TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

Essays by
College and University Teachers

Samuel Totten, Paul R. Bartrop,
Steven Leonard Jacobs

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Foreword by Hubert Locke

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Samuel Totten dedicates this book to the blessed memory of three wonderful individuals and noted Holocaust scholars/educators—all of whom died far too young but still left a legacy of great significance—Harry James Cargas, Judith Doneson, and Sybil Milton.

Paul R. Bartrop dedicates this book to the man who has done the most to stimulate his interest in teaching about the Holocaust and conveying its truths to future generations: Elie Wiesel.

Steven Leonard Jacobs dedicates this book to the more than 150 members of his own family who were themselves victims of the Holocaust, but especially to his own grandparents Leo and Ella Jacob who did not survive and to his father Ralph Albert Jacobs who did.

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Foreword

Hubert Locke

The essays in *Teaching about the Holocaust: Essays by College and University Teachers* edited by Samuel Totten, Paul R. Bartrop, and Steven Leonard Jacobs offer readers unusual insight into the personal backgrounds, motivations, academic experiences, pedagogical emphases, and teaching methods of a representative group of second-generation Holocaust scholars. These are the individuals who have followed in the footsteps of Yehuda Bauer, Raul Hilberg, Franklin Littell, George Mosse, and Richard Rubenstein et al., all of whom continue the task of probing and interpreting the catastrophe that befell European Jewry between 1939 and 1945. The various accounts are of interest for several reasons.

While all the contributors set out to pursue careers as teachers, none began their career with the intention of making the Holocaust a major field of study. For some, in fact, it is an interest that has developed quite late in their careers. Only one of the contributors recalls the Holocaust as a topic of conversation in his family during his adolescent years and only one writer experienced the war itself. Born, with two exceptions, after World War II had ended, these are writers whose conscious recollections are of post-Holocaust events—the Suez crisis, the capture of Adolf Eichmann, the Six-Day War in the Middle East. Those who are Jewish recall experiences of antisemitism while their non-Jewish colleagues recount confronting problems of racism, but for all of them, the Holocaust is history—an event outside the realm of their immediate experiences. Their accounts are the more interesting in part because the Holocaust, except for the several who are children of survivors, is not a history that affected them directly or personally.

The compelling nature of that history—how it has impacted and influenced their academic work and their personal lives, how they go about their efforts to impart knowledge and interpret the meaning of the Holocaust to the succession of students (high school, undergraduate, and graduate) who come under their tutelage—is at the core of their reflections. In the course of their recollections,

we have the benefit of reading the views of scholars who have been at the center of some of the fiercest debates in Holocaust Studies (e.g., Christopher R. Browning on the intentionalist-functionalist controversy), whose teaching has defined the reception of the Holocaust in their homeland (e.g., Paul R. Bartrop), and who have helped to shape the way in which the Holocaust is taught and remembered by young people in the nation that was at the center of the tragedy (e.g., Hanns-Fred Rathenow). We also hear from those who have rejected consistently the term "Holocaust" to describe the fate of the Jews of Europe (e.g., Zev Garber). What we discover from these varied accounts are some of the reasons why the Holocaust continues to have enormous sway among younger scholars, over a half-century after the end of World War II.

When reading these essays, it is simultaneously difficult and essential to remember that they discuss a field of academic inquiry that is barely three decades old! The difficulty stems from the fact that the study of the Holocaust is currently such a vast intellectual endeavor—courses, programs, departments, and degrees are offered in colleges and universities across the United States, in Canada, the British Isles, Europe, and Israel. So vast is this effort, in fact, that it is astonishing to note, as several contributors do, the "nonexistence of Holocaust Studies" as late as 1970. But precisely because it is a new field of inquiry, the tensions, controversies, and challenges that inevitably mark the emergence of new academic arenas of study and research are reflected throughout these pages.

Foremost among the controversies is the comparability issue—is the Holocaust a unique occurrence in history or another chapter (albeit perhaps, the most horrific one) in a long and tragic saga of genocides and other human tragedies? Are slavery, apartheid, and the bombing of Hiroshima "disrespectful comparisons to the Holocaust," as Aaron Hass would have it, or should the latter be seen and, perhaps, more important, accorded respectful treatment, even if they are not accorded equal rank on some scale of human suffering? This question goes to the heart of the objectives and methods that the instructor brings to the classroom setting, as well as the responses one is likely to engender, especially if teaching in schools that have heterogeneous student populations. No one, however, who offers a course in Holocaust Studies can escape confronting this issue, even if the school's student body is entirely homogeneous.

Teaching about the Holocaust also raises issues of contemporaneity. Distinct from the problem of whether the Holocaust can or should be compared with other events involving human suffering on a catastrophic scale, is the question of how to deal with the Holocaust and current situations or circumstances with which the Holocaust is presumed to have some relationship. This deals with the conundrum, as Stephen R. Haynes put it, of if and how Holocaust education fits into the study of "contemporary politics, both national and international." Here, one confronts such issues as the Holocaust and current episodes of anti-semitism in Europe and elsewhere as well as the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the latter instance, for example, if educators link the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel as it is commonplace to

do, students may well expect teachers to deal with popular and media-driven perceptions that make "Israelis into righteous Jewish victims under assault by 'new Nazi' Arabs, or Palestinians into 'new Jews' " (Haynes).

These questions and issues inevitably give rise to the problem of credibility—of who is an authentic interpreter of the Holocaust? Is the destruction of European Jewry a matter that cannot be taught apart from an intimate knowledge of Jewish life and culture in Europe before the annihilation began (David Patterson)? "What is gained or lost when the subject is taught by non-Jews?" (Haynes). Ironically, these same questions were raised a generation earlier in the university when the subject was slavery and the issue was whether Black Studies could be taught by other than black Americans. They continue to haunt new fields such as Women's Studies as well.

It should not be surprising also to find that a new field, struggling to locate itself in the vast intellectual arena that colleges and universities encompass, should seek to distinguish its efforts from other thematic or topical approaches to learning. Does Holocaust Studies claim its place in the academic galaxy on the same basis as Environmental Studies, Ethnic Studies, and Women's Studies? Is the case for Holocaust Studies a different or more meritorious one? Should the Holocaust be restricted to examination by historians, psychologists, sociologists, and the other relevant disciplines, or is it becoming an academic specialization of its own, with its own literature, theories, and methods of approach?

These questions of comparability, contemporaneity, and credibility are likely to remain unresolved in the near future, but their importance for every educator who is engaged in grappling with the Holocaust—whether as a topic in a course, as an entire course, or in a larger program of Holocaust Studies—is immediate and requires an earnest effort, at the very least, to find honest, defensible answers for whatever one chooses to do or say. In this regard, the chapters in *Teaching about the Holocaust: Essays by College and University Teachers* may prove to be of considerable help.

That said, one senses that the objectives in teaching courses on the Holocaust remain diffuse and, to some extent, unclear. Is it to honor the memory of those who perished (Hass)? To bear witness to what took place (Patterson)? To have a lasting impact on the way students understand their world (Haynes)? To combat racism (Geoffrey Short)? To build a better society and world (Nili Keren)? Several contributors reject the idea of teaching the Holocaust as moral education (Franklin Bialystok) or to prevent its reoccurrence (Patterson) while others imply this should be one of the principal objectives (Leonard Grob).

From Browning, Grob, and Rathenow, we get the most compelling grasp of what is, or should be, involved in teaching about the Holocaust. Browning sees the Holocaust as a "key event in modern Western and world history" and thus an opportunity to examine human nature, "the destructive potentialities of the nation-state and modern bureaucracy, [and] the dark underside of Western civilization and modernity." Grob finds that teaching about the Holocaust enlarges one's understanding of what he calls "the key issues": existential and essential

notions of human nature, the problem of evil, the failure of education and of Enlightenment notions of progress and human perfectibility. Rathenow is the most specific (and it is interesting, in one respect, that the greatest moral clarity should come from the one contributor whose country was the initial perpetrator of the Holocaust). He considers Holocaust education an essential part of political education in Germany (and, by extension, in Western society); a way of developing what he terms civil courage in young people who must be taught to resist the tendency toward totalitarianism in the modern world.

Finally, there is the matter of "Holocaust Studies" per se. Each of the contributors to this volume has made a substantial contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust itself but not all of the contributors are engaged in Holocaust Studies as an emerging new field of academic inquiry. Some are scholars who bring the theory, literature, and methods of their disciplines to bear upon an investigation of the Holocaust (e.g., Browning, Nechama Tec); others are in the forefront of what is an effort that is beginning to take on its own academic shape and substance. Robert Skloot, for example, through his work in the arts, reminds us of the capacity of these forms of human endeavor to both nourish and challenge us, even when their theme is as dire as the Holocaust. Equally, Stephen Feinstein has also made major contributions to our understanding of the Holocaust from the perspective of the arts, but as an historian of Eastern Europe, he has been in the forefront of efforts to place the Holocaust in the larger context of modern genocides. Whatever the position from which one approaches the demanding and consuming task of teaching the Holocaust, one will find in these essays a sense of the particular obligations that rest on all those who, in Patterson's words, "seek the fire in the ashes."

Introduction

Samuel Totten, Paul R. Bartrop and Steven Leonard Jacobs

Teaching about the Holocaust: Essays by College and University Teachers is comprised of personal and pedagogical essays about Holocaust education by educators/researchers across the globe.

The genesis of the book was inspired by Carol Rittner and John K. Roth's *From the Unthinkable to the Unavoidable: American Christian and Jewish Scholars Encounter the Holocaust.* In this volume, such noted Holocaust scholars as Harry James Cargas, Franklin Littell, A. Roy Eckardt, Michael Berenbaum, Alice Eckardt, Richard Rubenstein, and others reflect on their encounter with the Holocaust and that which led them to dedicate their life's work to wrestling with, and thinking, writing, and teaching about the Holocaust. The stories are moving and thought-provoking, and the insights are illuminating. In a review of the Rittner/Roth volume, Samuel Totten (one of the co-editors of *Teaching about the Holocaust* wrote:

> The individual and collective essays of this book work their way into the reader's mind and heart. Not only is one left with ample food for thought about a host of vitally significant issues, but a deep appreciation for these scholars who are such passionate and caring human beings. . . .[A]ll have been moved in significant ways by others' suffering and have committed their professional and personal lives to delving into a world of darkness. Many are doing so in the hope that their own and other's efforts will raise a clarion call to the fact that one of the worst sins is to be a bystander when others are taunted, tortured and murdered because they are marked as "different"—or as less than human.
>
> This is a book that many readers, especially those who are engaged in study, scholarship, and/or activism in the fields of Holocaust, genocide, and human rights, will likely return to time and again. Not only will they revisit it for its many cogent discussions of critical issues, but [also] for

> the inspiration that can be gleaned from the struggles and successes inherent in the stories of these remarkable human beings. (1997, 144)

Ultimately, we hope that *Teaching about the Holocaust: Essays by College and University Teachers* serves much the same purpose for the reader as *From the Unthinkable to the Unavoidable* did *and* does for us.

This book, then, is an attempt to bring together the reflections of college and university educators who have been confronting the enormous responsibility of teaching—over a lengthy period of time—about the Holocaust. The task of such a pedagogical effort is far from being just another academic endeavor. Indeed, for all of those involved in this book, the teaching of the Holocaust has been an experience characterized by, at a minimum, in-depth study, passion, introspection, dedication, and the ardent need to educate students about what a seemingly civilized and advanced society in the heart of Europe in the midst of the twentieth century perpetrated against those they deemed "other."

In their essays, the contributors to *Teaching about the Holocaust* relate the genesis of their interest in the Holocaust and the evolution of their educative efforts. The latter includes but is not limited to their efforts to gain an ever deepening knowledge about the Holocaust, their initial efforts to teach about the history of the Holocaust, their on-going teaching efforts and the changes they have made along the way, and their involvement in research and publishing, among other projects. Holocaust education is at once probably the most challenging and the most fulfilling area of pedagogical activity, and those included in the present collection relate stories from their own lives in which both (fulfillment and challenge) have been present—sometimes simultaneously. The result is an arresting (and often, deeply moving) group of essays.

One of the initial aims we had in developing this book was to cast out as wide a net as possible among our academic colleagues in order to compile a testament of sorts that would connect with the experiences of Holocaust educators around the world. Be that as it may, readers are sure to wonder how the fourteen contributors to this book were selected.[1] It was not an easy decision to make. That said, the following criteria established a starting point in the selection process:

> The individual had to have been involved in Holocaust education for at least a decade, and, ideally, much longer than that
>
> The individual needed to be extremely well versed in the history of the Holocaust and ideally have published notable works in the field, and
>
> The individual had to be recognized generally as having made a significant contribution to some facet of Holocaust education.

Ultimately, those selected for inclusion in *Teaching about the Holocaust* represent a wide variety of disciplines (e.g., history, sociology, political science,

religious studies, literature, education, and the like); teach in diverse settings across the globe; have diverse religious backgrounds (e.g., Jewish, Christian and unaffiliated); and are both male and female. Do they represent all who do such important and outstanding work? Of course not. But they are outstanding representatives of the cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of the work itself. The upshot is that their selection was the result of extensive discussions among the editors of this volume, as well as their willingness to accept the invitation to write an essay.

All of the individuals whose stories appear herein have dedicated a great amount of time, energy, and commitment to learning and teaching about the Holocaust. Many have done so for well over twenty-five years. They are individuals who believe this history is imperative to learn *and* to learn from. They are also committed to teaching it in a manner that is historically accurate and pedagogically sound. That is not to say that all go about teaching it in the same way, let alone for the same or even similar reasons. Indeed, if the individuals represented in this book were involved in a debate with one another, undoubtedly there would be many disagreements over what should be emphasized (and why) when teaching this history. In fact, one of the more curious (and telling?) aspects of this book is the vastly different rationales and motives that individuals from different nations have for teaching this history.

What is also of special interest herein is the focus of research of each of the individuals and how and why they have chosen to pursue such a research agenda. As one might expect, the research interests of various individuals impact directly upon the focus of their teaching efforts.

In a project of this nature, it is not always possible to include all the individuals one would wish—nor is it always possible for those invited to participate to actually do so. In regard to the former situation, space constraints precluded inviting many noted Holocaust researchers/educators both in the United States and abroad to contribute an essay to this book. It is also worth noting that in order to offer a diverse set of stories and insights, an effort was made to seek individuals who have come to Holocaust education under vastly different circumstances and/or work in different settings. Thus, unfortunately, many individuals who would have been ideal contributors could not be included. As for the latter situation, among those who were invited to contribute essays but, for various reasons, could not do so were: Yehuda Bauer, David Ceasarani, Deborah Dwork, Annegret Ehmann, Yaffa Eliach, Raul Hilberg, Konrad Kweit, Deborah Lipstadt, and Michael Marrus.

Many people, including numerous contributors to this volume, have asked, "What is the purpose of this book?" It is a good and fair question. Among the contributors who asked that question, some were worried that they would be part of a project that was, or at least seemed to be, self-serving. Tellingly, that was a major concern of the co-editors as well. From the outset, our sense was that while the essays in the book needed to focus on the "personal"—that is, highlight the focus of the individual work of Holocaust educators—they also

needed to be instructive or, if you will, didactic in nature. More specifically, from the start, it has been our goal that readers would glean valuable insights from what such dedicated researchers/educators (e.g., the contributors to this book) have learned over the years in regard to tackling such a complex and terribly difficult and sorrowful topic in the classroom and beyond. It is also our hope that this book proves to be inspiring in that it encourages those who have not yet taught about the Holocaust to consider seriously the possibility of doing so. Furthermore, we hope that in reading these essays readers become more reflective individuals and educators. The point is, then, anyone who, more or less, merely wanted to relate his/her story and not provide key insights into the whys and hows and the strengths and weaknesses of how they have gone about teaching this history were not included in the book.

Each person who was invited to write an essay for inclusion in *Teaching about the Holocaust* received the following note (and directions) from us:

> The book will be comprised of personal essays in which noted college and university-level Holocaust researchers/educators from across the globe will delineate the genesis and evolution of their thought and work in this field.
>
> In relating their personal stories, each author is expected to discuss, among other issues: how he/she became engaged in Holocaust education; those individuals and/or works that have most influenced him/her, and how; the major focus of his/her research and pedagogical efforts; the barriers, successes and frustrations one has faced; his/her perception of the field, and where the field needs to go from here.
>
> In order to assure some semblance of continuity amongst the chapters, each author is to address the following questions: (1) What led you to initially begin thinking, teaching, speaking and possibly writing about the Holocaust?; (2) How has your thought, knowledge-base, pedagogy, and related efforts evolved over the years?; (3) What has/have your primary goal(s) been as you proceeded in this work?; (4) What individual(s) and/or scholarly work(s) vis-à-vis the Holocaust and/or the field of education has/have most influenced you in your work, and how?; (5) Has there been a persistent and consistent focus in your thinking and practice regarding Holocaust education?; (6) Has your work changed in practical terms as your thinking has evolved? If so, how?; (7) What are the major obstacles, if any, you've come up against in your work?; (8) What do you perceive as your major contributions to the field?; (9) What are your perceptions of the field of Holocaust education—where it has been, where it is, and where it appears to be heading?; and (10) What, in your mind, remains to be done in the field of Holocaust education?

Finally, each author was asked to provide a select bibliography of his or her own list of books, essays, articles, teacher's guides, curricula, etc., that he or

she perceived as being their most significant contributions to the field of Holocaust education. This list is located at the end of the volume.

In putting it all together, a picture emerges of a worldwide community of educators who are at once dedicated to their task, committed to their subject area, and anxious lest the promise of the future be corrupted by those who cannot, or will not, learn much-needed lessons from the totality of the Holocaust experience. Educators of the *Shoah* constitute a community that has identified an obligation to remember and to communicate; as the essays in this book show, while there is no single road to understanding, it is nonetheless such understanding that all strive to convey—and which is needed more than ever in the early part of the twenty-first century.

