into irony, and eventually sarcasm and offensive derision. At this stage, as already noticed, there is a convergence of the intentions and expressions of the author and of his characters.

From the outset, Benjamin is defined as "a sharp one", one of those

"whose pointed souls are turned inward against themselves" (pp.

65/64-65). He includes within him the essential components of irony: critical lucidity, game-playing, and a regard directed not only to the surrounding, but also addressed against the Self. Benjamin will soon question the intrinsic essence of the Levy family vocation, their Jewish fate and faith. His laughter becomes progressively exclusive, refusing and denying, especially under the influence of the external world and his own querying. In Berlin, Benjamin meets an alter ego, another "sharp one", Yankel, who represents for him the transition from the padded family bosom to the wide world free for all. Yankel's laughter expresses a deep moral pain, that of a Job-Prometheus, in rebellion against a "sky which has shattered" (p. 92/89). Derision expounds not only revolt but also the desperation of having lost faith.

Above all, the mutation of spontaneous laughter into derision seems to be crystallized in Ernie's personality. Ernie's potential for joviality and humor is gradually corroded by the increasing savagery of his surroundings. Hatred of Man, nothingness, and the silence of God convert him into a kind of modern tragic hero, aware of the absurdity of the Jewish condition, all leading him to attempted suicide. This suffering and his incipient masochism wipe the smile from his face, encourage maturity and increase a sense of existential pensiveness, at the same time as improved lucidity. War is lengthening its shadow, but the "evil of the times" pierces those whom humor no longer protects: "You must not think, Ernie said to himself as he laughed, you must not hear the cries...." (p. 275/254).

After the arrest of his parents, Ernie resembles the Yankel of the preceding period, in revolt against cruelty and arbitrariness. Faith and submission, in fact, become for him the emanation of the essential Absurd. With merciless sarcasm, in a model style of the genre, Ernie builds an anecdote in the form of a Midrashic tale, but giving it a meaning quite in contradiction to the traditional (pp. 283-284/261-262). He banters with it, at the kind of Jewish fatalism that might be found sometimes in orthodox circles. Ernie's derision undoubtedly mingles with that of Schwarz-Bart, in a common condemnation of the Lord's might, and of those whose naive beliefs come to justify His so-called decrees. This universal mockery, sprung from an intolerable ethical and metaphysical suffering, aspires to be the expression of an absolute liberty, through the total negation of the Self and all sacred conventions. Ernie wishes to become a dog. He uses his

own, as well as the others' laughter, to complete this desacralization into

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which he rushes despairingly, in a kind of second attempt of abstract suicide (pp. 287-290/265-267).

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Through its presence, its absence and its various nuances, laughter contributes to the fall brought on by Jewish destiny. In its unfurling throughout the novel, there is what might be called a dividing of the roads - the road of those who pursue the human and the ideal, and the road of those who plunge towards the abyss and the demonic.

Ernie chooses to join Golda in the camp, inspired not only by the spirit of sacrifice and a sentiment of solidarity, but also by the vision of the void. Nevertheless, although he opts for physical liquidation, he opposes the disappearance of the soul, and takes a stand in the defence of human dignity. That explains the exchange of smiles at the end of the novel, especially with Golda (p. 358/329) - smiles of the heart, undoubtedly the most attractive, but yet the last....

From this moment on, as the train advances slowly towards its final destination, laughter disintegrates down the sinister slope where tears and blood become indistinguishable (pp. 368-369/340-341). Tearless weeping, pouring from the unconscious, to which blood contributes its warning - premonitory message of invading horror which the birth of smiles vainly disguises.

Although "blackish", the smile remains the unique appeal of a world which moves away..As long as the Smile and the Word last, Life goes on. That is why Ernie speaks to the children to replace harsh reality by softer dreams. In this deceptive enterprise, which adults do not accept, Ernie must admit that there can be "no room for truth". However, consenting to be drawn into an imaginary universe, a universe of ethereal suffering, the children themselves listen to Ernie, "without understanding, gentle smiles shadowing their tortured lips" (p. 370/341).

Here is the smile of those hoping to enter the ideal kingdom of God's smile — the smile of the Genesis which could give birth to eternal

existence and joy, but which the atrocious reality rejects to the opposite realm of absolute Evil, where bodiless laughter holds sway. The contentment of the SS upon arrival at Auschwitz, with the presence of the "peripatetic orchestra waiting farcically on the truck" (pp. 368-369/339-340) symbolizes the total negation of Life and Happiness. It ends with "the somber abysmal sneer of the gas chamber...." (p. 373/345).

It seems that, after Auschwitz, laughter had definitely tumbled into the abyss: as if the world, overwhelmed by the absolute tragedy, was, from now on, sealed against the welcome of Joy; as if, after the phenomenon of the concentrationary universe, there was no more room for humor; but perhaps, only for irony, of which the final Kaddish, where the names of the death-camps resound, contributes poignantly an incomprehensible, if not sublime testimony.

Notes

1. Gustave Flaubert, Correspondence. IV.
2. Joe Friedemann, *Le Rire dans l'univers tragique d'Elie Wiesel*. Paris: Nizet, 1981; "De l'insouciance à la brisure: le rire dans les romans d'Anna Langfus", *Cahier Comique Communication*, 3, Grenoble: 1985, pp. 93-111.
3. The 317 pages of the French edition contain 302 occurrences of the concepts laughter and smile, synonyms included. If one adds broader lexical items and humorous or ironical passages, one reaches a total occurrence even more important.
4. *Le Mot d'esprit et ses rapports avec l'inconscient*. Paris: Gallimard, 1969.
5. Francine Kaufmann, *Le Dernier des Justes d'Andre Schwarz-Bart*, Genese, Structure, Signification, These 3 e cycle, Paris X: 1976, pp. 80-85; p. 443.
6. The pagination in the text will be as follows: 1) English translation: *The Last of the Just*. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1961. 2) Original French text: *Le Dernier des Justes*. Paris: Seuil, 1960.
7. Voltaire, "Candide ou l'optimisme," in: *Romans et Contes*. Paris:

Garnier-Flammarion, 1966, chap. 6; chap. 30.