It has been a honor to work with so many intelligent, caring, and passionate educators. All of the contributors took time out of extremely hectic schedules to write and revise their essays for this book, and we are grateful for that.

None who read this volume and reflect upon its contents should conclude that it is definitive in any manner, way, shape, or form. Again, as editors, our hope is that those included will inspire others not only to join them in the work of Holocaust education at the college and university levels, but also continue the work long after they have stepped away. As should be equally obvious, there is *much, much* more work to be done in all of the academic fields represented in this volume: questions to be asked, research to be conducted and disseminated, and debate and discussions to be held. Those who have already engaged themselves in this work knew early on and know only too well that we, as the inheritors of this awful legacy, will never fully understand or know everything there is to know about the Holocaust: How it was that, for one brief and awful moment in history, specifically the years 1933–1945, seemingly well-educated, civilized human beings, products of the best education that Western civilization had to offer, could embark upon a program of such horror and, ultimately, extermination, using the bureaucratic, legal, religious, military, economic, and technological means at their disposal, to turn upon other human beings and seek their removal from the human race?

It is our belief that studying and teaching the Holocaust, ultimately, seeks to address fundamentally one question: What, in truth, does it mean to be human?

NOTE

1. As readers may have noted, only one of the three editor's essays, that of Paul R. Bartrop, is included in this book/collection. Both Samuel Totten and Steven Leonard Jacobs have published their own essays in their co-edited volume *Pioneers of Genocide Studies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002).

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1

A Little More Understanding: The Experience of a Holocaust Educator in Australia

Paul R. Bartrop

Like many teachers of history born in the 1950s, I came to the academic study of the Holocaust from somewhere else. When I was attending Melbourne's La Trobe University as an undergraduate in the early 1970s, and later, as a doctoral candidate at Monash University, there was next to nothing in the way of any Holocaust content in courses other than within broader German or European History programs. I entered the serious study of the Holocaust through the side door, so to speak; having completed a fourth-year Honors thesis in History on Sir Nevile Henderson, the British ambassador to Berlin from 1937 to 1939, I was looking for another Third Reich–related topic to offer up as a proposal for a possible Master's thesis. When interviewed about my possible candidature by the then-head of the History Department at La Trobe, the late Roger Joyce, he asked me what I was currently reading; as it turned out, I had just finished Stefan Lorant's memoir of his time in Nazi prisons during the 1930s, *I Was Hitler's Prisoner* (Lorant, 1935). "Good," said Professor Joyce. "We'll put you down for a topic that we'll call 'Nazi Racial Theories and Imprisonment,' or something like that. Applications close tomorrow, and we have to have something for you. We can change it later if we need to." And with that, my academic and personal life was to be changed forever.

At this time, in the mid-1970s, the specter of Holocaust denial (masked as "revisionism") had begun to raise its head in Australia, and my thesis supervisor asked me to investigate the deniers' claims concerning conditions of life in the Nazi concentration camps. This task not only provided the topic of my M.A. thesis, it also led to a lifetime interest in the history of the camps that culminated in the appearance of my *Surviving the Camps: Unity in Adversity During the Holocaust* (Bartrop, 2000), nearly twenty-five years later.

The aforementioned tasks also led to my first exposure to the issue of Holocaust denial and to those who preach it. In fact, it did not take too long before I was contacted by one of the leading distributors of denial material in Australia,

who began to provide me with what he kept calling "revisionist" literature and an oft-repeated request that I forward him the fruits of my research. He wanted, in short, to either recruit me to the denial cause or discredit my efforts once I offered something up. Either way, I would be required to enter into some sort of a quasi-academic relationship with him, something I was not prepared to do. I chose a third option, to which I henceforth have remained constant; after a few initial contacts in which I informed him of my position, I ignored him. My stance on the matter is simple: I will not enter into debate of any sort with Holocaust deniers, for to do so is to both give them a platform from which to spread their lies and sow their hatred, and to give them a respectability as though their point of view is legitimate.

I was not quite as clear about this then as I am now, but even at that time I was quite determined that I wanted nothing to do with these people whose position was so diametrically opposite my own. Moreover, I learned very quickly (and at first-hand) that such people are little other than intellectual bully-boys. The more I resisted, the more dogmatic, intolerant, and downright unpleasant my contact became. It was a valuable lesson learned by a young scholar of the Holocaust; that is, deniers are less interested in the processes of historical thought than in the "veracity" of their own arguments, and woe to any who harbor alternate views. My early experiences with the deniers showed them to be totalitarian and thuggish in their approach to scholarly discourse, an observation from which I have had little reason to retreat in the decades since.

What might be termed the "history scene" in Australian universities in the later 1970s was conditioned by the unspoken assumption that Australian-born academics might have expertise in certain fields based overseas, but that unless they could also teach about Australia their employment prospects were reduced. It was with this in mind that I was highly focused in my search for a Ph.D. topic that would combine my Holocaust work and some sort of Australian theme, as well as for a university department that could provide adequate supervision. After a lengthy investigation, I was fortunate in finding at Monash University, Dr. Geoffrey Spenceley, an economic historian whose twin interests were Australia during the Depression and the history of Nazi Germany's rearmament program. The dissertation that followed examined the Australian response to Jewish refugee immigration during the 1930s. It formed the foundation for a book I published much later, *Australia and the Holocaust, 1933–45* (Bartrop, 1994).

By this stage I was becoming known as a scholar of the Holocaust in an academic environment where the Holocaust was taught in only a few places—the universities of Melbourne, Sydney, and New South Wales standing as pioneers in this regard. My own history had not provided any clues that the study or teaching of the Holocaust (or Jewish history generally) should become my life's work. I am an Australian of very long pedigree; my great-great grandfather, James Bartrop, arrived in Australia as an English convict during the 1830s; his son Robert was a red-dirt farmer in central Victoria; Robert's son, William,

was a professional soldier in the Australian Army prior to and during World War I; and his sons, including my father Donald, variously fought Germans, Italians, and Japanese during World War II. My family history is crowded with the iconic code words of the Australian past: Van Diemen's Land, Gallipoli, Tobruk, Borneo, New Guinea. Only a change of government in the very early 1970s saved me from adding Vietnam to that list.

The Bartrop family does not, to the best of my knowledge, have any "battle honors" related to the Holocaust experience; the Jewish history of my family is very different from that of many members of the Melbourne Jewish community, which takes it as a matter of pride that over half its number is comprised of Holocaust survivors or their descendants—the largest such Jewish population, per capita, of any diaspora community in the world. But many (possibly most) Australians, and many Australian Jews, are unaware that there were Jewish convicts on board the First Fleet, that group of eleven ships that sailed into Sydney Harbor and founded the first permanent settlement of Europeans on January 26, 1788. There was a Jewish presence at the very birth of the Australian nation, a fact that has meant traditionally that Jews have never been viewed as outsiders to quite the same extent as other groups that have arrived later.[1] And not only that; there have been constant comings and goings within the Jewish community across the two centuries of modern Australian existence, translating—in my family's situation—to numerous cases of Jews and non-Jews marrying in and marrying out, and of conversion taking place in both directions. As a Jew, I have a particular interest in the Holocaust, but it might well have been just as much my sense of *Australian* identity as *Jewish* identity that led me to track down the Australian record during the Holocaust and to have developed an accompanying expertise in other facets of the Holocaust experience—and then to teach it.

Putting aside these considerations about my own background, I think it is important to point out that over time the Holocaust has become an inescapable part of Australian popular culture and of awareness about the twentieth century. It just will not go away. Each year Australians are exposed to an increasing number of Holocaust-related television documentaries, feature films, background reports, and news items. The 1990s, for example, saw numerous aspects of the Nazi period reappearing before the Australian public. In Adelaide, committal proceedings were heard against three men charged with war crimes against Jews in Eastern Europe, though in all cases it was found that there was not sufficient evidence to mount a successful case against the accused. Leaders of right-wing and antisemitic political groups, such as the Australian Nationalist Movement and Australian National Action, were jailed for various racially inspired crimes, ranging from bombing to physical assault. The Gulf War saw a spate of firebombings of synagogues, Jewish schools, and kindergartens reminiscent (in the words of one Jewish leader) of the *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass), as well as antisemitic daubings and attacks on worshippers walking to or from Sabbath services. Holocaust denial, increasing since the 1970s, now attracts

adherents from a younger generation who seem to be confused as to the veracity of the accounts upon which their parents were raised. Swastikas and Stars of David are used to grab attention on book covers and magazine articles, and projections of barbed wire or bullet holes are employed as backdrops to reports on war crimes trials, racial vilification legislation, and World War II. And this is to say nothing of the increasing conflation of the Jewish people with Israel and the accompanying media and popular categorization (and often, condemnation) that follow.

All this notwithstanding, for much of my early teaching life, Holocaust education in the universities received something of a low priority, and I had to make my own opportunities if I was to draw students' attention to both the reality and the meaning (such as I could) of the Nazi assault on humanity. Thus, at Deakin University, from time to time I dropped aspects of the Holocaust into my classes when teaching already-established courses such as "War and Modern Industrial Society" and "Economy and Society in Europe, 1914–45" (during which I prepared two electives, "The Holocaust" and "Resistance and Existence in Occupied Europe"). I adopted the same approach at the Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education, in a compulsory core course on Modern European History and at the University of South Australia in "Conflict and Compromise in Europe." The pinnacle of my efforts was reached with the successful introduction of my course "Comparative Genocide Studies" (about which more later). At other times, I managed to insert elements of Holocaust education when teaching about antisemitism, as in, for example, "Race Relations in Australia," "Racism in Contemporary Australia," "Social Issues in United States History," and "Britain at War in the Twentieth Century," or in courses about the history of immigration.

It was really only in the 1990s that serious teaching of the Holocaust began to take place in Australian universities, which is of course lamentable for a number of reasons—foremost being that there had been previously little interest shown in what was viewed as essentially a sectarian issue that would attract only a narrow student clientele. The most obvious counters to such a position are, of course, the intrinsic ones: the need to remember the experience of those who were killed, the moral lessons the Holocaust has for modern society, and the very historicity of the Holocaust period. At no time in Australia, however, had the popular consciousness ever considered that the *Shoah* could be a matter of *Australian* concern, which was—and remains—one of the motifs inspiring my work. My efforts to draw the attention of Australians to this aspect of their history have been met with only a lukewarm response. For example, although my book *Australia and the Holocaust* was reviewed by almost every major newspaper in the country, it aroused next to no interest in government, bureaucracy, education (other than Jewish education), or the popular media. It is as if the Australians really just "don't want to know"; colleagues of mine who have also looked at the Australian story during the Holocaust have reported the same sense of indifference concerning the reception of their work.

My written and educational endeavors carry a pretty unpleasant message for many Australians, that suggests nothing less than a form of Australian complicity in what is arguably the greatest outbreak of radical evil of all time. It is interesting to note that practically every history of twentieth-century immigration policy in Australia starts in 1945, as if to assert either that there was no immigration policy beforehand or that the period since 1945 has been such a massive success that whatever came before does not bear revisiting. In recent years, with an ongoing "dumbing down" of Australians, the knowledge people have of their history is becoming both duller and weaker. Jews are increasingly being seen as foreign or alien, Jewish topics are being marginalized, and the very notion that Australia had any role to play during the Holocaust, either during or after, is being dismissed as an issue of any relevance to the "mainstream." It is almost as if the Holocaust, along with many other issues that should be of similar concern to Australians, is in the process of disappearing down a memory hole. Fewer Australians are reading history books, fewer still are enrolling in history courses at university and high school, and far more are satisfied to get all they need to know from tabloid television. Already we are seeing signs of a particularly unfortunate apathy toward current events overseas that is all too reminiscent of the 1930s; our journalists, moreover, do not help through their own bias or ignorance of the stories they cover. (By way of example, it took Australians an inordinately long period—several months, in fact—before they learned that the Russian war with Chechnya was taking place in a land that had been fought over for the last two centuries or that the people there were Muslims.) The Holocaust would soon fade from public view in Australia were it not for the Jewish community, the neo-Nazis and deniers, and a few academics and teachers.

The only consolation we can take—and it isn't really all that much of a consolation—is that the Holocaust has had a better "run" than more recent genocides (Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia, Sudan, Tibet). Awareness of these has been raised only through sound-bites and talk-back radio, to be forgotten when the next item of noteworthy news has surfaced. The impact of this malaise was expressed no more clearly than when one of Australia's foremost Jewish leaders was questioned in 1993 on what we should be doing about the tragic situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. " '*We*' should be doing nothing," he replied. "It isn't *our* problem. The Jews of Bosnia have been rescued." That single statement, from one who should have known better, spoke volumes.

The innocence—I'm reluctant to say "ignorance"—of Australian students is best illustrated through reference to a couple of anecdotal incidents that left a lasting impact on me as a teacher of the Holocaust. In the mid-1980s, when teaching in the rural-industrial La Trobe Valley region of Gippsland, in eastern Victoria, I entered my freshman History class one morning wearing a *kippah*, as I habitually did at certain times of the year. (It was around the time of Passover on this occasion.) I was somewhat into making statements in those days, and I didn't think it hurt to expose the students to something of the world

outside their own experience. There was a long silence from the students at first, until one asked why I was wearing a "party hat." Upon explaining the spiritual and liturgical purposes of Jewish men wearing a *kippah*, a measure of appreciation appeared to spread through the room, and I thought I had provided the class with a piece of knowledge they could take with them when they left that morning. My expectations were short-lived, however, when a student of Italian-Catholic background said she was confused; she realized I was a religious person, but I was wearing my exotic apparel too early: It was only Monday, and Holy Thursday was later in the week, after which we have Good Friday; shouldn't I be waiting until then before I "got all religious"?

A second example of student innocence came in the mid-1990s, when I was invited by the Catholic Students' Society of the University of Adelaide to address them about the Holocaust. A survivor of Auschwitz was also going to speak at that time. Unfortunately, the gathering was advertised across the university, and news of the lecture was picked up by antisemitic and neo-Nazi groups that came in substantial numbers to hear my talk. My topic concerned the need to combat Holocaust denial, and I revealed to the students some of the tactics employed by the deniers. In the ensuing verbal brawl I had with the antisemites in the audience—a brawl that was for me most unexpected—I gave as good as I got. The Catholic Students' Society members were traumatized. Nothing had prepared them for the viciousness of the deniers' attacks, and as things heated up, the president of the society, a Vietnamese medical student, informed the deniers that if they persisted with their personal attacks against me she would be compelled to call security and have them removed. With this, they turned against her; she was a "gook," a "slant-eye," bringing her "Communist ways" into Australia and subverting "our" democracy. This provided the Catholic students with a very valuable lesson to which they might never otherwise have become aware; that Nazis are not just antisemitic, but also racist, bigoted, and (by their actions and other comments) sexist, as well.

Holocaust education in Australia has lagged behind other places in the world by virtue of what may be termed a national fondness for historical self-indulgence; the desire to read the past only from a patriotic viewpoint, seeing Australian history as nothing but one success following another. In 1993, one of Australia's greatest historians, the controversial and influential Geoffrey Blainey, made the comment that his generation "was reared on the Three Cheers view of history. While the convict era was a source of shame or unease, nearly everything that came after was pretty good" (1993, p. 11). For opponents of this idea, said Blainey, "the very opposite is preached, especially in the social sciences." He termed this the "Black Armband" view of history, according to which

> The multicultural folk busily preached their message that until they arrived much of Australian history was a disgrace. The past treatment of Aborigines, of Chinese, of Kanakas [that is, Pacific Islanders, usually

> [Melanesians], of non-British migrants, of women, the very old, the very young, and the poor was singled out. (1993, p. 11)

From this, he argued that:

> Anyone who tries to range over the last 200 years of Australia's history, surveying the successes and failures, and trying to understand the obstacles that stood in the way, cannot easily accept the gloomier summaries of that history. Some episodes in the past were regrettable, there were many flaws and failures, and yet on the whole it stands out as one of the world's success stories. (1993, p. 15)

Ultimately, Blainey found that he could arrive at but one conclusion: "Most young Australians, irrespective of their background, are quietly proud to be Australian. We deprive them of their inheritance if we claim that they have inherited little to be proud of" (1993, p. 15).

Here we see the essence of the "Black Armband" critique of history: Focus only on the positive, downplay the negative, and do nothing to make Australians (particularly young Australians) feel anything other than pride for the achievements of their ancestors. Doing this, of course, would mean overlooking the racism, violence, persecution, sectarianism, xenophobia, and downright meanness on which so much of the nation's past is based.

To generalize, it could be said that a majority of non-Jewish Australians have a particular way of looking at the Holocaust. Along with many other episodes of history, which do not have their roots in "Australian Studies," the tendency has been for Australians to shrug their shoulders, say "it happened 'over there,' " stereotype the main players according to racial or national criteria, ascribe blame or praise accordingly, and then drop it. As a teacher of the Holocaust, I have been confronted frequently with comments forcing me to justify my choice of topic, including, at various times, the following: "You don't need to study the Holocaust; it's not *your* problem"; "Why do you Jews continue to harp on the Holocaust? It was all so long ago"; "Look, we know they suffered, but now you should drop it. Just forgive and forget"; and (an interesting one, for those who don't know who I am) "Jewish things are for Jews—and you're not a Jew, you're an Australian."

Having said that, and recognizing that I live in a country that traditionally has never placed a high value on the personal empowerment and social development that education can bring, what motivates me to do what I do? Australians have for decades been prejudiced against education in the humanities and social sciences, but the reluctance until very recently to confront—or even consider—the Holocaust of the European Jews has been indicative of something that runs even deeper in the Australian psyche: moral apathy. The sad fact is that insularity and geographical remoteness have fostered an attitude whereby a majority of Australians traditionally have not concerned themselves over such matters as

foreign political or socially driven disasters. This underwent its first major alteration only in 1999, when Australians saw the need to pressure the federal government into doing something concrete to assist the people of East Timor in their struggle to avoid genocide at the hands of Indonesian-backed militias. So far, however, this had been by far the exception to an otherwise very straightforward rule: Political tragedies affecting large numbers of people overseas are someone else's problem. The apathy ("I don't care") and ignorance ("I don't know") that have characterized attitudes among the carefree people of Australia provides its own motivation for those, like me, who have seen something of the world beyond my nation's shores and realize that we are not alone on this planet. Accordingly, I have devoted myself to helping Australians see that it is in their own interest to embrace what the story of the Holocaust can tell us about ourselves and each other.

One of my intellectual heroes is the French historian Marc Bloch, a veteran of World War I who became a member of the French Resistance in World War II, and was captured, tortured, and shot by the Nazis in the summer of 1944. While still free in 1941, he tried to make sense of what was happening to the world around him and wrote a reflection on what value historians can be to the societies of which they form a part. In a famous statement he wrote what has become my *raison d'être* as a student, scholar, and teacher of the Holocaust:

> When all is said and done, a single word, "understanding," is the beacon light of our studies. Let us not say that the true historian is a stranger to emotion: he has that, at all events. "Understanding," in all honesty, is a word pregnant with difficulties, but also with hope. Moreover, it is a friendly word. Even in action, we are far too prone to judge. It is so easy to denounce. We are never sufficiently understanding. Whoever differs from us—a foreigner or a political adversary—is almost inevitably considered evil. A little more understanding of people would be necessary merely for guidance, in the conflicts which are unavoidable; all the more to prevent them while there is yet time. (1954, pp. 143–144)

Ultimately, this is why I do what I do; through precision of language, respect for difficult theories, a rigorous insistence on the clarity of detail, and a careful application of the historian's skills when approaching complex questions, I seek nothing more than the kind of understanding of which Bloch writes. I seek it in my own writing and teaching; I seek it in the course syllabi I compose, in the projects I set for my students, and in the discussions we have both in and outside the classroom. Without the quest to achieve understanding, when it comes down to it, for what are we here?

Before this begins to sound too much like a polemic, it might be worthwhile to reflect for a moment on where the failure to understand can lead. In 1980 an Australian author, Thomas Keneally, published a fictionalized account of a true Holocaust story that he titled *Schindler's Ark*. An immediate bestseller, it was

a massive success in Australia and was rushed into print overseas as *Schindler's List*. For a while, copies were hard to come by; rapidly, the success of the book saw it go through a number of reprints. After some delay, I received a call from a local bookshop to tell me that the copy I had on back order had arrived, and could I come in to get it. Later that day, as I paid for the book, I commented to the attendant that I was pleased to get it after having been obliged to wait for a such a new publication. "Sure," said the clerk with a smugness bred of an inverted sense of cultural superiority, "that's because suffering's back in style." This person, I concluded, had no idea of what he was saying, nor did he have a clue as to what he was selling. I realized that I was being served by an intellectual barbarian and left the store (which, coincidentally, closed down a few months later).

Looking back from the perspective of more than twenty years, I am convinced that it was because of this incident that I determined to remain in Holocaust Studies and to make Holocaust education my life's work. If a flippant comment of such destructive nastiness could fall so quickly from the lips of a bookshop attendant, there was clearly no quality of thought sustaining this young man's understanding of the world around him. Rationalizing to myself that this type of thinking was the result of a shoddy education, I became determined to rectify it in my own work. Ever since then, no student who has passed through any of my classes has left without having had their thinking capacities tested in matters requiring a critical appreciation of profound human issues. I am known as a serious teacher of serious subjects, and I revel in it; not because I enjoy it, but—ultimately—for my own safety's sake, and for that of my children. I am convinced absolutely that the ongoing struggle for the human mind will be fought to a finish within the next half-century and that it must be decided to the benefit of the individual rather than the collective. I do not want to teach (or even less, tell) students *what* to think; that is up to them. But in the very first place they should be encouraged to use their brains, to reflect rather than accept, and to do so from the perspective of information and understanding. Not doing so, in my view, can create the intellectual preconditions for a society that devalues freedom of thought and expression and the pursuit and admiration of excellence; it is the kind of attitude that can lead to an acceptance of simple solutions to complex questions.

As an educator of the Holocaust, I have not been prepared to stand by and do nothing while this happens. It has been said by those who know me well that I am a person driven by inner demons; if that is true, I should say that the demons wear Nazi uniforms, shout destructive slogans, and are both unable and unwilling to think for themselves. And it is to their eradication that I have dedicated my professional life.

How do I do this? It is all well and good to make statements about why the Holocaust is taught, but a teacher must have an achievable goal and a means to reach it, if he or she is to be effective in the classroom. As an historian, my methodology in teaching the *Shoah* has invariably been chronological in nature;

only once the students have a narrative understanding of the period do I break it into thematic discussions of the issues. I have always proceeded from the premise that before we can begin to discuss anything we must first be equipped with both an adequate language and an appreciation of at least an outline of what happened. Hence, I begin all my classes in Holocaust Studies and Genocide Studies by examining the essential contours of whatever it is we are dealing with: dates, places, people, key events, concepts, and the like. I emphasize the need to comprehend these things thoroughly, and I continually go over the chronology in order to make sure that the students are familiar thoroughly with where we are and at whom we are looking. Sometimes this has its frustrations: It is a truism that good teachers can only be successful if they move as quickly as their slowest student. But this can be turned to advantage if we treat part of every classroom session as a revision of the previous lesson, prior to moving on. In short, students receive from me the most complete grounding in a topic I can give; then, and only then, do we branch out into analyzing the issues. I cannot abide a person who claims to speak with authority on matters on which they know little or nothing.

Given this, what actually do I teach when teaching the Holocaust? Actually, I begin by not looking at the Holocaust, or the Nazis, or Germans, at all. Rather, my preferred attention at the beginning focuses on the nature of the Jewish communities in Europe that were to be destroyed; of what were they comprised, how they saw themselves relative to the Christian communities surrounding them (and sometimes, into which they were welcomed as co-citizens), and what the relationship had been between these same Christian communities and the Jews in the decades leading up to the arrival on the scene of the Nazis. From there, the chronology and geography takes over: From Germany, we move to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland in 1939, Western Europe, Operation Barbarossa, the ghettos in Poland, the extermination camps, and Hungary. From this crescendo of murderous destruction, we then consider our themes: resistance (in camps, forests, and ghettos, with a focus on the Warsaw Ghetto), the last stages of the war, liberation, war crimes trials, displaced persons, and Holocaust denial.

It is a big curriculum, and sometimes, of necessity, it must vary; outside events often intrude, and the teacher must be prepared to be flexible. Once, for example, I dabbled in Holocaust literature toward the end of the course, but found that as an historian not only was I not up to it, but also that neither were the students. I had to adapt. In the mid-1990s, when I was teaching in Adelaide and that city was the location of the aforementioned three war crimes trials, I had to leave out part of my curriculum in order to discuss what was happening in the courtroom as well as dealing in our classes with the incidents of antisemitism (which hit the tiny Adelaide Jewish community around the same time).

Teaching the Holocaust can be an immensely rewarding experience, but every teacher must know that he or she cannot do it all, all the time. The most we can hope to achieve is that our students will come out of a course with a deeper understanding of what things had been like at that time. I do not think that any

single course could cover every base, though that never stops me from trying. It is here, of course, that my own biases and priorities take over. I encourage students to pursue issues of their own interest outside the classroom and have always derived enormous satisfaction when undergraduates become postgraduates and colleagues in Holocaust teaching.

All in all, the experience of the Holocaust can bring to modern society an awareness that massive evil exists in the world, and that the onus is on all of us to ensure that it be resisted before it gets out of hand. Such evil, of the kind the Nazis perpetrated, is not an unstoppable force, and I try to teach that we are not helpless in the face of it. As I ask in the classroom, What are we to do? Do we need to change the world? The answer, of course, is that we do not; but as I say, if each of us realizes how we can make our little corner of it a better place than it is now, and if all our efforts can link up over time, every one of us can appreciate each other more. And that, as I see it, is a great start.

Why teach the Holocaust? A number of reasons suggest themselves, most notably that the Holocaust provides universal lessons for today; that we must know about the Holocaust in order to try to ensure it never happens again (even though it has, in various ways, on numerous occasions since 1945); that we must know about the Holocaust in order to guard against those who would deny it; and that finally, the Holocaust shows us that we must safeguard our freedoms and our democracy and our sense of fair play, if we are to make any progress in the world.

There is no doubt that we can learn from the Holocaust. It was simultaneously a denial and a reversal of the promise for humanity that the Reformation, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and other great movements in Western society and education had been building toward for the previous two millennia. As the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn, himself a survivor of the Holocaust, put it:

> If you take the Ten Commandments, from the very first which starts: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt"; here you had people who set *themselves* up to be Gods, to be masters of life and death, and who took you *into* Egypt: into an Egypt of the most bizarre and most obnoxious kind, and all the way to creating their own set of idols, to taking God's name in vain, to setting generations at each other so that children dishonored parents.
>
> Certainly they murdered. Certainly they committed robbery. Certainly there was a great deal of coveting, of envy, involved in it. In other words, you had here an outbreak of the very opposite of everything that civilization had been building towards. It was a denial of God; it was a denial of man. It was the destruction of the world in miniature form. (Cited in Gilbert, 1986, p. 826)

The Holocaust was unprecedented in that the entire structure of a society was mobilized for evil and not found wanting. Mass murder became a civic virtue,

and modern European industrial civilization, through this, made a determined effort to self-destruct. If the contemporary world is to learn anything from this, it must be that those who were killed died at the hands of other human beings who were not opposed successfully owing to ignorance, apathy, and fear. If we are to develop a satisfactory appreciation of the Holocaust's lessons today, if it is not to become simply another branch of history about which movies are made. We must all stand back, have a look at the facts of the situation, and ask ourselves "what does this mean to *me*?" At the moment of our asking, we are confronted automatically with our understanding of where we stand in relation to the rest of society—and to what our responsibilities and obligations should be both toward society and toward the state.

A lifetime of researching, writing about, and teaching the Holocaust has had an impact upon me the likes of which I could never have contemplated if I had moved into another area of academic pursuit. More than in any other historical area I can envisage, I have traveled, in a variety of senses: geographically, intellectually, and pedagogically. Geographically, my work in the Holocaust has led me to see the world in a way that most Australians could never even dream. Through research and conference attendance I have traveled frequently to Europe, Israel, the United States, Canada, Africa, and the Pacific, as well as all over Australia. It was through my Holocaust work that I entered the mainstream of Jewish Studies, a development that was crowned by my being elected president of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies in 1991. Intellectually, I have broadened my outlook on the world and what makes people behave as they do, though I still have far more questions than answers. Pedagogically, my method has altered considerably, from that of a doctrinaire young teacher terrified of departing from his notes to one who is comfortable allowing the students to initiate the terms by which they will learn and running with their agenda rather than relying on a single prescribed way of doing things.

I have also broadened the scope of my teaching, and this would have to stand as the principal area of development my approach has taken as the years have unfolded. It must be borne in mind, I think, that I am first and foremost an historian, and even though much of my work must of necessity be interdisciplinary, it is primarily from the perspective of history that my work proceeds.

Given this, I have come to look at the Holocaust from within the broader historical context of what was once known as "man's inhumanity to man." Whilst still basing much of my interest and teaching on the Holocaust, I have come to consider additional cases of massive destruction of humans by other humans, placing the Holocaust on a continuum of genocides throughout the twentieth century. My course "Comparative Genocide Studies," introduced while I was teaching at the University of South Australia during the mid-1990s, was one of only a handful of such courses in Australia at the time, a fact of which I am proud—though tragically, funding cutbacks wrought by a federal government interested in saving money meant that the course was terminated the minute I left the university at the beginning of 1997.[2]

The course was resurrected subsequently in a unique environment, a Year 10 classroom at Bialik College, a Jewish day school in Melbourne. As the only year-long genocide (*sans* Holocaust) subject in a secondary school anywhere in the world (to the best of my knowledge, as of this writing), it is effectively the same university course, modified. Nearly 150 15 and 16 year olds have elected to run the intellectual and emotional gauntlet of this course since it was introduced in the late 1990s, and many have seen it as a life-changing event. A number have gone on to study law, history, and political science at university after their high school graduation.[3]

My teaching of the Holocaust has also evolved in areas other than subject matter. I now employ much more film in my curricula than previously, using both documentaries and movies. I made a conscious decision to do this after concluding that the moving picture has become the chief stimulant of the imagination for a generation less attuned to written literature (of all kinds) than mine was. I especially welcome documentary footage in color; decades of color television have socialized contemporary student populations into thinking that black and white images only record the experience of black and white people and that an air of unreality surrounds their activities. As imaginations narrow, adaptive measures have to be taken by teachers if they are to convey their messages successfully, and that is why I have no difficulty with utilizing all means at my disposal. Color documentary footage is one way (as a student was once overheard saying, "Hey the Brownshirts *really wore* brown shirts!"); motion pictures are another, not necessarily because of their story line—which can be dissected, discredited, or discussed in the classroom—but, if done well, because of the sense of place or period they can convey to a student body that might otherwise envisage the events being examined from the perspective of incorrect (or no) perceptions.

For me, anything that can be used to assist a student's understanding is at least worthy of consideration. As my teaching has developed, I've learned that some things work, and others do not; but to be an effective teacher one must keep an open mind to the prospect of new initiatives and be prepared to adapt accordingly.

None of these reflections emerged overnight. Many of what I would consider my greatest successes came from disappointing failures, and a trial-and-error process certainly characterized my early years as a teacher of the Holocaust. And yet I had a lot of help to guide me along the way, most notably with regard to the research and writing aspects of my development. As the child of a disabled World War II veteran who was unable to work not long after I turned 4 years of age, I attended schools that were not well endowed and were more tailored to technical education than the professions. Yet one of my teachers when I was about 14—Lucy D. Meo—kindled my interest in research and writing and lived the dream through the production of what is still considered a first-rate work of Australian history, a book entitled *Japan's Radio War on Australia 1941–1945* (Meo, 1968). It was assumed generally, in the environment in which I was

raised, that the writing of books was something "other people do," and to some degree the same was true of higher education: Only three students (of which I was one) moved on to La Trobe University after high school graduation.

Since then, I have been influenced by the contributions of many outstanding scholars in my quest for understanding. Several, such as Sir Martin Gilbert and Elie Wiesel, have had an impact on me through their writing; others, such as Franklin H. Littell, Herbert Hirsch, Yehuda Bauer, Richard L. Rubenstein and Konrad Kwiet, have helped to shape my thinking through the written word and personal contact over a lengthy period. Importantly, even those with whom I have had disagreements on key issues, such as W.D. Rubinstein and Inga Clendinnen (who, incidentally, presented the first History lecture I attended as an undergraduate), have helped to frame questions I have asked (or rejected) over the years.

In the quest for understanding, I think it is incumbent upon all teachers—generally, as well as teachers of the Holocaust—to be honest in their recognition of from where their ideas and inspiration come. Their students, in the long term, need this recognition; without it, the continuity that scholarship of this type demands breaks up, and students can only see themselves and their endeavors individually, rather than as part of a much bigger picture of which they are but a link in a lengthy chain. The enterprise is one for all generations, not simply for those whose families were affected.

We are never sufficiently understanding, as Marc Bloch said; but that must not stop us from trying. The Holocaust shows us that the stakes are too high to abdicate that responsibility to future generations. And so I engage in research, I speak to people, I write—and above all, whenever I get the chance, in any environment, to any audience—I teach.

NOTE

1. This is discussed in-depth in the following, among many others: Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History*, vol. 1, *1788–1945* (Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991) and Suzanne D. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora* (Sydney: Collins Australia, 1988) (a revised American edition of this was published in New York by Holmes and Meier in 2001). Those with an interest in exploring further the story of the Jewish convicts should consult J.S. Levi and G.F.J. Bergman, *Australian Genesis: Jewish Convicts and Settlers, 1788–1850*, rev. ed. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002). For an interpretation of an early intercommunal colonial relationship involving Jews, see my article "Living Within the Frontier: Early Colonial Australia, Jews, and Aborigines," in Sander L. Gilman and Milton Shain (eds.), *Jewries at the Frontier: Accommodation, Identity, Conflict* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), pp. 91–110.

2. For additional information regarding the fate of this course, see Paul R. Bartrop's "Comparative Genocide Studies at the University of South Australia: A Report on a Course," *International Network on Holocaust and Genocide*, 12(3) (1997): (10–12.)

3. The Holocaust is not taught as part of the Genocide Studies course, as it forms the

major component of the compulsory Year 10 Jewish Studies curriculum at Bialik College. The two thus complement each other, and I frequently employ the Holocaust as a point of reference for the students' appreciation of each new topic we consider in Genocide Studies.

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2

Emerging from the Shadow

Franklin Bialystok

FAMILIAL EXPERIENCES

I have lived in the shadow of the Holocaust all my life. I was born in Lodz, Poland, in 1946, the only child of parents who were married in Warsaw and escaped to Soviet-occupied Poland after the German invasion. They spent the next seven years under Soviet rule, including twenty months in a Soviet labor camp near the Arctic Circle, followed by almost five years in Uzbekistan. They were repatriated a year after the war ended, and I was born several weeks after their return. All members of their immediate and extended families were killed. I was born without grandparents; I never knew my four uncles, five aunts, and numerous cousins. We escaped from Poland in 1947 with forged visas to Mexico, but after landing in New York en route, we were denied further passage. Awaiting deportation back to Poland, we were able to immigrate to Canada, on the condition that my father accept employment as a farm laborer. Eventually, my mother and I moved to Toronto. My father joined us after suffering an accident on the farm.