8. Joe Friedemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-30.

9. Elie Wiesel, *Le Jour*. Paris: Seuil, 1961, pp. 48-49.

10. Sanctification prayer said by the mourners.

COMPREHENSION OF AND AWARENESS OF THE HOLOCAUST AMONG LEADERS OF THE "YISHUV" IN "ERETZ-YISRAEL"

Dina Porat

Within the general theme of the conference, "Comprehending the Holocaust", I have chosen to examine the comprehension and the awareness of the Holocaust among leaders of the Yishuv in EretzYisrael. And to be more specific, to examine the way two great leaders, who need no introduction, David Ben-Gurion and Martin Buber, expressed their understanding of the events in Europe and their implications.

One of them is first and foremost a political leader, the political leader of the Yishuv and the Zionist movement in the forties, and the other is mainly an intellectual, a world-renowned philosopher. Still, it should be immediately emphasized that it is quite difficult to differentiate between intellectual and political leadership in a small, very involved, very committed community such as the Yishuv under the British Mandate.

It seems that their letters, speeches and articles, especially those written in 1943-1944, and public reaction to what they said and wrote, make clear that, already during World War II, they both became almost symbols of non-understanding, and even of detachment from the terrible events: an intellectual in an ivory tower and a politician with one idee fixe, the establishment of the State of Israel.

The main questions are, therefore, what was their unique view of the events and of their implications; was there a discrepancy between their respective views and public opinion and reaction to them; and if there was — what were the reasons for such a discrepancy.

We begin with Ben-Gurion. There are two main primary sources of material:

A) Interviews with people who worked side by side with him, especially in the Labor Party Centre (merkaz Majjai), and those who were in charge of collecting the news from Europe; and

B) Ben-Gurion's own deliberations on the Holocaust, which are scarce and terse, as compared with his profuse writing on major issues such as relations with the Arabs, the British Mandate, the future and prospects of Zionism and others. Both bring us to a clear conclusion: Ben-Gurion said and wrote very little on the Jews in Europe and the disaster that befell them, compared to the volume of his speeches and writings on other subjects.

These two main sources show that his characteristic reaction to the news from occupied Europe was — silence, especially from the end of 1942 and thereafter, when the Yishuv fully realized that a systematic extermination was taking place in Europe. Sometimes, while reading the proceedings of a meeting of one of the Yishuv's organs, in which he certainly participated, one wonders whether he really did, because he said almost nothing. When an issue of rescue was at stake, he did not let his colleagues drag him into a debate, but rather stated his own opinion very briefly and in terms of what action should be taken.

However, a thorough examination now under way of the Ben-Gurion Archive in Sde-Boker has already proved that he spoke and wrote more than the public and even the researchers have assumed until now. Still and all, this is not much. Only once, quite late, in September, 1943, when he addressed a home meeting, gathered for the collection of money for rescue purposes, he explained his silence: "I don't have the words; I will not speak about the catastrophe," and added: "I think that the language to describe it has not been created."

He kept silent, as well, about the Allies' attitude towards the rescue of Jews. Ben-Gurion, though a realistic leader, sometimes realistic up to a point of cruelty, hoped and believed that rescue plans suggested to the Allies might materialize: the Germans-Jews exchange plan, the establishment of an international large-scale rescue institute, the rescue of 29,000 children out of Nazi-occupied territory on the account of all the certificates left with the Jewish Agency, and others. It took a long time till

even he realized what the real attitude of the Allies was. One bitter disillusionment followed the other as rescue plans presented to them, and above all to the British, were rejected or thwarted once and again. Still, he kept

to himself the bitterness and the anger at this polite but cold and indifferent attitude of the Allies, and did not share it with the public or even with his colleagues.

It was only in August, 1944, in a commemoration-gathering on the fortieth anniversary of Herd's death, that he let himself go with an outburst of emotion and outrage, disregarding all real-politik and caution: What did you do to us, you freedom and justice loving nations, fighting for democracy, equality and socialism; you stepped aside and watched our blood spilling endlessly. Why do you treat us so differently than you treat any other nation that fights on your side? Is not our blood as red as yours, and our honor as important as yours? These are almost the words of Shylock, in Shakespeare's tragedy. Interestingly, this outburst is not included in the volumes of his speeches, although the rest of that particular speech is. ⁶ Probably he later came back to himself, to the silence and the real-politik, realizing how futile such an attack was especially as the small Yishuv could rely, politically, only on the Allies.

Yet a survey of what he did, in contrast to what he said or wrote, shows clearly that he was involved and well informed. According to the emissaries of the Yishuv in Istanbul, who frequently visited Eretz Yisrael, he often sat with them for hours and hours, listening to the details of their rescue work. He refused to allocate money from the Jewish Agency's budget for rescue purposes, but helped personally to collect considerable sums from the few local rich. He was deeply involved in a number of rescue attempts and plans, and in some of his letters[^] he expressed his hopes for the materialization of those plans.

But the public in the Yishuv, including some of his colleagues in his own party, who were not informed about his deeds, interpreted his silence as lack of regard and feeling for the suffering of the Jews in Europe. Ben-Gurion remains in our collective memory as a leader who detached himself emotionally from the most extreme of national disasters; one whose mind was stubbornly centered on the Zionist goals and their realization; a leader who ignored public pressure for mass demonstrations against the British and for more intensive rescue attempts; a calculating, cold-minded

politician, who did not hesitate to manipulate even the survivors in the D.P. camps as a means toward his goal.

It is the task of the historian to try to explain this discrepancy between the leader and his public. His silence was part of his style

and behavior, not only with regard to the Holocaust. He was not interested in being popular, in publicly manifesting sorrow and grief, in giving in to demonstrations which he believed to be futile, or in advertising his rescue attempts. He kept the sorrow to himself, as he did with other heavy and critical decisions and judgments. He did not share them with others, following the example of Lenin, his admired hero and example: keep silent, gather all possible strength, and strive forwards.

But the material a historian can gather today reveals a deeper explanation, which is the main theme of this conference: comprehension. The available material shows clearly — though not with ample examples — that at an early stage, perhaps earlier than a few other members of the Yishuv leadership, Ben-Gurion understood that Germany's brutal policy towards Jews was beyond rationality, and that their might and organizational talents were too much to overcome; that the Allies, and especially the British, were simply not interested in

rescuing Jews, certainly not in large numbers, and that no demonstra

tions would force them to act contrary to what they regarded as their immediate interests in the Middle East, and on the war fronts in

general; that by the end of 1942 when, at long last, the Yishuv came to realize the gravity of the situation, a large part of European

Jewry had already been lost; and that, as he put it, "the extermination of European Jewry is a fatal blow to Zionism, because there will be nobody left to build Eretz Yisrael with," as money, support and immigration came mainly from Europe; that the small Yishuv, 470,000 in all, must very carefully calculate its expenditures, manpower and political maneuvers, in order to be able to save as many Jews as possible — even in small numbers ~ during the war; and at the end of the war, to serve at least as a shelter to the survivors, and convince the Allies that it could become an independent political entity. 10 Such bitter and complicated truth could hardly be openly shared with the public at large.

The public in Eretz Yisrael, who reacted much more emotionally than its leadership during the war, and the public of the State of Israel, who forgot the hardships of the forties, and lived through both the great achievements of Zionism and the outcome of the Holocaust, blame Ben-Gurion bitterly. Perhaps they do so because it is much easier to blame the Jews of Europe, and the Jews in the free world and their respective leaderships, than to face up to the helplessness of the Jewish people at the time, and the active help rendered by many a

nation to the Nazis. Perhaps the historian will continue to explain, but public collective memory will go its own way, for its own reasons and needs.

Martin Buber, too, was sharply criticized for his attitude toward the Holocaust. In 1978, in articles and conferences commemorating his 100th birthday, he was accused of not being influenced by the Holocaust, neither in style nor in ideas, despite the fact that he had spent five years in Nazi Germany, from the Nazi rise to power till his aliya to Eretz-Yisrael in 1938 — years during which he served the Jewish community as an educator and a spiritual leader, and bravely opposed the authorities. But in Eretz-Yisrael he allegedly detached himself from the suffering people he once was part of, and devoted himself to academic work, and to other political issues. 11

Contrary to these accusations, Buber did not shut himself up in an ivory tower. He was a member of a small protest-group, Al-Domi, that tried to awaken the Yishuv to the implications and significance of the Holocaust, was active on its committees, took part in meetings initiated to bring up suggestions and ideas for rescue, and formed a clear opinion concerning a large number of practical political questions closely connected with the actual rescue work. But these activities of his were largely unknown, publicly, and were soon forgotten. 12

His important contribution to the attempts to comprehend Nazi ideology and Jewish reaction was forgotten as well. According to his analysis, the ongoing struggle in the world was driven by the neverending attempts of the beast that lurks inside man to return to the wild forest, to the pre-human era, before the spirit of God prevailed. In this struggle the nation of Israel had a unique task: it is a "manpeople", symbol of humanity and the divine spirit, contrary and

opposite to the savage powers, and it is its duty to continue the

struggle for morality in the entire world.

Our brothers and sisters died in a world struggle, though they did not fight with arms in hand; their very existence was a

stubborn war against the beast, and this is exactly why the beast went so wild.

Therefore it is the duty of the living Jews to replace those killed — in their way of life, in their faith in mankind, as the people of

Israel, who live "because we are eternal, a man-people, because God is with us."

This is one of the first attempts to conceptualize the events while they were still happening, to give them a theoretical framework. Buber was strongly opposed by his listeners, mainly AHD members, not because he stressed Jewish morals as an antithesis of Nazism, or because of the importance he attached to morality, and not necessarily to armed struggle. It was his pessimistic conclusion that they objected to, that this was the fate of the Israeli nation, and that the righteous will always be opposed and killed for their righteousness.

But the strongest general opposition to Buber stemmed from an *idée fixe* of his which he preached for many years: the idea that "Jewish Fascism" will spread out, because of the Holocaust and the World War. In 1939, a year after Kristallnacht, he published an article entitled "We and They", in which he denounced in the strongest terms "those who preach to us to be strong, and do the deeds of Satan, for our benefit." Our country cannot be built on the basis of injustice, he wrote, because it is unlike any other country, and we are unlike any other nation. The God of justice should rule here and immediately, right now.

This article was not fully understood, especially not its timing. The public was mourning the burning of Germany's synagogues the Kristallnacht results and implications; Buber seemed to be comparing the Nazis and their treatment of the Jews to nationalist-rightists in Eretz Yisrael and their treatment of the Arabs, an insulting and irritating comparison.