When I was 3, I went with my mother to a summer camp sponsored by the Jewish Federation in Toronto. Most of the other women were survivors of the ghettos, camps, and forests, and I grew up with the vague memory of them telling their stories. Many of these people became our friends, and as is common to the experience of survivors, those families became our family. The children were taken everywhere; there was no money for babysitters, and, even had there been, it was not part of the culture.

My childhood was spent to a large degree with people with tattoos. We spoke Polish at home and with friends, I learned Yiddish at the Borochov School, and didn't speak English until I entered kindergarten. I was taught to hate all things German, was told about my lost relatives, about my parents' lives before and during the war. Little was hidden from me. My father recounted how he had

learned after the war from survivors from his home town that his parents, then in their seventies, and his grandfather, who was about 100 years old, were deported from the ghetto in Dabrowa Gornica to Auschwitz. My mother learned from her best friend from Warsaw, who survived and immigrated to the United States, that her parents committed suicide in the ghetto rather than be deported. These and other stories were seared into my memory at a very tender age. In the past few years, as some of my parents' friends have died, I have learned even more about their experiences from their children. The Holocaust has been the subtext of my life.

Despite these early experiences, I grew up in a loving and healthy atmosphere. I became acculturated thoroughly, my parents spoke only English to me once I had entered elementary school, and I felt myself to be a normal Canadian kid who was not estranged from my Canadian friends. As with many second-generation children, especially only ones, my parents had great expectations and placed great demands on me, and loved me with unremitting ferocity. In some ways I disappointed them, I guess. As an adolescent, I was fun loving, unmotivated at school, and felt that while my family had been murdered, my own life was secure. By my late teens, I became detached increasingly from my family's tragedy.

REMEDYING A VOID: MY ENTRANCE INTO HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

After graduating with a B.A. in History in 1968, I traveled through Europe and Asia, including nine months in Israel, and was abruptly called back to Canada from India due to the sudden death of my father. Faced with this unexpected rupture, I had to reorient my life. I made two choices: first, to pursue a career in education; second, to marry Ellen, a woman from Toronto whom I had met on my travels. I obtained a B.Ed. with a specialist's certificate in History from the University of Toronto and was hired by the Toronto Board of Education to teach at a prestigious school, North Toronto Collegiate, in 1972. I taught history there for fifteen years, everything from Zinjanthropus to current events. I was given free reign by my department and was able not only to develop new curricula, but also to persuade my colleagues to adopt some of my initiatives. These included analyzing primary resources, integrating literature and the arts into the study of history, and adopting a global and antiracist approach. Gradually, my work became known widely in the Toronto Board, the largest in Canada, and, by 1982, I was giving workshops to teachers across the province of Ontario on antiracist education, non-Western history, and the Holocaust.

In April 1978, I was walking down the corridor to class, when two of my students came up and asked me if I was watching the new miniseries, *Holocaust*. They were surprised when I replied that I was not. I had read the previews and understood that this was a sugar-coated Americanized vulgarization. As we entered the class, the discussion continued, with the other students joining in. One

of them asked, in all innocence, "Was it that bad?" I was dumbstruck. Were they that naive? How could they swallow this pabulum and be so manipulated into thinking that this was somewhat realistic? Didn't they know what had happened to the Jews? It was then that I began to reflect on my own life. I thought that I "knew" about the Holocaust and that there was little more to be gained by studying it. After all, I had imbibed the words of the survivors, and as a student and teacher of history, I knew the context, the geography, and the major stages of the Holocaust. I had never considered teaching about it, separate from the study of interwar Europe, perhaps because I had tacitly assumed that the Holocaust was common knowledge. But now, stunningly it was apparent that my unconscious assumptions were wrong. Why should a Canadian born in 1960 know anything about the Holocaust? And what about my own knowledge? In the next few days, we continued our discussion, and I patiently answered their questions. But the students were insatiable. They wanted to know more, so I trudged down to the school library to set up reading assignments and found virtually nothing on the subject. I decided to remedy this void and spent part of the summer break developing a unit of study with a fellow teacher.

For the next few years, the small unit on the Holocaust was the talk of the school. Students not taking the Grade 12 course in Modern Europe would skip other classes, or come in during lunch, and sit on the floor and radiators or stand in the corners. When I assigned reports on memoirs, I would receive them the next day. The common response was, "I couldn't put it down, I had to write about it." In the staff room, other teachers would call me "the Holocaust man" and relate that some students would want to continue the discussions with them. I was under no illusions about why this was happening. It was not because I was suddenly such a gifted teacher; the same students had slept or skipped classes in other courses that I taught. Rather, it was because this was real history. This was something that shook them to the core. They asked universal philosophical questions: What is human nature? What are humans capable of doing? How can people continue to face life after such horror? Why didn't people resist, or help, or protest? Ultimately, why did it happen, could it happen again, and could it happen in Canada? The study of the Holocaust touched a raw nerve. My students were curious, they read, they argued.

I recall that we were talking about the "disappearances" in Argentina in the late 1970s and of the antisemitism that fueled, in part, those outrages. One student, who had emigrated from Argentina, refuted the news. She had no difficulty accepting the horror of the Holocaust, but she could not accept that its shadow had permeated her native land. Another student denounced the Jews for not having accepted Christ; he sympathized with their fate, but proclaimed that they were consigned to Hell anyway. I seized upon these moments to introduce the history of Christian antisemitism into the course of study and the misconceptions and myths imbedded in such history. This was spellbinding information for most of the students, not to mention controversial. I was able to confront

them about their own preconceived beliefs, but was mindful throughout not to make them feel guilty or responsible for the actions over almost two millennia.

Over the years I have met former students who have told me how significant this study was in forming their knowledge of the event. Recently, I met a student who started to recite events that had taken place in class some twenty years earlier.

BROADENING MY EDUCATIVE EFFORTS

Our unit included a visit by a survivor speaker. To facilitate this, I called the Holocaust Remembrance Committee of Toronto Jewish Congress and spoke to Ruth Resnick, the staff person. This call was fortuitous. Having established a connection with the committee, the next year Ruth invited me to join the Holocaust Education subcommittee, a recently formed body made up of secondary school teachers whose mandate was to develop Holocaust education programs and to lobby for the inclusion of the Holocaust into the provincial curriculum. The subcommittee's founders were Alan Bardikoff, a doctoral student in psychology who was also education director at a local synagogue, and Harold Lass, an English teacher in the Toronto Board. I joined in 1980, a year after the group began. I've been a member ever since and replaced Alan as chair in 1988, for a three-year term.

I believe that the subcommittee is unique in Canada. While nominally an arm of the Jewish federation in Toronto, its composition includes non-Jews, and its activities have never been constrained, except financially, by the federation. Entering its third decade, the subcommittee has been in the forefront of Holocaust education in Canada. It organizes two annual student seminars, one for middle schools and one for secondary schools; an annual teacher seminar; and numerous workshops. Some of its members have written curricula for boards and ministries of education across Canada, on pedagogy in journals and manuals, and have spoken worldwide. I am honored to be a part of this group and to have contributed to its development.

From 1982 to 1987, I was actively involved in Holocaust education in Ontario while teaching at North Toronto. As a member of the education subcommittee, I lobbied the Toronto and North York Boards of Education, the two largest in Canada, to develop Holocaust materials. In 1982, each board agreed to support the writing and implementation of a Holocaust curriculum. I co-authored a three-volume work with the late Barbara Walther, another member of the subcommittee. It appeared in 1985 under the title *The Holocaust and Its Universal Implications*. Our work was interdisciplinary in design and was applicable for Ontario students in all grades and levels of secondary school, until 1999 when the secondary school curriculum was revamped radically. Two other members (Alan Bardikoff and Jane Griesdorf) wrote a curriculum for North York. The latter appeared in 1985 under the title *The Holocaust: A Unit of Study for Grade Nine English*. I coordinated the student seminars in those years, which

featured guest speakers including Leon Bass, a liberator with the U.S. armed forces, and Yaffa Eliach, author of *Hassidic Tales of the Holocaust*. My contact with Dr. Bass was especially rewarding. One year, we spoke to students in Toronto, Kitchener (a city near Toronto), and Vancouver. I was struck by his compassion and humanity and the remarkable connection he made with people two generations younger than him.

At this time, I was conscripted by other boards of education to give workshops on the Holocaust, with the support of my administration and colleagues at North Toronto. In 1984, the Toronto Board created a Holocaust Studies Advisory Committee, the only such entity in Canada at the time, which produced professional development programs for its teachers. In 1985, the Ministry of Education in Ontario included the Holocaust as a topic for study in two of its senior elective courses, after an extensive lobbying campaign spearheaded by Bardikoff. In that same year, the Holocaust and Education Memorial Centre was opened in the Jewish Community Centre. Some twenty thousand students and their teachers visit the Centre annually, view the video presentation, study the panels and exhibits, and listen to a survivor speaker. Members of the subcommittee have produced many of the centre's education materials. I, for one, wrote an historical overview for the centre. I published my first article on Holocaust pedagogy ("Holocaust Studies in the History Program") in 1986 together with papers by other members of the subcommittee.

In this period, I was consumed with learning about the Holocaust. In preparation for our curriculum, Barbara and I read voluminously. The historical analyses of Raul Hilberg and Lucy Dawidowicz and the works of Elie Wiesel especially influenced me.

Hilberg's monumental study, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961), related the depths of bureaucratic murder. Indeed, it was extremely instructive for me in understanding the totality of state-sponsored murder. Ultimately, it allowed me to further complicate students' thinking by examining the notion of responsibility and the impact of the enterprise on "ordinary" citizens.

When I first started teaching the Holocaust, Dawidowicz's controversial work, *The War Against the Jews* (1975), was my primary secondary historical source. It was formative in persuading me of the intentionalist aims of Nazi leadership. Prior to reading Hilberg and Dawidowicz, I had not known about the Jewish Councils and had not considered the thorny issue of Jewish collaboration with the Nazi occupiers. My initial acceptance of the intentionalist argument was greatly modified as I read more nuanced works about the fractures within the Third Reich regarding the fate of the Jews and the complexities regarding the opportunity for resistance.

Wiesel spoke to me on so many levels—personal, universal, theological, ethical. After a few years of teaching about this history, I decided to incorporate Wiesel's works, especially *Night*, into the curriculum. This was somewhat extraordinary, since students were rarely exposed to memoirs in history courses. This allowed the students to explore a number of questions including the notions

of the incomprehensibility of evil, "choiceless choices," and Wiesel's dictum that "at Auschwitz, not only man died, but the idea of man."

Throughout the early 1980s, I attended local conferences and lectures, but my education took a great leap forward in the summer of 1984 when I attended the six-week teachers' seminar at Yad Vashem. I was immersed totally, listening to teachers such as Yehuda Bauer, Emil Fackenheim, and Israel Gutman.

Professor Bauer's seminars explored the intricacies of a number of topics, including resistance, Jewish rescue, and Jewish collaboration. With respect to collaboration, for example, I came to understand that the actions of the Jewish Councils in the ghettos depended upon the nature of the leadership, the economic utility of the ghetto inmates, and geographic factors.

Professor Fackenheim opened my mind to the questions of motivation and ethics, questions that I still grapple with, and will never resolve. The most fundamental question is: Why did they (the Nazis) do it? Fackenheim's response is both succinct and exhaustive—because they wanted to. In reading, listening, and discussing Fackenheim's views, we were opened to the Nazi *Weltanschaung*—their world-view.

Professor Gutman demonstrated how rigorous scholarship and intellectual modesty make for a compelling combination. Interestingly, Professor Gutman's own experiences had a tenuous connection to my life. He was born in Warsaw, a member of the Hashomer Hatzair Zionist movement, as were my mother and her brothers. In addition, he was a member of my cousin's kibbutz in Israel and was a friend of my aunt, who had been a partisan in Vilna. I only learned of these links after the course, and it was only recently, at a conference on Polish-Jewish relations during the war, that I was able to share this information with Professor Gutman.

My free time was spent in Yad Vashem' s library and archives and my evenings with course readings. I recall Randolph L. Braham's *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary* (1981), a work of tremendous scope and scholarship, and Gitta Sereny's chilling study, *Into That Darkness* (1974), based on interviews with Franz Stangl, the commandant of Treblinka. I had come to Israel believing that the course would fill some gaps in my knowledge. I was greatly mistaken; there was so much to know, and I knew so little.

LESSONS LEARNED IN EASTERN EUROPE

Two years later, I was chosen to participate in the first Holocaust and Hope Study Tour, sponsored by B'nai B'rith Canada. A dozen teachers involved in Holocaust education across the country went to Germany, Poland, and Israel. I was devastated by what I saw and learned in Poland. Returning to the country of my birth, where scores of my relatives had been murdered, I was unprepared for the protestations by our hosts that Poles were equal victims with Jews and that antisemitism was uncommon during the Holocaust years. It was my intro-

duction into the complexities of Polish-Jewish relations, a field that has become one of my major interests.

It was at Auschwitz/Birkenau, though, that my personal connection to the Holocaust was both shattered and framed. As I was walking toward the entrance of the former camp, I was talking with an elderly American couple who had been inmates there, and had returned for the first time since the war. Inside the main camp, I was struck by how normal it all was. My world had not stopped as I passed under the infamous arch. To paraphrase Wiesel, the sky was blue, the birds were singing, it was clean and orderly. I asked the man whether this was the way he had remembered it. He replied: "I don't know; I never looked up." Aside from the fact that my question was incredibly fatuous, his answer was thundering. What he was telling me was that I could never know what it was like, that I was only a visitor to a site, a place that claimed some of my relatives, including my father's parents. At the end of the day, my colleagues and I were devastated emotionally.

In my childhood milieu, I had identified consciously with the victims through the memories of the survivors and had come to Poland assuming that that connection would be hardened with my visit. In fact, the opposite had happened. The only connection that I could feel was with prewar European Jewry. This bond was severed for me when the Jews entered the gates of the ghettos and camps. I could not identify with that. I was not at Auschwitz; I was at a museum. I was not in Birkenau; I was at the ruins of the largest killing field in history. I was a visitor to history but that did not allow me to become a participant. In 1986, the gates of Auschwitz and Birkenau had exit signs.

The tour, though, did reinforce some of my teaching strategies. Part of my pedagogical approach to the Holocaust was the categorical opposition to role-playing. Not only did my visit to the camps fortify that belief, but now I also understood that education could only take one so far into the abyss. Many teachers employ the strategy of "imagine if" in motivating their students to explore the feelings and experiences of the actors in that event. I strongly oppose this tack. We can't "imagine." Nor can we project. It may be helpful to understand discrimination in prewar Europe by discussing prejudice in our society, but, even if we project our worst experiences in North America, there is nothing that, fortunately, can replicate Auschwitz. This is not because the Holocaust was so terrible that we can never understand it. I fully agree with Bauer (1973), Saul Friedlander (1992), and others, that the Holocaust must be demystified. That said, the student of the Holocaust cannot experience; the student can only learn.

Since that first trip, I have returned to Poland several times for research and was the group leader of the Holocaust and Hope Tour in 1990. In 1993, I was part of the Canadian delegation to the fiftieth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. At that time, during our visit to Birkenau, I walked with my friend Manya Kay, with whom I had conducted teachers' seminars. She was an inmate there for a year and half, certainly one of the longest periods of incarceration of any Jewish survivor of the camp. It was her first return to the site of that

horror, and the courage she displayed that day has had a lasting impression on me. I was there most recently in 1999 with Ellen and our daughters, Sandra and Lauren. We spent nine hours in Auschwitz/Birkenau, were taken to some buildings normally off-limits to visitors by special arrangement, and I continued to learn.

MY STANCE IN REGARD TO HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

My approach to Holocaust education is quite simple. First, I believe in teaching content. I want to know what the students know before asking them how they feel. Students must have a solid grasp of the history of the period from 1919 to 1945, relative to their scholastic ability, before they can enter into a dialogue about moral and ethical issues. Within such a study, the following topics are imperative: antisemitism and racism, mass obedience, the stages of the Holocaust (legislation, concentration, mass murder), responsibility, rescue, and resistance. If time allows, I advocate an inquiry into collaboration, the role of the churches, the situation faced by women (both Jewish and German), liberation, justice, and the legacy of the event.

Second, I have never been an advocate of so-called "moral education" as it has been presented in our schools. Everything that we do has a moral compass, but it is my belief that we shouldn't teach our children in order to make them more tolerant, sensitive, or to strive for a higher ethical standard. I'm very troubled by those who propound this view. My first concern is who decides on the standard? Further, how can we possibly measure "morality"? How do we know that if we teach the Holocaust in order to inculcate tolerance and acceptance of the "other" that it pays off? Will today's student resist or oppose the arrest of their neighbors in twenty years because of their beliefs or race, ethnicity, or some other predetermined criterion, because the student read *The Diary of Anne Frank?* Surely, we hope that our students will be more accepting of diversity, but that's not why we teach. If we are to teach the Holocaust, we do so because of its overwhelming impact on our world and because it pushes students to consider the dilemmas about human behavior. If that makes our students better people, and again, according to whose standard, that is wonderful, but that is not something that can be measured.

Third, it is imperative that we distinguish between the universal and unique aspects of the Holocaust, as we should for all history that we teach. It's well established that the study of the Holocaust can be an effective vehicle in anti-racist education in Canada, a position that I've espoused in my writings (Bialystok, 1995, 1997, and 1999a). There is a place to discuss discrimination, propaganda, obedience, and other related issues. Educators are making an egregious error, however, when they use the Holocaust as a template to teach, for example, about the slave trade, or the genocide of native peoples, or the necessity of reinforcing "democratic values." I have been at odds with some educators in the United States over this since the early 1980s. There is a limit to univer-

salization; Rodney King is not the Holocaust, nor are caricatures of blacks and Asians on television. I'm not against the teaching of these events but I fervently believe that they must be learned about on their own merits. Comparative history is valid only insofar as the student has enough ammunition to discern the peculiarities of the events compared.