In the summer of 1942, Buber continued this line, and at the Hebrew writers' conference, when all speakers mourned the terrible situation of the

Jews in Europe, he lamented the moral deterioration of the Yishuv. "Will it be possible to identify the morally disintegrating Yishuv with that Zion we once tried to establish? The moment Zion will be only a political ideal, and not a human ideal as well, the faith in Zion will weaken."

His words raised quite a storm. He was accused of being an unrealistic pacifist, an exaggerating humanist, an extreme follower of Gandhi, a cosmopolitan who forsakes the vital needs of the nation for his ideas. The nations of the world are divided into those who kill us, and those who watch the killing ~ and Buber preaches to the Jews morality and justice? Again, his words were an insult, and seemed to be out of the context of events.

Buber defended himself: It was not that all the Yishuv was morally corrupted. What bothered him was that violence had become part of its

political life, and if such a phenomenon were not publicly denounced this was the clearest sign that there were fascists in such a public, and that hidden fascism, cryptofascism, was dangerously widespread. Those who declared that Zionism should not tolerate professors and intellectuals like Buber because of their opinions, "those are the buds of Jewish Fascism in all its glory." 14

In 1943 he continued to claim that as a public the Yishuv had no real identification with the dying diaspora; we lack the great love that comes with the knowledge, with the deep concern of the soul." Such a lack of ability to identify would put a severe question mark on the inner quality of Zionism and on the first generation of Israelis. He also denounced any use of the Holocaust as a political tool, either possibly by the Yishuv organs, or by the Revisionist party, which he openly accused of an immoral, futile use of the national disaster. Like Ben-Gurion, he assumed that anti-British demonstrations, which the Revisionists demanded, would amount to nothing, except for a radicalization of the atmosphere in the Jewish street. 15

Buber provoked opposition and criticism during the early forties. In Nazi Germany his preaching of humanist values as an antithesis to the local nationalistic development was accepted by the Jewish community as relevant in time and place. But in Eretz-Yisrael, in a completely different environment, the public felt that human values were almost naturally identified with the renewal of its national values on the way to

independence. Buber became a stranger, a Nudnik, whose sharp criticism of the Yishuv stood in marked contrast to the self-image of the Yishuv: a productive, creative, moral, idealistic community.

The public did not understand that Buber's sensitive analysis of the situation made him foresee processes that were at their very beginning in the forties; made him stress that the quality of Jewish and democratic life and the attitude towards the Arabs should serve as a yard-stick by which to measure the Zionist enterprise; made him attack not any particular party, but rather any violence in political life whether directed against Jews or non-Jews; made him denounce any utterance or deed that reflected narrow-mindedness and selfish nationalism, on both the left and the right

It became an obsessive idea for him, a constant fear, that precisely during a world war, the use of violence and instinct to satisfy national desires might turn into a contagious example; that the terrible injustice inflicted upon the Jewish people would justify hatred of others, and promote nationalist feelings that would be very

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hard to uproot later; that we would forget that "the main thing is not that we live, but how we live."

We conclude with words spoken by Buber after the war, when he faced isolation and was incomprehensible to his audience. Perhaps these are the words suitable to end a conference of historians, for who reads their books and listens to them? "Tragic is the fate of the men of spirit, but the spirit itself, although saturated with sorrow and toil, ^ets its victory, though it is a victory hidden from the eye." 1

Notes

1. I had interviews with: Yehi'el Duvdvani, (Mapai Centre), Moshe Kol (the Histadrut Aid Committee), Avraham Zilberberg (Aliya Department), Azriel Begun (World Union of Mapai), all texts in my possession. D.P.

2. See, as one of many examples, Yitzhak Gruenbaum on Ben-Gurion's way of speaking, in a July 23, 1944 meeting of the Executive of the Jewish Agency, Central Zionist Archives (hereafter: CZA).

3. This examination is being conducted by Tuvia Frieling, in charge of the archive.

4. At a home meeting, gathered for the collection of rescue funds in September, 1943. Quoted by T. Frieling, Meoravuto shel Ben-Gurion Be'parashat Hazalat Va'aluyat Hayeladim Ubepulmus Hakelita (Ben-Gurion's Involvement in the Rescue of Children and in the Absorption Debate). MA. Thesis, Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1984, p. 19.

5. See, according to plans, D. Porat, Hanhaga Bemilkud (An Entangled Leadership — The Yishuv and the Holocaust 1942-1945). Tel Aviv: Am-Oved, 1986, Part B.

6. See a draft, corrected by Ben-Gurion, in file CZA S44/201, and partially in Davor, July 7, 1944; and the speech, published without this outburst, in Bama'aracha (On the Battle-line). Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1957, vol. 4, pp. 184-192.

7. See, for example, Porat, (note 5), chap. 7.

8. Debate at the Beersheba University conference on the post-war years, 1985 (still unpublished).

Dina Porat

9. About Ben-Gurion and Lenin see, Israel Kolatt, "Ben-Gurion, Hademut vehagedula" (Ben-Gurion: The Image and its Stature), Molad, 22, December 1971, pp. 340-351.

10. See note 4.

11. See, among others, David Glantz, "Tefisat Hahistoria VebaShoa ct^el Martin Buber (The Perception of History and the Holocaust by Buber), Kivunim, 2, February 1979, pp. 75-78.

12. See: D. Porat, "Al-Domi, Palestinian Intellectuals and the Holocaust, 1943-1945", Studies in Zionism, 9, Spring, 1984, pp. 97-124; "Martin Buber in Eretz-Israel During the Holocaust, 1942-1944", Yad-Vashem Studies, XVII (1986), pp. 93-143.

13. See, Ben-Zion Dinur, Zachor, on the Holocaust and its Lesson,

Jerusalem: Yad-Vashem, 1958, p. 14ff.

14. Moznaim, August 14, 1942, p. 42.

15. "Shetika Uzeaka" (Silence and Cry), Buber's article in Be'ayot, April 1, 1944.

16. See note 14, p. 381.

17. Am Ve'olam (Israel and the World, A collection of Buber's essays). Jerusalem: The Zionist Library, 1961, p. 345.

HOLOCAUST HEBREW LITERATURE BETWEEN THE CONCRETE AND THE MYTHOLOGICAL

Hanna Yaoz

Holocaust literature brings into prominence a question concerning artistic expression of a trauma which is itself beyond the power of words. The experience called the Holocaust is seen by the post World War II generation as a sort of symbolic representation of human evil that has achieved superhuman dimensions. This symbolic representation of evil may be seen as an assignment of myth to the experience.

The conception of the Holocaust as a myth of superhuman evil is not intended to negate the historical truth but rather add to it. This concept achieves a unique form in Holocaust literature.

Hebrew fiction on the Holocaust, as we shall see, can be divided into two categories, the one, historical fiction, and the other transhistorical, while Hebrew poetry on the Holocaust moves between the concrete and the mythical.

Hebrew historical fiction on the Holocaust is inclined to the mimetic, and is based upon accepted political and social concepts. Within the fabric of the fictional plot it weaves historical facts and sometimes even intermingles both historical and fictional characters. Accordingly, when analyzing historical fiction I consider it necessary to study the relationship between the historical basis of the plot and the structure of the story. Having examined the molding of historical characters and known historical events in the characteristic forms of fictional presentation, such as the fictional chronicle or the fictional testimony, we understand the way concrete and realistic fiction deals with the Holocaust.

An interesting example is the novel of N. Frenkel, *Shaul and Yohana*,

which deals with the years 1930-33 in Berlin. The novelist draws three circles: The Jewish, the "Red" and the "Brown" Germany. The "real" historical figure, Hitler, is described in a purely causal appearance. He is portrayed only as he appears externally, and is represented merely through the eyes of a fictional hero. But Frenkel's novel ends in 1933. This sort of historical fiction cannot be applied successfully to fictional representation of the years of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. Special attention must therefore be paid to the wide range of styles used to give form to the concept of terror and anxiety, styles which range from the art of presenting the disgusting and the grotesque through techniques to neutralize the terror (such as humor and irony), until finally the terror is refined into a sort of "dream language" and lyrical realism. The artistic use of nausea is the method K. Zetnik has chosen for his books. Salamandra, Pipel, House of Dolls, have been written in a naturalistic way, giving the reader a very concrete panorama of Auschwitz and the Musselmen. The techniques of the portrayal of the grotesque and the use of black humor were chosen by Y. Kaniuk. His novel, Adam, Son of a Dog, combines terror and anxiety with the grotesque.

Another way of writing about those dreadful years is the lyrical realism chosen by poets who wrote a sort of poetic prose. The novel, In the Window of the Travelling House, by I. Yaoz-Kest, portrays the time of fear and anxiety from the point of view of a little boy in Bergen-Belsen. Some of the most dreadful scenes are written in a sort of "dream language".

In contrast to this, we find that the trans-historical narrative on the Holocaust avoids both the mingling of real characters with the fictional and any connection with accepted historical concepts which are characteristic of any given period in history. The factual background of the trans-historical narrative is not based on known historical facts nor on the revelation or concretization of social, economic or political motives, but on some intrinsic system of laws which draws its strength from a world dominated by mythical forces and sometimes by madness or the absurd. Within the framework of our discussion on the trans-historical narrative, we shall deal with two of its subtypes: a) passages on "the other planet", which appear as isolated chapters in novels which may generally be classed as historical fiction - such as chapters 9-11 in Salamandra, of K. Zetnik. These chapters give form to the concept of terror while stressing the

deviation from the accepted norms of human existence. This is achieved mainly by emphasizing changes in time and space, b) The second sub-type of trans-historical fiction appears in self-contained passages (mainly novellas and short stories). In contrast to historical fiction which rouses real fear of the cruelty of the Nazis and the world of the concentration camps (an effect which is found even in "the other planet" passages), in this type of Holocaust fiction the horrors of the chase and the manhunt are portrayed as the anguish of existential finality. The destruction of European Jewry is no longer presented as a unique event belonging to a specific historical period, but as an existential Jewish situation. This form of writing is typical of A. Appelfeld, whose fiction transcends the specific situation known as the Holocaust, and even refrains from confining it to specific geographical areas or known political events. In other words, this type of narrative is based on a conception of the Jewish fate from a point of view uncommitted to any specific period, in contrast to historical concepts which are firmly fixed within boundaries of time.

The main characteristic of both poetry and prose is the inclination towards a new system of overt and covert code words. The appearance of code words has a special place in the poetry of the Holocaust period. It is important to distinguish between code words which have their origin in the world of nature and normal human activity prior to the Holocaust, and between the language used in the new system: symbols which are essentially archetypal, deriving their meaning from the Judeo-Christian culture, containing symbols such as "Cain and Abel", "The Sacrifice of Isaac", "The Crucifixion" and so on, and such new terms as "the other planet" and "vacuum of the world", and such code words as "cattle car", "consignment", "smoke" and so on.

The Hebrew poetry on the Holocaust written by the first generation of the state is mostly written by survivors who were themselves children during the forties. They chose the code words as a sort of symbolic language which, within the framework of poetry, endeavors to give expression to a terror which is beyond the power of words.

Here in this truck I'm Eve with Abel my son
If you see my eldest son Cain,
son of Adam Tell him that I am.