When I gave my first talk on Holocaust education to teachers in 1982, I titled it "Why Not Teach the Holocaust?" a rather awkward title. I outlined reasons why I felt that the Holocaust should not be taught. These included some of the points above, including the temptation to mirror the experience of the participants. I added that one should not embark on this road in order to make non-Jews feel more sympathetic to Jews, or to understand the insecurity of Israel, or because of personal attachment, such as, in my case, being the child of survivors. My initial motivation for teaching the Holocaust was because the exercise pushed my students' thinking about the history itself, the historical process, the nature and meaning of progress, education, and civilization, and made them reflect on human nature, but not for personal vindication.

It is natural that educators in each country teach about the Holocaust through their nation's lens. In Israel, there has been an emphasis on resistance and "martyrdom," although that approach is waning, while in the United States, some educators accentuate the need to participate in public life. In Canada, we strive to learn about the Holocaust, to a small degree, from the perspective of Canadian immigration policy and the government's treatment of ethnic minorities. Our history has not been kind to Jews and other groups. We had the worst record of admitting Jewish refugees between 1933 and 1948 of any country outside Europe (Abella and Troper, 1982). We incarcerated Japanese Canadians in concentration camps in World War II and then stole their property, and we imprisoned some Italians, Germans, and Ukrainian descendants during both wars. Our immigration policies were overtly racist until the 1960s. Not only is it important to teach this history to our children, but also it demands that we have homegrown curriculum materials.

Years ago, in discussing my curriculum with a member of Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO), a major Holocaust organization in the United States, I was asked why did I bother, why was I "reinventing the wheel" when I could just adopt the FHAO curriculum? Notwithstanding the fact that this work is invaluable in many ways, and is being used by some Canadian teachers, this attitude is presumptuous and ethnocentric. Like the other Americans, we have our own history and our own needs. Consequently, we need our own research and resources.

BROADENING, EVEN FURTHER, MY FOCUS AND REACH

In 1987, I took a leave from the Toronto Board of Education when I was invited to the University of Oxford as a visiting fellow at St. Antony's College and at the Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. While I did not work with

Holocaust scholars, I joined the Centre for Polish-Jewish Studies. I attended the International Conference on the History and Culture of Polish Jews in Jerusalem where I became acquainted with scholars from Poland especially, and became involved with the annual POLIN (a meeting whose title has a double meaning; in Yiddish, it means "Poland" and in Hebrew its means "We are here," which is to say that Poland was the home of the Jews). At the end of my year in Oxford, I took part in the conference "Remembering for the Future." This exposure to the academic world, which already had begun in Toronto, led me to reconsider my position as a teacher. I wanted to step beyond the boundaries of the secondary school classroom, so I resigned from the Board and turned to two related areas—antiracist consulting and continuing my formal education.

As a consultant, I have worked with boards and ministries of education in Canada and Jewish organizations as a speaker and writer. I have spoken to thousands of teachers, administrators, and students in several countries, including India and Australia. The Holocaust Remembrance Committee's education subcommittee held two summer institutes in 1989 and 1990, during which I co-taught with Myra Novogrodsky of the Toronto Board and Mark Skvirsky of Facing History. In 1997 I wrote an education kit for the Department of Education in Nova Scotia that focused on Elie Wiesel's memoir, *Night*. In 1999 I wrote a curriculum guide for educators in Ontario on Independent Research Topics in History for the local Holocaust Education Centre. I am currently consulting with the Ministry of Education on the inclusion of the Holocaust in the new curriculum in History and the Social Sciences and remain active in the education subcommittee.

With the encouragement of my family and colleagues in the academic world, I enrolled at York University in Toronto in a doctoral program in history in 1991. My major field was Canadian history, and my minor field was modern France, Italy, and Germany. My doctoral research dealt with the impact of the Holocaust on the postwar Canadian Jewish community. I chose this topic for several key reasons. It was a connection to my past and an opportunity to learn about the world that my parents and other survivors encountered when they arrived here. It brought together my study of the Holocaust with my interest in postwar immigration and ethnic adaptation in Canada. The research opened the hitherto neglected field of study of the postwar Jewish community. Finally, it allowed me to explore the Holocaust from the perspective of collective memory of an ethnic minority in a multicultural society. While at York, I taught the Holocaust in the Division of Humanities and developed a course on the Canadian response to the Holocaust. I completed my dissertation in 1997, and a revised version (*Delayed Impact: The Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community*) was published in 2000. Currently, I'm teaching Modern European History at the University of Toronto and the Holocaust at the University of Waterloo. My new research deals with the Jewish community in Poland at the end of the war.

I have found the change from secondary to university education stimulating.

Teaching a full course in the history of the Holocaust has allowed me to explore issues in greater depth and to focus on topics that interest me, including the motivation of the Nazis, collaboration, the impact on Jewish thought and faith, and justice. My students can explore a wider range of subjects, such the "grey zone" that Primo Levi (1988) described in *The Drowned and the Saved* and the impetus to commit mass murder by "ordinary men" as described by Christopher Browning in his 1992 work *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland.* Nevertheless, my pedagogic approach remains the same, as when I taught high school, because the fundamental questions raised by the study of the Holocaust are no different for students irrespective of age.

Holocaust education has exploded in the past generation. While many teachers have taken on the challenge, most have not. Those who have taken the plunge, have, in the main, been rewarded, as I was, by student response. Despite the progress that we've witnessed, our task remains formidable. New teachers enter the profession every year so we need to retrace our steps and improve our training. That's why the subcommittee is now working with students in faculties of education in Ontario as well as with established educators. Some of the old obstacles are still in place. Teachers lack the knowledge and the time to learn; boards lack the finances for professional development. Financial cutbacks strain the education system, and an overstuffed curriculum is further stressed as other minorities lobby for the story of their victimization to be told. The most important challenge is the difficulty of teaching this history.

We also face new barriers. Hate on the Internet has a mesmerizing effect on some young minds. Reading skills seem to have dropped and student indifference to human suffering, we are told, has increased. Survivor speakers, our most potent resource, are dwindling, and students, who have difficulty understanding anything that is not immediate, are being asked to analyze events that occurred when their grandparents were children. Yet, we are in a much stronger position than in the 1970s. We have a large body of experienced and dedicated teachers. Our subcommittee, for example, has members who have been there since 1997. Further, the field is immense. Whereas the school library in 1978 was bare on the topic, there is now a plethora of resources, including the Internet.

Despite the advances in accessing information, my pedagogic prescription has been consistent for twenty years—stress information, distinguish between what is universal and what is particular, and challenge the students. We live in a society that is becoming increasingly multiethnic, especially in Canada. Toronto has been designated the most cosmopolitan city in the world. In one school, students at home speak sixty-eight languages. Some of them may have been the victims of racism and some members of their families may have been the victims and even the perpetrators of genocide. We also run the possibility that a small minority may be Holocaust deniers. We need to be sensitive to these situations and respond appropriately. I offer a few guidelines to teachers: avoid generalizations and absolutes; acknowledge that this is difficult history to study; find a

support network. The last suggestion is increasingly feasible with the development of Holocaust education centers across the country.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

My involvement with Holocaust education has had three sources. The first one is my personal connection to the event, although that was not the reason why I chose to teach it. Second, my mandate as a teacher was to impart knowledge of that history, and to do so through research, discussion, and argument. Third, as a student of history, I continue to learn as much as I can about the Holocaust, not only to better understand my world but also for the sheer love of learning. Overall, it's been a tremendous adventure.

I have been fortunate to work with scores of dedicated teachers and scholars and to be part of a network of individuals who have contributed immeasurably to developing the minds of a generation of students. In so doing, I have come to learn about myself, my parents' lives, and the history that I share with humanity. As my odyssey progresses, so does my emergence from the shadow of the Holocaust.

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Writing and Teaching Holocaust History: A Personal Perspective

Christopher R. Browning

I came to the field of what we now call Holocaust Studies through a series of indirect and, at least in part, fortuitous events. I began my graduate study in the fall of 1967 in the field of modern French history. As with all young American males in reasonably good health at that time, I lived under the shadow of the Vietnam War and the military draft. On the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I also lived in an environment of antiwar sentiment that I fully shared. I was just beginning my M.A. thesis on a very obscure topic—the disarmament policy of Eduoard Herriot at the 1932 Geneva Disarmament Conference—when President Johnson announced that draft deferments for first year graduate students would not be renewed the following academic year. My draft board confirmed that, as a 23-year-old male, I would receive a conscription notice as soon as my student deferment expired. When I asked for what they were still granting draft deferments, the answer was for teachers—then in short supply in the Chicago area—who were deemed indispensable by their employers.

Desiring to neither face jail as a draft resister nor immigrate to Canada, but determined not to wait passively for conscription and the great likelihood of military service in Vietnam, I finished my M.A. thesis while simultaneously applying for every conceivable teaching job. Several weeks before the expiration of my student deferment, I was hired to teach at St. John's Military Academy, a private school for 7th through 12th grades, in Delafield, Wisconsin. Though not unappreciative of the irony of avoiding the draft by teaching at a military academy, I sought more congenial surroundings the following year. This was still one year before the great 1970 job market crash in history positions at the college level in the United States, and I was in fact offered a temporary position as instructor at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania, though I had only a M.A. degree, one year of graduate study, and no college teaching experience. Two years later, in 1971, I would be replaced by a student of Gordon

Craig with Ph.D. in hand from Stanford University. I was to teach numerous introductory sections of Western Civilization, but my new employers also asked if I could teach an upper-level course in modern German history. Having had a single semester of modern German history as an undergraduate, I naturally replied "of course."

I then began reading feverishly and, on the recommendation of a former professor, included Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Study in the Banality of Evil.* I knew nothing of the controversy that surrounded the book, particularly the bitter reaction to her evaluation of the Jewish councils. I was ignorant of the overall topic but nonetheless fascinated by the book and especially by Arendt's notion of the "banality of evil," which seemed all too applicable to the American misadventure in Vietnam at that time (Americans were then past the era of Kennedy's "best and brightest" and into the Nixon gang of Haldeman, Erlichman, Mitchell, Colson, et al., though Watergate had not yet burst upon the scene). My interest had been hooked by the topic of the Nazi assault upon the European Jews in its own right, however, not just in its relation to current events. I resolved to read further.

Arendt frequently referred to a book by Raul Hilberg, entitled *The Destruction of the European Jews*, which I ordered. To my dismay, the book turned out to be 800 pages of minuscule print in double columns, and I despaired of ever finding time to read it, given the pressure of preparing for my first year of college teaching. At that point, however, I contracted a severe case of mononucleosis with complications and was bed-ridden for a month. Hilberg's book was lying on the side table by my bed. When I felt well enough to read, it was the only book I could reach. I began to read and could not put it down. Quite simply, it was this book that changed my life.

If Arendt had been fascinating, Hilberg was to me both electrifying and overwhelming. He convincingly portrayed the Holocaust as a vast bureaucratic and administrative process employing a cross-section of German society, not the aberrational accomplishment of a few demented individuals. The Holocaust was, in short, historically important—not just a freak, pathological event. I could no longer conceive of returning to the study of French diplomatic history after discovering that the destruction of the European Jews could be a legitimate topic of academic research and analysis that probed the most basic questions about human behavior. I met with my M.A. thesis adviser, Robert Koehl, who in addition to specializing in the study of the Nazi SS also supervised graduate thesis topics in both European diplomatic history and imperialism. I told him of my desire to switch fields and undertake my Ph.D. thesis on some aspect of the Nazi persecution of the Jews. As I already had experience in diplomatic history and Koehl specialized in the SS, I suggested a thesis on the "Jewish experts" of the German Foreign Office who were the official liaisons to Eichmann and the SS. His response was mixed. It was a good dissertation topic, he said, but I should realize that there was "no professional future" in this area of study.

At the time, of course, his warning quite accurately reflected the nonexistence of what we now call Holocaust Studies. No courses were taught on American campuses. Virtually the only venue for offering professional papers on the topic was the conference on "the Holocaust and the Church Struggle," which had its first meeting in 1970. *Yad Vashem Studies*, appearing once a year in Israel, was the only journal devoted to its study. Scholarly monographs on the subject occupied scant bookshelf space. I would be specializing in a topic that for all practical purposes had none of the infrastructure that provides academic legitimacy and standing in American higher education.

Despite his warning, Koehl advised me to go ahead with the topic if I really wanted to do so. The most important thing was truly to be interested, whatever the dissertation topic chosen, and there was no fate worse than trying to write a dissertation if one's heart was not in it. I did go ahead, and Koehl proved to be a most supportive and careful adviser of a dissertation clumsily entitled "Referat D III of Abteilung Deutschland and the Jewish Policy of the German Foreign Office, 1940–1943." It was a case study that focused on how and why a small group of bureaucrats—who were trained as lawyers and joined the National Socialist Party (NSDAP) as "bandwagon" Nazis in the spring of 1933—became involved in mass murder.

Most of my dissertation research was done in the Political Archives of the German Foreign Office in Bonn. But I noticed an obscure reference in Gerald Reitlinger's *The Final Solution*, according to which the head of the Foreign Office *Judenreferat*, Franz Rademacher, had been tried and convicted in the Nürnberg-Fürth state court in 1952. I sought permission to see the court records and discovered that Rademacher had appealed his conviction, fled the country while out on bail, eventually returned to Germany, and been tried a second time. The second verdict had then been appealed by both prosecution and defense. A third trial was pending, and the records would be closed until the entire judicial process—now in its twenty-first year!—was concluded. With exquisite timing for my career, however, Rademacher died in the spring of 1973, and I was able to consult the judicial records after all, including many volumes of testimony that opened up a whole new dimension in my study of the Foreign Office "Jewish experts" about which I could not have written relying solely on their impersonal documents and files.

Rademacher's timely death enabled me to become—to the best of my knowledge—the first historian of the Holocaust to make extensive use of German court records for a detailed monographic study. One month's hectic work in this single case brought to me the realization that awaiting any scholar with sufficient stamina and perseverance were literally mountains of hitherto untapped judicial records that would either supplement and give new meaning to the captured documents returned to the German archives or help fill the gaps where no documentation survived. For me, a new window into the world of the perpetrators had been opened. My dissertation would be just the beginning, not the end, of

my Holocaust research. People and their motives, as well as policies and their implementation, would be at the center of my work.

However, publishing the results of my research did not prove easy. My work focused on the bureaucratic and careeristic aspects of middle-echelon perpetrators, not the ideology and antisemitism of the top Nazi leaders. In 1975, Lucy Dawidowicz published her best-selling *The War Against the Jews*, in which the emphasis was just the opposite. While interest in the Holocaust was clearly picking up in the mid-1970s, I was not exactly swimming with the historiographical tide that prevailed in the United States at that time.

In my initial attempt at publication, the manuscript was indeed rejected by Princeton University Press. In a scathing and venomous, four-page, single-spaced evaluation, the anonymous reader who recommended against publication argued that any work that did not focus on the SS and antisemitism was inconsequential and concluded that my case study of Foreign Office bureaucrats "cannot be regarded as providing any contribution, no matter how minor, to scholarship in the field." The anonymous reader, who was, in fact, easily identifiable by style, tone, and interpretation, publicly excoriated the historical profession for ignoring the Holocaust while simultaneously attempting to destroy the careers of young scholars who had the temerity to tread on her turf or disagree with her interpretations.

A second press, Holmes & Meier, to which I sent the manuscript, consulted Raul Hilberg, who recommended for publication. He gently warned, however, that I tended "to analyze motives quite a bit. That is a tricky business." He advised that I reassess and rewrite some of those passages "more cautiously." When I wrote Hilberg to thank him for his suggestions and support, he modestly replied that many had helped him in the early stages of his career, and he hoped I would have the opportunity to do likewise for others someday. In addition to Hilberg's support, I had the exceptional good fortune to receive help from two other senior scholars very early in my career. George Mosse, a member of my dissertation committee at the University of Wisconsin, was consistently supportive. And by virtue of his advocacy, I was approached by Yehuda Bauer and made my first contact with the Israeli community of Holocaust scholars. All three of these men became not just helpful colleagues but valued, lifelong friends.

The publication of my first book, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*, in 1978, coincided with a phenomenal growth of interest in the Holocaust. On the academic side, successive Holocaust conferences were held in New York in 1975 by Yehuda Bauer and Nathan Rosenstreich, and in San Jose, California, in 1977 and 1978 by Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton. Moreover, the Western Association for German Studies, which subsequently evolved into the German Studies Association, met for the first time in the fall of 1977 and consistently offered a supportive venue for the presentation of Holocaust research from its very beginning. Outside the academic world a similar trend could be observed. NBC showed its "Holocaust" docudrama, President Jimmy Carter

formed the commission that eventually led to the creation of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and following the Holtzman legislation (which established the Office of Special Investigations or OSI to investigate suspected Nazi war criminals), the OSI began its work within the Justice Department. In 1977 David Irving also published his notorious claim that Hitler neither ordered the Final Solution nor even knew what was being done behind his back by zealous underlings until late 1943. As a publicity stunt, Irving flaunted the offer of an immediate one thousand pound reward for anyone who could produce the Hitler order.

Irving's claim of Hitlerian ignorance and innocence of the Final Solution was rebutted by Martin Broszat (1978). However, at the same time, Broszat advanced the argument that neither Hitler nor anyone else had given a comprehensive order for the systematic mass murder. Instead, he argued, that the Final Solution had emerged out of a sequence of events. The deportation of Jews eastward in the fall of 1941—envisaged as a prelude to expulsion into Siberia—had backed up when the Blitzkrieg against the Soviet Union failed. Killings initiated by local commanders to deal with the logjam of surplus Jews evolved into a program of total extermination that no one had ordered or planned beforehand. For Broszat, conception of a comprehensive program of mass murder followed escalating local improvisation.