This little poem by Dan Pagis gives us the well known archetypes from the Bible combined with the new ones from the world of deportation and concentration camps. In a way this poem is a good example for a sort of

"Breathless Poetics" as Alvin Rosenfeld suggests in his book, *The Double Dying*.

The modern new poetry in Hebrew sets aside any rhythm, rhyme, structure and grammar. With its understatement it is very suitable for Holocaust poetry and especially for "Breathless Poetics".

In the air that does not flow

In the air that shuts like a fist

In the air that becomes ashes

and ashes into needles

In the air of the blind fire

In the air that is sweet - not because of blossoms

In the air that is thin like a scream

In the air that tears thousand eyes

and every eye sees blackness

In the air that dwarfs between the lips

Lives my little sister

The Eternity of the last minute.

The main word in this poem, by Tuvia Rivner, is "air", but really it is about the lack of air, and from one sentence to the other the little sister becomes more and more breathless. One smells the gas and the decay, till one comes to the overwhelming oxymoron about eternity and the last minute. The little sister is a well known figure in Hebrew poetry on the Holocaust, and it receives a mythical expression in Aba Kovner's well known poem, "My Little Sister". (He received the Israel Prize for Poetry in 1970). Judaism and Christianity are fighting in his poem, and the little Jewish girl who was left in a monastery becomes a symbol for childhood in the Holocaust.

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Thus, the Holocaust has become a symbolic representation of human evil. There are poets in modern Hebrew poetry whose writings incline towards the conception of the Holocaust as a myth of superhuman evil.

Dressed in Black / I. Yaoz-Kest

The Evening sat on the threshold of the sack

The shadow of the skies floated

like a dead body in the rain

that floated the aimless yard

Dressed in black the evening

on the threshold of the Universe

Sat seven days of mourning

and on the eighth was late to rise.

The evening is personified, the horror has become cosmic and the trauma belongs to the universe in a way of magnification of the horror.

On the opposite pole we find Hebrew poets who long for the concrete and the unmythical approach, like the following poem by Yakov Besser:

Black earth stains of soiled snow someone thin and feverish in burning
urine yellow star.

This poem points to the "lower mimetic", and leads some of the writers to a sarcastic style of secularization and the grotesque. Meir Wisaltir, himself a refugee from Russia, wrote some poems about the Holocaust based upon the grotesque and the "lower mimetic" mode of expression. His "Ballad to a German Soldier-1943" is the "negative" of Tschernikhovski's well known ballad, "The Rabbi's Daughter". When his Jewish girl speaks she swears like a trooper.

The young poets who began to publish about the Holocaust in the last 8-10

years happen to be children of Holocaust survivors. Tanya Hadar, Rivka Miriam, Odded Peled and others write about the trauma of their forebears and about themselves in a sort of overt and covert code. They show great empathy on one hand, and a great rejection of the heritage of the horrors on the other. "Mother I'm with you in BergenBelsen/where you are carrying a poet in your womb", writes Odded Peled

in his poem, "Letters to Bergen-Belsen", and he gives place to new codes like Bob Dylan or Joan Baez, the "protest singers".

Another young poet, Tania Hadar, writes about the Roman soldiers of two thousand years ago, together with the Polish Jews in the ghettos and in the concentration camps.

Jerusalem in my dreams/my parents are floating there, the houses of Lita on their backs/

Trees are growing there from the forests of Polin/Children are playing two thousand years ago.

Rivka Miriam, daughter of the well known Yiddish novelist, Leib Roichman, writes: "My yellow star - dressed in children cries". Rivka Miriam writes in her poems about the third generation: "My children will suck from me the ashes." The diabolical nature of the horror becomes a new heritage — the grand-children of the survivors suck the ashes with their mother's milk. This Hebrew poetry and prose provide the reader with new ways of looking into the horrors of that black chapter of history that has traumatized the entire Jewish nation.

Notes

1. H. Yaoz, Siporet Hashoa belvrit — Kesiporet Historit VetransHistorit (Holocaust in Hebrew Literature - as Historical and TransHistorical Fiction). Tel Aviv: Eked, 1980.
2. H. Yaoz, Hashoa beshirat Dor Hamedina (The Holocaust in Modern Hebrew Poetry). Tel Aviv: Eked, 1984.
3. A. H. Rosenfeld, A Double Dying - Reflection on Holocaust Literature. Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1980, p. 85.

HOLOCAUST SCHOLARSHIP IN DIMINISHING RETURNS

Eli Pfefferkorn

During the last ten years or so, literary critics have been searching frantically for new forms in Holocaust literature which would embody the unprecedented life under Nazi occupation in Europe. On failing to find the new forms they are looking for, the critics have prescribed to the writers ~ witnessing and non-witnessing alike ~ aesthetic formulae that will enable authors to express the ineffable. In their attempt to construct a theory of Holocaust literature, the critics draw on the vocabulary of fifties existentialism, and use an analytical approach essentially modeled upon the Pound-Eliot school. Thus, equipped with a double-pronged modernism, the literary critic makes sweeping statements about a body of literature that does not easily lend itself to the application of lofty critical principles.

Predicated on a premise that is essentially formalistic, these critical theories cannot cope with the literature of siege and its aftermath nor with the cultural and social environment that yielded it. A theory of Holocaust literature that is not grounded in texts written under siege and in its aftermath, by direct participants, must inevitably fall short of its objective. For the purported objective of sound theory has been and still is ~ despite the deconstructionists ~ to explain the literary phenomenon within its historical context.