The Broszat thesis opened up an academic debate on the decision-making process behind the Final Solution and the question of Hitler's direct role therein. It also offered me, as a young scholar who had done recent archival research relevant to the issue, the opportunity to make a serious contribution. Though I was in considerable sympathy with much of Broszat's general interpretational approach to the history of National Socialism, I could not accept his argument in regard to Hitler and the decision-making process behind the Final Solution. With considerable trepidation, I wrote a critical reply and submitted it to Broszat's own journal. Broszat promptly published it (Browning, 1981)—an act of academic integrity and graciousness that proved to be a turning point in my career. Henceforth, I was known to the growing circle of Holocaust specialists around the world, and various opportunities—extremely unusual for a young and relatively unpublished scholar from a small undergraduate institution of regional reputation—Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington—were open to me. In particular, I was first approached and then contracted by Yad Vashem in Israel to take part in their projected, multivolume *Comprehensive History of the Holocaust* by writing the volume on *The Origins of the Final Solution*. This connection with Yad Vashem in turn allowed me and my family to experience two extraordinary years living in Jerusalem, undoubtedly one of the most fascinating cities in the world.

While two decades of work on this volume for the Yad Vashem series is just now coming to conclusion (*The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942*), my research for that work allowed me to continue writing and publishing shorter pieces in two related

areas: a gradual refinement of my arguments over the decision-making process that led to the Final Solution on the one hand, and a variety of case studies of the perpetrators on the other. The former was a major topic of debate at three successive international conferences in Paris, Jerusalem, and Stuttgart between 1982 and 1984 (see Furet, 1989; Gutman and Greif, 1988; and Jäckel and Rohwer, 1985, respectively). At the Paris conference, I took the terms "intentionalism" and "functionalism"—originated by Tim Mason to identify the two current historiographical approaches to Nazi Germany—and applied them for the first time to the debate over Hitler and the Final Solution. In this debate I articulated a "moderate functionalist" position between the ultraintentionalist position of Lucy Dawidowicz that Hitler consciously aimed at the systematic mass murder of the Jews from the beginning of his political career in 1919 and the ultrafunctionalist position of Martin Broszat and Hans Mommsen that the Final Solution emerged through improvisation from below—without comprehensive decisions and orders by Hitler—in response to the thwarted expectations of Blitzkrieg victory and Jewish expulsion in the fall of 1941. I argued, on the one hand, that the Final Solution emerged out of a series of decisions taken in the particular circumstances of 1941 and was not simply the implementation of a premeditated grand design, and, on the other hand, that Hitler was very much at the center of this contingent decision-making process.

In hindsight it is easy to see that this so-called "intentionalist-functionalist" controversy was unnecessarily and artificially polarized around extreme positions that cried out for synthesis. But the scholastic qualities of that debate should not obscure our appreciation of two important consequences, namely the fruitful research that the debate stimulated and the fact that Holocaust Studies had come of age. As the subject of spirited debate in a series of international conferences, the academic study of the Holocaust had been accepted and validated by the historical profession.

The emotional intensity of the "intentionalist-functionalist" debate was subsequently eclipsed by the so-called *Historikerstreit*—a bitter dispute in Germany over the relativization and trivialization of the Holocaust triggered by the increasingly dubious publications of Ernst Nolte—in the latter half of the 1980s, but three important aspects of the debate over the decision-making process have continued to this day. One such aspect has been the ongoing debate over the timing of the decisions for the Final Solution, in which I have had the privilege of courteous and civil disagreement with Richard Breitman, Philippe Burrin, Christian Gerlach, and Peter Longerich among others. The second aspect of the debate over the decision-making process involves the relative roles of the center and periphery, in which a generation of younger German historians, in particular, has pursued a "neo-Broszatian" approach that downplays Hitler's role and emphasizes the piecemeal improvisations of local authorities. Arguments over whether key decisions were taken in this or that month of 1941 have been criticized as excessive quibbling. But in my opinion the issue of timing in 1941 is not simply a quibble over a few meaningless months. Because the situation

changed so rapidly over a very short period, it is rather an argument about the wider historical context that is essential to our understanding of why Hitler and the Nazis did what they did. And the debate over Hitler's role is not just the illusory search for an incriminating "smoking gun" but crucial to understanding how the Nazi system worked and hence how the leadership of a modern nation-state can harness its bureaucracy, military, and population to the enterprise of total genocide. These are not arcane issues.

A third aspect of recent scholarship on the decision-making process, which no one dismisses as a quibble, involves a deepening of our understanding of continuities. Though the "fateful months" of 1941 have, rightly in my opinion, been at the center of our attention, there is increasing consensus among historians that the emergence of the Final Solution cannot be understood without recognizing the crucial ties to two earlier developments out of which it evolved: first, the "ethnic cleansing" and ghettoization policies that the Nazis tested in their "laboratory" for racial experimentation in Poland, and, second, the preparations for the "war of destruction" against the Soviet Union.

In addition to the decision-making process, another focus of my research has been on the people involved in devising and implementing the Nazi policies of racial persecution and ultimately mass murder. I have pursued this subject through a series of case studies. Following my initial work on the "Jewish experts" of the Foreign Office, I have studied the military officers who shot the male Jews and "Gypsies" of Serbia, the motor pool mechanics of the Security Police in Berlin who designed and built the gas vans, the public health doctors of the General Government, the ghetto administrators of Lodz and Warsaw, and the occupation authorities in Brest-Litovsk. But clearly in my own career, one case study of Holocaust perpetrators has eclipsed all others, namely that of the "ordinary men" of Reserve Police Battalion 101 who cleared small-town ghettos and murdered Jewish villagers in the Lublin district of the General Government.

I came across the indictment of fifteen policemen from Reserve Police Battalion 101 while doing research in the *Zentralstelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen* (the German agency for coordinating the investigation and prosecution of suspected Nazi criminals) in Ludwigsburg near Stuttgart in the summer of 1987. I had first visited that institution when, following the Paris conference on "Nazi Germany and the Holocaust" in 1982, Raul Hilberg and I had independently concluded that we had to search the records of the Belzec and Chelmno trials for testimony concerning the initial construction of the first two Nazi extermination camps. Hilberg is a tireless and inveterate walker, and, in addition to finding the testimonies of Walter Burmeister and Stanislaw Kozak on the earliest days in Chelmno and Belzec respectively in the fall of 1941 (excerpts from these testimonies were subsequently published in *Nationalistische Massentötungen durch Giftgas*, edited by Eugene Kogon, Hermann Langbein, and Adalbert Rückerl [Frankfurt: Fischer (1983), pp. 113–114, 152–153]), we spent many hours strolling the streets of Ludwigsburg after the archives had closed. Since then I visited the Zentralstelle many times, but no visit was more fruitful than

that of the summer of 1987. Looking through virtually every case related to Poland in preparation for the Yad Vashem volume, I first encountered not only the indictment of Reserve Police Battalion (RPB) 101 but also an egregious (mis)judgment in the trial of the police commander in Starachowice. I resolved to pursue both topics further and tackled RPB 101 first. If my "reply" to Martin Broszat and my subsequent participation in the "intentionalist-functionalist" controversy was the first major turning point in my career as a Holocaust historian, the publication of *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* in 1992 and the ensuing "Goldhagen controversy" was clearly the second.

The judicial investigation of Reserve Police Battalion 101 by the state attorney's office in Hamburg offered the historian a unique opportunity to study the lower-echelon killers of the Final Solution for two reasons. First, unlike other killing units, especially the *Einsatzgruppen*, the roster of the battalion survived, enabling investigators to interrogate over two hundred of its former members. In other trials, in which most of the officers but few of the rank and file were known and interrogated, they simply lied for one another. But in this investigation, many of the rank and file did not protect their officers and spoke with a degree of candor that, like the number of participant witnesses and sheer volume of testimony, was unmatched in any similar proceedings. Second, the commanding officer, Major Trapp, had made clear from the beginning that no one was compelled to shoot, and hence, the obfuscating defenses of "duress" and "putative duress" so commonly invoked in such proceedings were quickly set aside. These court records, therefore, would allow the historian for the first time to examine in detail the internal dynamics of a killing unit, in particular the spectrum of behavior and motivation within the unit and how the men changed over time.

My attempt to confront the human face of the perpetrators and my approach, that assumed I was dealing with basic facets of human nature, were not uncontested. At the initial "Lessons and Legacies" conference at Northwestern University in the fall of 1989, where I presented my first paper on the battalion, Saul Friedländer spoke about the difficulties that Holocaust historians encounter when faced, on the one hand, with the "human ordinariness of the perpetrators" and, on the other hand, with our "feelings of strangeness and horror" that their actions arouse and our inability "to find the point of psychological identity" with men motivated in his view by *Führerbinding* (emotional identification with Hitler) and elation. Faced with a "blocking of intuitive comprehension of events that happened more or less during his or her lifetime," Friedländer (1991) noted, Holocaust historians took refuge in the "conceptual fuzziness of the 'banality of evil' "—a notion that we all share "common propensities" with the potential to commit such criminal acts (pp. 25–31).

If Friedländer was arguing for a certain incomprehensibility of the perpetrators because he doubted that the historian could establish "psychological identity" with them in the way he or she does with other historical actors, my approach

soon faced a second critique. At this same "Lessons and Legacies" conference in 1989, a young man approached me and succinctly introduced himself: "I'm Daniel Goldhagen. You scooped me." After the publication of *Ordinary Men*, Goldhagen published a review in *The New Republic* (July 13 and July 20, 1992). My book was both methodologically and conceptually flawed, he argued. I had been duped by the mendacious German testimonies, whose problematic nature I did not understand. And I had conceived mistakenly of the perpetrators as "ordinary men" rather than "ordinary Germans," who were the carriers of a unique German antisemitism imprinted by a unique German culture. It was erroneous, he argued, to explain these Holocaust perpetrators' behavior in more universalistic and situational terms.

At the opening academic conference of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in December 1993, Goldhagen and I were placed on the same panel. I had not been informed that he was to be the commentator on this panel until I received the conference program, and I altered my paper accordingly. I critiqued his review; he reiterated his critique of my book (see Browning [1998, pp. 252–265] and Goldhagen [1998, pp. 301–307]). It was an awkward situation for me, in that Goldhagen had my book as a specific target to attack, while I was completely on the defensive. That situation changed dramatically in the spring of 1996, with the publication of his *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust.* The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum once again provided a venue for debate. In a meeting that began in the afternoon and stretched into the late evening, Goldhagen presented his position and four historians—Yehuda Bauer, Konrad Kwiet, myself, and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm—responded. Goldhagen's opening presentation, my response, and the concluding presentation by Leon Wieseltier have been published together as an "occasional paper" by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. My own remarks were also published as "Daniel Goldhagen's Willing Executioners" (Browning, 1996, pp. 88–108). Quite unexpectedly for many, who had come to celebrate a new Holocaust publication that was receiving rave reviews in the press and an author who was appearing on numerous morning talk shows, Bauer launched a harsh attack on the book. He was followed by Kwiet, who was equally uncomplimentary. The atmosphere in the overflow audience was highly charged by the time I spoke. Fortunately, I had written a strictly academic paper carefully and intentionally devoid of any excessive rhetoric or hint of personal animus. The initial audible hostility in the audience soon subsided, and in the end my paper was accepted with polite if somewhat subdued applause. In his response, Goldhagen acknowledged the care with which I had read and critiqued his book.

The fragile civility did not last. Presumably elated by the popular reception of his book in both the United States and, more surprisingly, Germany, but frustrated by the growing rejection in academic circles, Goldhagen lashed out at his critics. In one particularly careless paragraph, he not only dismissed my work as incompetent but also accused me of failing "to present any actual evidence" and constructing my theses "out of thin air" (see Daniel Goldhagen, "A

Reply to my Critics: Motives, Causes and Alibi," *The New Republic* [December 23, 1996]: 37–45). This reprehensible charge of dishonesty, which he later grudgingly disavowed (see Goldhagen's reply to my letter to the editor, *The New Republic* [February 10, 1997]: 4–5), basically ended discussion.

As the Goldhagen controversy ran its course, I turned to the second case that I had come across in Ludwigsburg in the summer of 1987—the trial of the German police commander in Starachowice, a small industrial town in central Poland. The trial was an egregious miscarriage of justice, in which the verdict, with shockingly abusive language, attacked the credibility and dismissed the testimony of numerous Jewish survivor witnesses concerning the murderous role of the police commander during the clearing of the Starachowice ghetto. If the judgment was a disgrace, the prosecution effort was not. It had laboriously interviewed over one hundred survivor witnesses who had been sent to several factory slave labor camps in town rather than to Treblinka. Like the testimonies of Reserve Police Battalion 101, this collection now offered the historian an important source. My linguistic deficiencies had hitherto precluded me from doing much research in Jewish sources related to Eastern Europe, but now as a starting point I had a critical mass of testimonies from Polish Jews in the German language, all related to a single complex of factory slave labor camps, which in themselves were an understudied phenomenon. I have subsequently expanded my evidentiary base to the accounts of 175 survivors of the Starachowice camps, with testimonies that date from the summer of 1945 to my most recent interviews in 2003. It has been an exceptional experience encountering some of the survivors and an exceptional challenge working with the multitude of differing memories to write a history of the Starachowice factory slave labor camps.

PEDAGOGICAL ENDEAVORS

Over the past two decades Holocaust Studies has not only gained respectability as a field of scholarly research, but also entered the college curriculum as an important subject to be studied by undergraduates. This stands in sharp contrast to my own undergraduate education in the 1960s, when even cursory study of the Holocaust was not included in the courses I took on either modern European history or even modern German history. (Indeed, teaching modern European history without mentioning the Holocaust is somewhat akin to teaching U.S. history without mentioning slavery or the fate of the Native Americans.) Even when I taught my first course on the Holocaust at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU)—as an experimental course in our one-month January "interim" between the regular semesters—it was still one of the few such courses being offered on American campuses.

Initially, I offered the course on an alternate year basis—as I did my other topical courses in European history above the general survey level—but demand was such that I was soon offering it every year. More gradually the nature of the course changed. At first, it was a one-month course offered on a pass-fail

basis. The first major alteration was my decision to teach the course on the normal graded basis instead. I had thought naively that the nature of the course itself would impose a degree of seriousness and responsibility among students and that the discipline imposed by grade consciousness would be superfluous. This was the case with many but not all students. Perhaps I also felt in some vague and unarticulated way that the topic should not be tainted with the mundane aspects of grading. Ultimately, I decided that I was sending the wrong message. My course on the Holocaust was a legitimate academic subject, not just an occasion to feel deeply moved by an encounter with unfathomable evil and suffering. I studied and taught it with academic rigor, and if I wanted my students to approach it with academic rigor as well, I had best offer it on a graded basis like any other history course I taught.

For a much longer period I persisted in offering it during our one-month "interim" rather than as a regular semester course. During the PLU "interim," when students took only one course and were encouraged to experiment, I could attract students from many areas outside the humanities and social sciences, particularly those in tightly prescribed programs in math, science, and nursing, who could seldom schedule elective courses far from their discipline during the regular semester. Moreover, this format facilitated a certain degree of intensity in the students' encounter with the topic, since it was the only course being taken by them at the time. However, the one-month format did not permit the amount of reading or kind of assignments that are possible with a course that extends over an entire semester. In the end, I found the one-month format too limiting and changed my Holocaust course into a regular, semester-long, upper-level history offering.

Since coming to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1999, my teaching of the course has been altered once again. At Pacific Lutheran University, I limited the size of the class to eighty students, since that was the outer limit of what I could handle in terms of grading papers and exams and leading discussions. The latter, needless to say, had to take place in the form of questions and answers between instructor and students, not as ongoing interaction among students. Now, at a large state university instead of a small liberal arts college, I have increased the enrollment cap to 165 and teach the course with three graduate student teaching assistants who lead small-group discussion sections. I have less contact with the students than previously, but the students I believe do benefit from the close contact with their teaching assistants. At Chapel Hill, as earlier at PLU, I strive to maintain a rigorous academic approach to the topic. I do note to the students that commemoration and mourning are appropriate responses to the Holocaust, with their own vocabulary and ritual, but that is not the approach that I will take in class.

Over the years I have also taught the history of the Holocaust as a visiting professor at Northwestern University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I discovered that the makeup of the class does effect the dynamic of the course significantly. At Pacific Lutheran University, where only rarely was there a

Jewish student in the classroom, I placed a great deal of emphasis on the origins of adversarial relationship between Christians and Jews, the emergence of religious antisemitism, and, of course, the role of Martin Luther. The campus pastor told me that on the day of my Luther lecture, he could anticipate a line of distraught students outside his door. Encountering a shameful aspect of the history of a faith that was central to their lives, about which previously they had known virtually nothing, was a traumatic experience for many. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where by my estimation over half the class was Jewish, we sailed smoothly through the first lectures without disturbance. The emotional crisis of the course occurred not over the fateful role of Christianity but when we reached the topic of the Jewish councils and the complex issues of compliance, accommodation, the strategy of the saving remnant, and resistance.