The practice of mechanical application of theories is most notable in the introductory chapter of Lawrence Langer's book, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*. In his description of what he calls "the aesthetics of atrocity", Langer advocates not merely "... the transfiguration of empirical reality, but its disfiguration, the conscious and the deliberate alienation of the reader's sensibilities from the world of the usual and the familiar, with an accompanying infiltration

into the world of the grotesque." 1 The twin concepts in this quotation, namely, "alienation" and "grotesque" have been stable commodities in

literature and criticism for a long time. The idea that literary works can be used to alienate the reader's sensibilities was posited by the Russian Formalist, Victor Shklovsky, and others, about sixty years ago, while the employment of the grotesque as an alienation device goes as far back as the Renaissance and further. Shklovsky identified a phenomenon that he termed "defamiliarization" of the habitual, whose purpose was to afford the reader a new perception of reality. "Tolstoy," writes Shklovsky, "makes the familiar seem strange by not naming the familiar object. He describes an object as if he were seeing it for the first time. In describing something, he avoids the accepted names of its parts and instead names corresponding parts of other objects." The conceptual affinity between alienation and the grotesque has been the subject of numerous treatises not related to Holocaust literature. In his detailed study of the history of the grotesque, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, Wolfgang Kayser describes the Renaissance concept of the Grottesco as that of alienation from the familiar world. In the world of the grotesque as perceived by the Renaissance, writes Kayser^ "...the laws of statics, symmetry and proportion are not more valid." The Renaissance concept of the grotesque is akin to that held by the German post-Romantics who, as Lee Byron Jennings has shown, employ the grotesque as a vehicle to distort reality. "There is," observes Jennings, "a recombining of the elements of experienced reality to form something alien to it; the norms of common life are replaced by anti-norms." With the advent of the Theatre of the Absurd, the technique of alienation through the grotesque has become the modus operandi of post-war drama.

Thus in both the pre- and post-Holocaust eras, the artist employs grotesque techniques to alienate the reader from the "world of the usual and the familiar." Langer makes his mistake in the manner in which he applies this theory to literature of the Holocaust. For, to the witnessing author, the grotesque is not a technique used to defamiliarize the commonplace, but rather the estranged is precisely what constitutes his world. In order to familiarize the reader with his alienated world, the witnessing author falls back on conventional forms.

I have shown elsewhere how strategies of estrangement of the familiar and distortion of reality pre-date Holocaust literature. What

makes Holocaust literature unique, however, is that a distorted reality and an estranged commonplace are inherent in the substance of the experience

itself. Nothing, for example, could be more grotesque than an accurate description of Konzentration Lager life. The witnessing author, therefore, has no need to give expression to his experience in newly crafted forms. Moreover, by using conventional modes of expression, the witnessing author makes the form a touchstone for the normative against the chaos of the experience. Indeed, for the witnessing author, as well as the reader, the conventional form is a commonly shared literary property through which the distorted experience can be communicated.

I should like to demonstrate my point by analyzing two excerpts, one from a testimony told by a nine-year-old child, the second from a tale by Elie Wiesel.

An unusually sensitive girl with a literary bent, whose native intelligence burst into maturity in the pressing environment, Hava K. was born in Poland in 1935 and recorded her ordeal soon after her liberation in 1944. Hava and her mother had escaped the Aksia in their town and found temporary shelter in a prisoner of war hospital administered by Jewish doctors and nurses. After the presumed liquidation of the hospital, mother and child roamed the Polish countryside under Aryan identities, mother doing odd jobs for the peasants to earn food and shelter.

We go inside the hospital. There are no Jewish patients, only war prisoners and Jewish doctors taking care of them. All the doctors have hypodermics full of morphine. Some have cyanide. They all want to poison themselves. Mama asks for a little morphine for me. She says, "Let the child have an easy death." But nobody has any extra morphine. It's hard to get. Two beautiful young nurses are lying there poisoned. In the next room there is a lady doctor who is a good friend of Mama. Her eyes are still open, and she recognizes Mama. "Don't give up," she says and closes her eyes. A doctor feels her pulse and says, "There, she's breathed her last. Lucky woman!" We go into the courtyard. We sit there feeling awful. Mama is very worried because she isn't with the rest of the family.

Every day it gets harder to travel the road. The Germans could capture us any time. During the day we stay hidden and have

nothing to eat. Mama is getting weak. She doesn't think we'll stay alive so she begs me to throw myself into the river and put an end to my misery. I cry and beg her, "Don't give up, Mama! Live for me. I won't die. You'll see, we'll stay alive. I won't say I'm hungry any more, so please don't take

me to the river." I get so weak from hunger that I can't stand. Mama thinks I'm paralyzed and I will stay a cripple.

What emerges from Hava's description is a world whose contours of reality have been dissolved into the surrealistic. The nervously grotesque sketches, the disfigured images, the sense of alienation — all these are the very stuff that nightmares are made of. Hava's account affords an insight into the relatedness of memory to imagination and the witness's role as mediator between the two. Her account also contains concrete information that will allow the historian to place her human drama into historical context. Furthermore, I suggest that a historical narrative of this particular region would benefit from Hava's account.

An attempt at comprehending the Holocaust reality at the human level — which is after all the concern of literature — does not lie in the formulation of a theory from without, but rather in formulating questions that arise from within. Some of the underlying questions that arise from Hava's testimony deal with the relationship of memory and imagination. At what point, for example, does the witness-bearer become the interpreter of his own experience? There is also the related question: Does the witness bearer's interpretation of the events have historical validity as well as human value?

Among the witnessing authors, none is more acutely aware than Elie Wiesel of the chasm separating the granite-like hardness of the fact from the rainbow-like fancy of the imagination. And yet, prodded by an artistic impulse, he also knows that fiction, when responsibly handled, makes truth credible, just as imagination makes memory bearable.