THE STATUS OF UNIVERSITY-BASED HOLOCAUST EDUCATION TODAY

Since I taught my first course on the Holocaust in 1975, a rare event at the time, the situation has altered dramatically. Hundreds of colleges and universities now offer specific courses on the Holocaust, and the topic is now commonly included in surveys of modern European history as well. In many cases this did not just happen spontaneously. In the summer of 1988, while attending the "Remembering for the Future" conference at Oxford, I was standing at the bar of a smoky English pub when I was approached by an Elie Wiesel look-a-like, only somewhat taller. He introduced himself as Zev Weiss, the founder and head of the Holocaust Education Foundation (HEF) based in Wilmette, Illinois. It was his vision that if one wanted to increase consciousness and understanding of the Holocaust in American society at large, one did not need more monuments, centers, or museums. Rather, it was necessary to penetrate the undergraduate curriculum of American higher education. Weiss had tested his method by facilitating a pilot course on the Holocaust taught by Peter Hayes at Northwestern. He now wanted to expand the program, and both faculty and administrative reluctance were to be overcome by tailoring offers of help designed specifically for each individual and institutional situation. The HEF would raise the necessary funds. Now he was looking for suitable recruits. Would I be able to help him? Thus, I became an early recruit to an organization that has not only sponsored biennial conferences devoted to Holocaust scholarship and pedagogy, as well as annual summer workshops and biennial study trips to Poland for faculty and graduate students, and but also—most important—helped to initiate Holocaust courses on more than 400 campuses.

But with the exception of the 1939 Club Chair held by Saul Friedländer at UCLA, the study of the Holocaust made no parallel advance at the postgraduate level among the major American universities whose Ph.D. programs were producing the next generation of scholars. Attempts to establish additional chairs in Holocaust Studies similar to that at UCLA floundered at Washington Uni-

versity in the early 1980s and at Harvard in the late 1990s. And appointments to already existing slots in research universities did not go to those with publications and research specialization in the Holocaust. Most undergraduate teachers of the Holocaust were nonspecialists from a myriad of disciplines who introduced their courses as a personal avocation. Those seeking to become productive scholars as well as teachers had to seek their own way and design their own programs. This situation has changed significantly within the last five years, however. Clark University has established a Ph.D. program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. With my appointment at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill and that of Omer Bartov at Brown, Holocaust specialists were for the first time hired to fill the traditional modern German history slots at two major universities. And elsewhere the productive work of Holocaust scholars like Peter Hayes, Michael Marrus, Antony Polansky, and David Engel was recognized by the creation of new chairs at their institutions. In short, in just a few brief years, the study of the Holocaust has been recognized and institutionalized at the graduate level in major research universities.

SERVING AS AN EXPERT WITNESS IN COURT CASES

As a Holocaust historian I have, like other academics, researched, written, and taught about my subject. But I have also had an opportunity, unusual for most historians, to engage in a kind of "applied" history by virtue of serving as an expert witness in various court cases. Most of these have involved the trial of aged suspects following the change in the legal landscape in many countries.

In the late 1970s, the Elizabeth Holtzman legislation provided for the investigation, denaturalization, and expulsion of suspected Nazi criminals in the United States. In the 1980s in Canada, Australia, and Great Britain, legislation granted their courts direct jurisdiction over suspected war criminals who had chosen to reside on their soil. Between 1992 and 1999, I was engaged as an expert witness for the Heinrich Wagner case in Australia, the Radislav Grujicic and Serge Kisluk cases in Canada, and the Simon Serafimovich and Andrei Sawoniuk cases in England. I wrote reports for all of these cases. For the Wagner and Serafimovich cases, I gave testimony and was cross-examined by defense attorneys in the pretrial hearings. However, these two cases, as with the Grujicic case, were suspended due to the ill health of the defendants before they went to trial. The Kisluk and Sawoniuk cases both went to trial, where I testified in court, and guilty verdicts were obtained. My role in all of these cases was to provide the court with historical background information on the nature of Nazi policies and occupation authorities to help it understand and assess the credibility of eyewitness testimony. With the exception of assessing files from the Belgrade Special Police in the Grujicic case, I was not involved in providing evidence about the guilt or innocence of the individual defendants, which depended upon eyewitness testimony concerning their activities as auxiliary policemen in Belarus or the Ukraine.

In addition, I served as an expert witness in two even more usual court cases, the "Holocaust denial" trials of *Crown v. Ernst Zündel* in Toronto in 1988 and *David Irving v. Penguin Books and Deborah Lipstadt* in London in 2000. In both cases, both the press and popular perception proclaimed that the Holocaust was on trial, and the task of the expert witnesses was to prove that the Holocaust had happened. This was not entirely untrue, in the sense that if the Holocaust deniers had prevailed, they would have proclaimed immediately that the Holocaust had been disproved in a court of law. But, in fact, both cases turned on a different issue, namely whether the conscious and deliberate dishonesty of the Holocaust deniers could be proven, by the high evidentiary standard of either "beyond reasonable doubt" in the criminal case of Zündel or "clear, cogent, and convincing" in the civil case of Irving's libel suit. Proving the state of mind of an individual is, of course, something quite different than proving the occurrence of an event. The task of the expert witnesses in these cases, therefore, was only tangentially to provide to the court a clear understanding of the evidence for concluding that the Holocaust had occurred, so that more crucially it could conclude that the deniers had engaged in the deliberate misuse and willful neglect of this evidence.

David Irving had long proclaimed that he alone found original documents and wrote "real history," while the professional historians sat in their studies and engaged in reciprocal plagiarism. In short, he accepted the rules of the profession and boasted of being the better practitioner. This was a claim that could be disproved clearly and convincingly, and in the end Irving sought refuge in ignorance. He asked the judge to rule that he could not be held responsible for any documents other than those found in his study between 1988 and 1992 and that he could not be considered guilty of deliberate distortion if any other person could have reached similar conclusions from the same documents. Judge Grey would have none of this. Irving was held responsible for those documents that any fair and reasonable historian would have found, if he had only looked (Irving could not put the telescope to the blind eye, Grey admonished!), and his treatment of that evidence was also held to the standard of the fair and reasonable historian. This was a standard Irving could not meet.

In the courtroom itself, Irving acted as his own attorney. He displayed considerable physical stamina, but he could not mount a skillful cross-examination of the expert witnesses that was up to the task he faced. He contested but could not crack in any significant way the testimony of Robert Jan van Pelt on Auschwitz, Peter Longerich on Hitler, Richard Evans on the flaws in his own publications, and Hajo Funke on his right-wing political connections in Germany. My experience as an expert witness was not that of my colleagues. Irving did not challenge the key conclusions in my report. He conceded that as many as 1.5 million Soviet Jews had been killed systematically by firing squads, with Hitler's knowledge and approval. He conceded that the bulk of Polish Jewry had perished in the camps of Operation Reinhard, though he refused to admit that they had been gassed. He conceded that the gas vans of Chelmno and

Semlin were not merely experimental but involved in systematic mass killing. Instead, much of my cross-examination was conducted as if we were colleagues at an academic conference, discussing the nuances and minutia of evidence. Only on the last afternoon of my two days on the stand did Irving take off the gloves, taking questions that had been posed to me during the second Zündel trial and trying to play the role of Ernst Zündel's abrasive and unpleasant defense attorney, Doug Christie.

Irving was the plaintiff in a civil suit for libel. Zündel, in contrast, was the defendant in a criminal case, charged under an archaic law that made it a felony to disseminate consciously false information with the potential to cause public mischief. At the outset of the trial, the presiding judge took "judicial notice" that the Holocaust had happened. However, the prosecution still had to prove that Zündel was acting in bad faith and knew he was disseminating consciously false information. The defense, in turn, had to enhance the credibility of Zündel's claim that he believed truly that the Holocaust was a hoax, the judge's "judicial notice" notwithstanding. Part of the defense strategy in this regard was to attempt to expose my own shortcomings as a Holocaust historian, so as to discredit my testimony demonstrating that the internal construction of the denial pamphlet in question clearly indicated conscious fabrication. Christie employed all the tactics of a skilled and experienced cross-examiner, combined with a sarcastic temperament oozing contempt. The transcript of my testimony that I later read could not, of course, capture Christie's body language and tone of voice and thus does not convey fully the atmosphere of the courtroom at that time. I was without any prior experience as an expert witness in the courtroom, and there were embarrassing moments that with greater experience on my part could have been avoided. But, ultimately, Christie did not destroy either me or the prosecution case for the flagrant mendaciousness of the clumsy denial pamphlet that Zündel had circulated and for which he vouched.

But part of the defense strategy aimed at a wider target as well. Ernst Zündel's courtroom adviser Robert Faurisson (a suspended professor of text criticism at the University of Lyon) and lawyer Doug Christie, in their more sophisticated moments, tried to lend intellectual credibility to Zündel's politically motivated denial of the Holocaust by invoking the notions that all history was opinion and all evidence susceptible to radically different readings that could not be adjudicated by any "objective" standards. Zündel denied the Holocaust, and they denied that historians could prove otherwise. For the defense, the discipline of history itself was put on trial.

In the decades since World War II, historians increasingly have become aware of the "relativity" of what we do. The old notion that, given sufficient evidence, unbiased and fair-minded historians will arrive at an "objective" consensus about past events is dead. The real issue now, as I see it, is between "relative" and "absolute" relativity. For some, this is a purely academic question and the temptation is to take relativity to its logical extreme. The number of potentially different perspectives on any past event is virtually unlimited, and past events

can be retold in multiple narratives and subject to multiple interpretations—all equally legitimate and either reflecting different historical truths or demonstrating the absence and indeed impossibility of "objective" historical truth as such.

This was the absolute relativism that Christie now invoked on behalf of Holocaust denial. My own stance was to argue for a distinction between historical interpretation—arguments about causation and meaning, for instance—which could not be "objectively" proven or disproven, and historical facts. For lack of evidence, the facticity of many time- and place-specific events could not be proven. In many other cases, legitimate debates about probability, given the incomplete and ambiguous evidence, were quite in order. However, for some time- and place-specific events the evidence was sufficiently ample and unambiguous that a group of reasonable men and women (for instance, a jury) could easily conclude "beyond reasonable doubt" that such events had occurred. The Nazis' mass murder of millions of European Jews was one such set of events. At times the courtroom atmosphere was more like a circus than a trial; at other times, as Lawrence Douglas (2001) has recently noted, it seemed strangely like the parody of a classroom discussion of historical methodology and epistemology.

HISTORICAL RELATIVISM AND THE NATURE OF HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

In these unusual circumstances, the wider debate about historical relativism and the nature of historical evidence and proof was not merely theoretical. Historians may often feel that they write only for a small audience of fellow specialists, and much of the time we do. But those of us working in Holocaust history do encounter several other wider audiences. First, the politically motivated deniers, along with their fellow travelers and dupes, are ready to exploit any carelessness. We carry the ongoing obligation to be exceptionally meticulous and articulate. I do not mean that we should shy away from dealing with certain topics that are especially vulnerable to cynical misrepresentation, but rather that we must do history according to the very highest standards of the profession. I know that some people feel that the application of "cold" academic standards of historical professionalism to the Holocaust is insensitive at best and a form of sacrilege or desecration at worst. Indeed, commemoration and mourning, anguish and pain, outrage and indignation, are appropriate responses to the Holocaust in their own right, but they are not a substitute for scholarship. Given the existence of those who do not wish us well, there are serious consequences for confusion in this regard.

Second, we live in a cultural climate that in some ways has become increasingly sensitive to victimization. As historians, we work in a discipline in which growing attention has been paid to recover the lost and silenced voices of the defeated, the excluded, and the oppressed. In general, I consider these to be

positive and healthy developments. But one less positive byproduct is the practice of "competitive victimization," in which one set of sufferings is pitted against another, and recognition, leverage, or compensation is sought on the basis of an alleged victimization balance sheet.

Clearly the Holocaust has become the preeminent yardstick by which victimization is measured and "credits" in such competition earned, even in the most unexpected contexts. For example, on a trip to China in the summer of 1979, I saw a political cartoon in an English newspaper produced for foreign visitors. This was at the height of the border fighting between China and Vietnam and in the wake of the exodus of the "boat people," in no small part an act of "ethnic cleansing" that aimed at the expulsion of the Chinese minority from Vietnam. In the cartoon, Hitler and Ho Chi Minh stood on the shore watching the passengers of an overloaded, sinking ship drown. Hitler asked Ho, "Why don't you use gas?" to which Ho replied, "Water is cheaper." What Holocaust historians write, therefore, is subject to greater politicization and has the potential for greater misuse and abuse than what most of my colleagues in other fields experience.

Thirty years ago, when I began my doctoral dissertation research, the field of Holocaust Studies as such did not exist. Now, it seems, I complain that historians of the Holocaust in some ways earn too much undesired attention. Such attention is the sign of a growing legitimacy and recognition of Holocaust Studies. Without this increased Holocaust consciousness in our present society, the neo-Nazis would not have found it so imperative to deny the Holocaust in order to whitewash Hitler and invert victim and perpetrator, nor would others be invoking the Holocaust as a measuring stick for their own past sufferings. There is a price to pay for "success."

CONCLUSION

Finally, I would conclude with a brief comment on my own position as a Holocaust historian. When I began my career, I was unusual for being both a non-Jew and a non-German in a field in which most active scholars were either Jews (American or Israeli) or Germans. Though I had come to the Holocaust through my study of German history and though clearly it was a traumatic and pivotal event in the histories of both Germans and Jews, never did I see the Holocaust primarily as the domain of German and Jewish history. From the beginning I considered the Holocaust to be a key event in modern Western and world history that transcended the histories of Germans and of Jews. Admittedly, I was always predisposed to study its universalistic aspects—human nature and the "banality of evil" (or to be more precise, human nature and the organizational and situational production of evil), the destructive potentialities of the nation-state and modern bureaucracy, the dark underside of Western civilization and modernity. Although my historical approach has been one of close, empirical study of selected events, institutions, and individuals and not of more abstract

theorizing, I have sought the universal within a detailed study of the particular. I am still comfortable with this approach. I am also comforted that it is no longer unusual for a non-German, non-Jew to study the Holocaust.

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What Are the Results? Reflections on Working in Holocaust Education

Stephen C. Feinstein

EARLY YEARS

I cannot say there is a linear path from my early education to a first career as a European and Russian historian and a second career with a significant focus on Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Certainly I was raised with a consciousness of the issue of the Holocaust, having been born in the middle of World War II and having grown up in a West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, neighborhood surrounded by Jewish refugees from the Russian Revolution, as well as more recent refugees from Hitler's Europe. There were not many shared stories, though. During this period of the late 1940s and early 1950s, there was sort of a hush when one spoke about these people who had suffered in various ways, but we were not supposed to speak about it. When I reflect back on my Jewish religious education at the West Philadelphia Jewish Community Center, which I would describe as finding a way not to learn Hebrew, the focus was certainly on the newly created State of Israel and what it meant to Jews. It was defined, vaguely for us younger folks, as a transition from powerlessness to power, but we certainly did not know what that meant exactly. Daily news reportage was not as pervasive as it is now, and, if anything was important, it was the Soviet Union and communism.

I sometimes define myself as a third- or fourth-generation American Jew. My father's parents had come from Riga, Latvia, which was in the Russian Empire, in 1892. My father, Jack Feinstein, was born in New York. He worked as a boom crane operator, chauffer and as a "sand hog," the term used to describe those who worked underneath the Hudson River building the Holland and Lincoln Tunnels. He eventually went into the linen supply business in Philadelphia. My mother, Beatrice Cohen, was born in Philadelphia, although my grandmother, her mother, was born in Baltimore. Dora Cohen was the only grandparent alive when I was growing up in Philadelphia, and she was sort of like a

second mother in the house, living first close to us and then with us as she aged. My mother was a trained accountant and spent most of the time "doing the books" in my father's business. My grandmother, born in America, spoke a few words of Yiddish, but not much. My mother knew a bit, my father more. The result was that I received nothing even close to the Yiddish stories overheard by many of my friends.

When I reflect back around the time of my Bar Mitzvah in October 1956, the most significant news event was Brooklyn Dodger Don Larsen's perfect pitching performance in the World Series. When there was some association with the Holocaust during this period, it was inevitably with the *Yizkor* (Memorial) service at Yom Kippur at The West Philadelphia Jewish Community Center. Young children were not allowed in the service. It was something secretive, having to do with the dead, and there was a sense that there was some bad luck involved if one went there without a precise relationship with the dead. But the "recent catastrophe in Europe" was not there as a subject. We lost no relatives during World War II.

If there was some reference to Hitler and what had happened, it came via jokes. They seemed to have surfaced around the time I was in junior high school and high school. Attending Central High School in Philadelphia was a place where such humor seemed to germinate quite well. Central High School then was an all-male academic high school, with some provocative teachers with Ph.D.s who were often quite open about their ideas on Hitler, Stalin, socialism, Roosevelt, the New Deal, and other heady subjects. Nixon and McCarthy seemed to be the enemies. So, the Holocaust was there in several fragmented forms. At the same time, the more pressing and unresolved question was segregation in the United States, the Civil Rights movement, and what was, upon reflection, some overt racism within the Jewish community. That came via references to African Americans as *schwartzas*, the Yiddish pejorative term for "blacks," and the entire Jewish community of West Philadelphia moved to new suburbs as soon as black families began moving into the neighborhood in the period around 1956. On the whole, the Jewish attitude toward African Americans was sympathetic on the issue of political and economic equality, but few would have wanted an African American as a neighbor.

I attended Villanova University outside Philadelphia in a Business and Economics curriculum from 1961 to 1964. The bonus for not being Catholic in a Catholic University was having the freedom to take other courses of choice instead of the mandatory religion courses for Catholic students. The result was that I sought out and took a lot of history courses and wound up graduating in three years with enough credits for a dual major. I was accepted into law school, but decided, instead, to attend New York University to get an M.A. in European history. Law school was still a possibility.