Put in terms of Aristotle's *Poetics*, Wiesel's is an advocacy of a poetic truth that is not necessarily verifiable in empirical terms. "The historian describes the thing that has been," writes Aristotle, "and the poet the kind of thing that might be. Hence, poetry is something more philosophic and of greater import than history."

I submit as evidence of a historical event mediated by imagination, Wiesel's tale, "The Scrolls, Too, Are Mortal," a paradigmatic narra

tive which encapsulates the quintessence of Holocaust sensibilities by using the conventional trope of allegory. 6 In the story, the Scrolls, which represent the Jewish collective memory, provide a vehicle for recapturing

the common experience of two survivors as perceived from two different perspectives. The Torah allegory allows Wiesel to examine the precariousness of memory and the fickleness of the imagination as they oscillate in the intricate consciousness of the

characters. Wiesel brings these two opposing impulses to a proximate resolution by linking the private memories of the characters with the collective memory of the Jewish people embodied in the Torah.

Subtly shuttling the narrative between past and present, Wiesel

brings together two survivors in a singular encounter. The narrator of the story intrudes upon Isshar's privacy which he has jealously protected these last thirty years, presumably since his release from the camp. Immersed in mending the charred and mutilated letters of the Torah, Isshar, the scribe, immediately rejects the narrator's attempt to revive their common camp experiences. In his single-minded dedication to salvaging God's word from extinction, Isshar is inextricably caught up with the past to a point that reminiscing about it becomes a meaningless exercise. Isshar has, therefore, no need for external stimuli in the form of a fellow inmate to invoke the memories of the

past. Painfully alive within him, these memories are embodied in the shreds of the scrolls.

In his renewed encounter with the scribe, the narrator longs to piece together the shredded past. For Isshar, however, memory takes on a different meaning. While for the narrator remembering means heading back to the yesterday in a reminiscing pilgrimage, for the scribe, memory means an existential reliving of the past through a passionate identification with the distorted letters of the Torah. In the letters of the Torah, Isshar has found the vital link that connects the past to the present in a continuous dialogue, assimilating historical memory with the Holocaust experience. Accordingly, the scribe sees the Torah as the "true memory: mine, ours," as an expression of the collective Jewish consciousness that transcends time and space. ⁷ Isshar's hostile reaction to the narrator's persistent attempts to hark back to the past, derive precisely from his frame of reference concerning memory.

Using the volatile quality of memory as a subterfuge for eluding

identification, the scribe cautions the narrator against overindulging in memory which is "...playing tricks on you. Watch it or you'll be

lost. Something like this could push you into the abyss." Memory, the scribe further warns the narrator, must not be trusted too much: "It is faithful only to the extent that we are faithful to it." But trifled with, it becomes imaginings. Because of its apparent vulnerability, memory sometimes "lets itself be devoured by imagination," the scribe tells the narrator, adding, though, that he likes "both, but separately." Yet, in spite of its self-evident shortcomings, the scribe nevertheless tilts towards memory: "That is the true kingdom of man."

From the scribe's rambling about memory emerges a two-fold design. One is to keep the narrative suspense of the story; the other is to demonstrate both the possibilities and the limitations of memory, particularly in its implicit relatedness to imagination.

"What do we really know about how we relate to our memories?" asks the scribe. "They are so personal, so undefinable. Where am I more real: in my memory or yours? Where am I more alive?" Wiesel answers these epistemological queries by conjuring up a fearsome image set in a kind of a verbal tableau vivant supported by commentary. The narrator is exposed to a picture of children looming in the dark:

Always in the dark, we watch them play together surrounded by the charred letters of the sacred scrolls; we listen to them as they recite the beautiful stories of the Torah; we hear them laugh. Would you like to hear them laugh, sir? ...You mustn't be annoyed with us, we are not rich. But the children love us because we love them. Nobody else does. That is why they come and play here, and study here, and take refuge inside the scrolls. Do you hear them? Ssshhh, don't say a word, you'll frighten them. Hey kids, be careful! The parchment is fragile and sick as well, do you hear me? Be careful!

The tension between memory and imagination sustained throughout the story is not resolved either at the narrative level nor at the philosophical level. The duality between the two faculties remains suspended.

Both Hava's testimony and Wiesel's story obviously draw on memory. But whereas Hava's testimony is not fashioned in a literary design, Wiesel's story is cast in an allegorical art-form. He brings to bear on the

text Western culture and the Hasidic tradition — both filtered through the vision of his camp experience. And yet, the questions

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relating to Hava's text also apply to Wiesel's story. At what point does the witness-bearer become the interpreter of his own experience? And its corollary: Does his interpretive account of the experience have historical validity, in addition to human value?

Obviously, the positivist historian will not use "The Scrolls Too Are Mortal" as an ancillary resource. However, the historian who seeks to integrate into his inquiry the inner truth of the event will find in Wiesel's story not only probability in the Aristotelian sense but also a truth that transcends empirical inquiry.

In a repartee with a certain Rebbe, Wiesel addresses himself to the issue of poetic truth in literature under siege and its aftermath.

'What are you writing?' the Rebbe asked. Stories, I said. He wanted to know what kind of stories: True stories. 'About things that happened?' Yes, about things that happened or could have happened. 'But they did not?' No, not all of them did. In fact, some were invented from almost the beginning to almost the end. The Rebbe leaned forward as if to measure me up and said with more sorrow than anger: 'That means you are writing lies!' I did not answer immediately. The scolded child within me had nothing to say in his defense. Yet, I had to justify myself: Things are not that simple, Rebbe. Some events do take place but are not true; others are, although they never occurred.

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5. Hava K. *Archival Documents*, Yad Vashem, Tr. from Polish.

6. Elie Wiesel, *A Jew Today*. New York: Random House, 1978, pp. 71-82.

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