While at Villanova, I managed to take an advanced course in twentieth-century French literature. The course was very energetic, had only five or six students, and opened the intellectual door to the classics of the period from

Proust to Sartre and Camus. It was a stimulant. When I got to New York University, my first graduate seminar was with Edward Tannenbaum, a French historian, and the subject of the seminar was "Cultural Responses to World War I." The result was a thesis on the DADA movement in art, with all of the research being done at the Museum of Modern Art's library. This subject was a direct reflection of the twentieth-century French literature class I had taken as an undergraduate. Once I decided to stay for the doctoral program, the logical choice was French history. However, it was clear there were no meaningful jobs in this area, and both the Russian and Chinese scholars were looking for students. I looked at the languages, decided I could not learn Chinese, but might survive Russian, and went in that direction instead. There was some situational logic, the 1960s being the era of the Cold War, Vietnam, and the Soviet threat. Studying in the Russian area also seemed to satisfy my draft board that I was doing something good for the country.

The general area of European history opened up some issues for me on the "Jewish question." While in Leo Gershoy's class on "The French Revolution," I spent a lot of time at the New York Public Library doing a paper on the emancipation of the French Jews, using original sources in French. Frank Manuel's "Intellectual History" class raised key questions related to both Marx and Freud and also some other revolutionary thought. In one of his musings, Manuel mentioned that when he worked for the Office of Strategic Services, he had been placed in charge of arresting Admiral Horthy, the deposed regent of Hungary, in 1945. On the trip back to Nuremberg, he related, the discussion was about "Bakuninism in the Spanish Civil War." Another interesting visiting professor was John W. Wheeler-Bennett, whose musings about Brest-Litovsk, Chamberlain, Churchill, Kaiser Wilhelm II, the Munich Agreement, and World War II had a feel more like oral testimony than any formal history. In all of this, little was mentioned about the fate of the Jews, except some terse figures that were revealed in the longer histories of the war. Then, in 1965, at the Sheraton Square bookstore I came across Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*. My response, as I remember it, was to say, "funny thing—an entire book on this subject!"

BECOMING INVOLVED IN THE TEACHING OF THE HOLOCAUST

I finished a doctorate with a specialization in eighteenth-century Russia and took my first job at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls in September 1969. Being at one of the smaller colleges in the Wisconsin system necessitated a teaching load of twelve hours a semester—four distinct courses. While not conducive for the scholarly pursuits of research and writing, this teaching load allowed for experimentation and teaching a wide variety of subjects. In teaching Russian history and the history of the Soviet Union, one could not escape what might be termed a "cruel history" and the huge toll in human lives since the

time of Peter the Great. This included political murders associated with the Russian Revolution, the human-made Ukrainian Famine of the 1930s, and mass murder associated with the purges through World War II. I also taught a course on "Modern Middle Eastern History," covering everything since the rise of Islam. The discussion of late Ottoman policies about national issues led to a discussion of the fate of the Armenians, which, by the early 1970s, was being spoken about in the language of a "genocide" or something resembling the Holocaust, as well as the transfer of Greeks and Turks after the Greco-Turkish War of 1920.

In 1975, Edward Peterson, the German historian in our department, asked me why I thought he was still getting forty students, a full class, in a course he taught on Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany. Peterson had been doing extensive research and publication on the Third Reich. Since it was thirty years after the end of the war, it seemed to me that there was still sufficient material in films and on television about Nazis to provide a familiarity with the Third Reich. The Arab-Israeli conflict, I felt, also played into the question of Nazi Germany and the legacy of the Holocaust. Peterson asked me if I could teach a one-credit course on the Holocaust, sort of a "filler" course for those who needed an extra credit in the major. So, I volunteered and forty students signed up. None were Jewish. All were Christians, some of German background, others whose fathers had served in Europe during World War II. That course came off rather well, using Lucy Dawidowicz's *The War Against the Jews* (1975), Simon Wiesenthal's *The Sunflower* (1976), and a few other readings.

The course was thereafter offered with some regularity. When NBC showed the docudrama *Holocaust* in 1977, special viewings as well as discussion groups were held with Holocaust survivors at several locations, both at UW–River Falls and in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. At our university, what followed were a series of workshops for teachers about the Holocaust. There was no precise formula except the use of European historians to outline the story; have, if possible, a survivor; and the use of a film, or part of one. One film that was available in the 1970s, which is, in my mind, still important was the Canadian documentary *Memorandum.*

The workshops on the Holocaust, particularly during summer semester, became an annual event during the 1980s and 1990s, with some of the highest enrollments in summer classes. During the early 1990s, when Dr. Robert Ross, author of *So It Was True* (1980), an important study of journalistic accounts of the Holocaust in Christian newspapers of the period, retired from the University of Minnesota, I was asked to teach a full three-credit class there on the Holocaust through the Jewish Studies Department. By the mid-1980s, I had also begun to pursue some research interests in the area of the Holocaust. This may have been piqued by a year-long sabbatical at Tel Aviv University in 1984–1985. That sabbatical focused on the transition of Soviet Jewish artists to the Israeli landscape. Talking with artists inevitably touched on the issue of the Holocaust. My interest in Russian dissident art ("unofficial art") of the 1970s was a significant

factor in moving me to look at the question of art and representation of the Holocaust. Some of these artists had been living in a situation where exact knowledge of the *Shoah* had been difficult to acquire; yet, many of them included Holocaust-related themes in their work. The logical question was to ask if similar visual themes were present in the work of Western artists.

One more matter is important to include as part of a collective influence. When I first arrived at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls in 1969, I was asked to administer an annual program that took students to the Soviet Union for three weeks every spring. This eventually led to eighteen visits to the USSR, including a twelve-year period of my becoming persona non grata (1977–1988), probably because of my "bad habit" of visiting Soviet Jewish *refuseniks*. Visiting the USSR was important for building my own Jewish identity and recognizing the absence not only of an active Jewish life but also the absence of Holocaust memory, and occasionally, some scary situations of being followed by the KGB. One book that became a frequent traveling partner in these ventures to Moscow, Leningrad, and other locations was Elie Wiesel's *Night* (1969). I frequently gave copies to friends who were interested in Jewish questions. There were also the usual odd confrontations with Soviet narratives in monuments that avoided any information about Jewish suffering. When I first visited Kiev in 1972, the monument at Babi Yar consisted of a stone smaller than my desk and a statement that the victims had been "Soviet citizens." Yevgeny Yevtushenko's poetic message in "Babi Yar" from 1962 about this subject, which had caused an intellectual storm in the Soviet Union, had yet to produce tangible results in Soviet history books and monuments about the identity of the victims and why they were murdered.

PEDAGOGY OF THE HOLOCAUST

My sense of pedagogy in Holocaust education has undergone changes, but I still believe that my outlook is rooted in a critical understanding of European history, and, when and where possible, world history. Having a reasonable understanding of both German and Jewish history, for example, allowed me to enter the Holocaust as a subject for teaching and research. While I now serve as the director of a Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, I feel ill at ease promoting the subject without proper context. That essential context is history. The history of the twentieth century has been particularly ruthless; but one may argue that the century began around 1885 with the age of imperialism. Joseph Conrad's 1902 novel, *Heart of Darkness*, seemed to have spelled out things well, and those who avoid his insights into civilization's essence or who think the events of the twentieth century are unique should reread this book. But the Holocaust, because of the enormity of support by German bureaucracies, professionals, and industries, has created case studies, legal issues, and models for use in fields ranging from art to bioethics to business and law. This broad capability of the subject is both a blessing and a curse. It can mistakenly draw

people into the subject and make them "instant experts" without a full understanding of the multiple dimensions of antisemitism and also the Nazi experience. For this reason, too, I am suspicious about the use and possible misuse of the Holocaust as a mandated curriculum in precollege education, as the study of elements of toleration in a democratic environment is different than mass murder that occurs when democracy breaks down. Certainly, there are many interesting hypotheses that may be explored, from an examination of the rise of Nazism to the German people's response. Hilberg's typology of *Perpetrators, Victims and Bystanders* (1992) is extremely useful and has been recognized as such. However, making moral judgments about the responses of perpetrators may fail to make clear how individuals respond to the use of terror in authoritarian societies. This is where not only the study of genocide, but also the necessity to rethink Leninism and Stalinism in Russia, Maoism in China, and other ruthless dictatorships becomes important. Generally, it seems to me, that, once a dictatorial regime is established, the potentiality for resistance or even involvement in rescue is small. However, this does not explain aspects of antisemitism as a European, even global, phenomenon, nor the desire of Nazism to kill every Jew in the world. Thus, in dealing with the Holocaust as an academic subject, I believe there are certain principles that have to be underscored. The first is the nature of diasporism and how diaspora nations, the Jews being most noteworthy, have survived through maintaining traditions, language, and religion, plus adaptation into the cultures in which they live. In turn, one must explore the question in this particular genocide of how the maintaining of a separate identity encouraged a view of the Jews as "other" and also as sinister beings. The second is that the Holocaust is not just Jewish history but a catastrophe for the Jews and a major event in world history. However, one must always ask the question: Can one study the Holocaust (or any other genocide for that matter) without studying the nature and culture of the victims? I think most academic courses err seriously because of time constraints and the nature of academic programs. It seems a bit outrageous that a student can emerge from a semester course on the Holocaust, know the names of members of the Judenrate, but not Maimonides, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Rashi, Isaac de Pinto and other important figures of the Jewish past. The only way to solve this dilemma is a linkage between Jewish history and the study of the Holocaust.

A persistent aspect of my thinking about the Holocaust has been the question that many others have asked: Why has this subject become so popular in the United States while domestic subjects such as the genocide of Native Americans and the negative aspects of slavery and segregation fail to attract the popular imagination. Maybe it is because these latter groups are perceived to be marginal socially in American society, and the issues their people attempt to represent are related to questions that hit significant emotional and financial nerves in American life. They also reflect on failed policies by American bureaucracies, especially the Bureau of Indian Affairs and programs in affirmative action.

On another note, if the Holocaust is to the issue of intolerance, then the study

of the Nazi period from 1933 to 1939, it seems, serves better than studying the genocide itself. Marion Kaplan's *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (1998) is one of the strongest scholarly works that describes the effects of the daily diminishing of Jewish rights after 1933. That work has lessons for understanding how "otherness" is created and how a civil society can become very uncivil. The case of Bosnia is even worse, as ethnic cleansing there witnessed not only the breakdown of neighborly relations, but also mass murder.

Inevitably, the Zionist question intersects the discussion of the Holocaust but sometimes appears like the elephant in the room that nobody sees. It is very clear that in looking at Israeli curricula on the *Shoah* that it has a Zionist "spin." Fair enough, as Israel has a right to construct its own history. However, to say that American audiences can learn from the Holocaust when Jews themselves know little or nothing of African American or Native American history, raises some interesting questions of others who have become victims and how we digest their stories. At some point, there has to be some sympathetic reciprocity on these subjects, without the competition over mass suffering. But perhaps less politics intersecting the subject is inevitable. A slavery restitution rally in Washington, D.C., during late August 2002, featured several speakers who pointed to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum at the end of the Mall, and asked why it was there and why there was no monument to slavery.

HOLOCAUST ART AND MEMORIALS

Another issue that I perceive as very important is the question of art and memorials. Artists in every country have been struggling with issues of representation, how to depict the Holocaust if one did not actually live through it, and how to avoid repetitive tropes of victimization: the watch towers, barbed wire fences, yellow stars, concentration camp uniforms, and mounds of corpses. Of course, these images are all taken from reality. But artists have to compete with the photographic record on this account, and they usually lose if the question is creating some sort of "authentic" and durable image. Yet artists have been dealing with the Holocaust even before it happened. What I sometimes refer to the "scent of Fascism" can be seen in the drawings, paintings, photomontages, and collages of George Grosz, Otto Dix, Hannah Hoch, John Heartfield, and others. Historians, as well as art historians, might benefit if they examined Marc Chagall's extensive number of crucifixion images that appeared after 1938 or why American artist Ben Shahn never gave up on the question of how to memorialize artistically the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The American painter Ron B. Kitaj has been so inspired by the negativity and disturbance of the Holocaust that it is found as a motif in almost all of his works and also gave rise to his own theory of what he calls "diasporism." Kitaj's concept is that a diasporist lives in two societies at once, which, after the Holocaust, places the Jew conceptually in possibly not only two, but also three places: where he

is, where he once was (Jerusalem and other places in the Diaspora), and where he might have been (Auschwitz).

The spring 2002 exhibition of Barnett Neuman's "zip" paintings from the late 1940s and 1950s, shown at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, raised the question of the Holocaust as an inspiration for abstract expressionism. In the didactics that accompanied the exhibition, the curators noted that, in 1945, after the end of the war and hearing about the Holocaust, Neuman destroyed all of his paintings. It was as if he was saying that something big had happened, and civilization, including art, had to reinvent itself. He studied Kabbalah and became an abstractionist, a move away from the figurative, which seems very modern and also very Jewish.

I would say that my interest in art about the Holocaust was one of the most significant influences in pushing me away from Russian history exclusively into the area of Holocaust education. In 1994, the Minnesota Museum of American Art asked me to be curator of an exhibition of art about the Holocaust whose opening might coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. The result was a 5,000-square foot exhibition that traveled to seventeen museums across the United States through January 2002. Entitled "Witness and Legacy: Contemporary Art About the Holocaust," the exhibition drew significant crowds and created a bridge between museums and the public on the question of how memory works in visual representation. A second exhibition of larger size, "Absence/Presence," dealing with both the artistic responses to the Holocaust and genocide was shown at the University of Minnesota in winter 1999.

These exhibitions and others, particularly those that display the work of artists with postmodern edges, as occurred during 2002 in the "Mirroring Evil" exhibition at New York's Jewish Museum, raise interesting questions about the subject matter and means of presentation that are outside the normal realm of historical research on the subject. "Witness and Legacy" and "Absence/Presence" tried to show some conventional artistic approaches to the issue of Holocaust art, as well as some edges. Those "edges," however, did not produce the same uproar as with the "Mirroring Evil" exhibition in New York. Survivors and the second generation, at least in that community, seem to have indicated that some sort of unknown rules exist that set limits on representation, and anything more, or less, is some sort of trivialization. All of this, of course, goes back to an essential question of "who owns the Holocaust?" The answer, I think, is global culture. The Holocaust, once out of the bag, so to speak, cannot become the monopoly of the community of survivors, second generation, or even American Jews and Israelis. But, if the survivor and second-generation community has the potential to become outraged about Holocaust art, the academic community seems to have, on the other end, more interest in literature, poetry, film, and theater.

The situation gets more complex with American public monuments to the Holocaust. Few that exist have any worth or possibly durable meanings. Certainly monuments are, in many cases, problems because they involve a com-

mittee, money from several sources, and many individuals who have different perceptions about what the monument is and how it serves memory. And there is the question, What about a monument that commemorates a negative event? Many American Jewish communities, I would argue, have wasted good funds on tasteless monuments. The reverse can be said in the countries where the crime of the Holocaust occurred. The most impressive monuments undoubtedly are in Germany, Poland, and in other countries where there is an understanding of the abyss that the Holocaust represents, as well as the absence of Jews. Israel has a mix of good and bad monuments.

Some existing monuments that have been around for a long time are hardly known by the Jewish communities in the city where the monument is found. In Philadelphia, for example, Nathan Rappaport's "Holocaust Memorial," dating from the 1950s, is hardly known, and is never visited even by Holocaust conference participants that convene regularly in that city. As James Young (2000) has noted in *At Memory's Edge*, the erection of a monument usually ends the discussion about the event and allows it to recede into history.

On a related but different note, a recent visit to a Holocaust memorial in Baltimore made me wish that I had not made the visit, as the monument could be described with no other word than "kitsch."

My belief is that the only durable monuments to the Holocaust can be found in university-based education. But endowed chairs seem less "sexy" than failed public monuments. There may be one big exception to this bit of cynicism and critique: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), despite some criticism of how its exhibit and space has been constructed, does succeed rather well in both its installation and memorial space. Whether it will continue to do so remains to be seen. A big question may be how the basement space at the USHMM is used. Rotating exhibitions of new material from its, as well as other, archives, the arts, and other issues have the potential to draw visitors back to the museum. The first exhibition of art on a significant scale appeared there in 2002, when a large retrospective on the art of Polish-Jewish artist Arthur Szyk was staged quite successfully.

It is thus logical that my main academic pursuit at this time is to further investigate forms of artistic representation. As this is among the least known of the many responses to the Holocaust, it appears that there is a great amount of academic investigation to do and education to achieve. The area itself has some inherent problems, which are often not found in other questions of representation. First, while there are huge numbers of visitors who attend museums, they usually go to see the work of dead artists. Renoir, Matisse, Degas, and the end of the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century avant garde artists continue to outdraw most contemporary exhibitions. Second, within the realm of representation of the Holocaust, there are multiple generations of art to consider: victims and survivors, the second generation and "empathizers" are the usual categories that have been established. Third, there are aesthetic considerations. There is a large quantity of "How are we to judge art created in concentration

camps and by artists in hiding?" questions that arise. Certainly, artists working under inhumane conditions, scrounging for materials, creating visual images rather than memoirs, should be understood to be as heroic as those who wrote histories and stuffed them in milk cans, as in the case of Emanuel Ringelblum's *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto* (1974). But this is not the case, as a painting or drawing usually gives an impression. It is either good or not good. The impression is usually a fast one, and it may last or disappear very quickly from the viewer's memory. But in the case of art from the camps, how is one to mediate between issues of witnessing versus aesthetics? Artists who were good before the Nazi era—Charlotte Salomon and Felix Nussbaum come to mind—continued to paint in an extraordinary fashion that served both as a form of witnessing and also possessed a high quality as art. For Polish-Catholic artist Jozef Szajna, the memory of the Auschwitz and Buchenwald experiences continued to permeate his artistic work, from the time of imprisonment until now. Others who delved into art, however, were less successful with clichéd images. If this is the case, how does one tell a survivor that his art may be terrible?

Fortunately, enough good work did appear: Alfred Kantor's recreation of his drawings from Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, Fritz Lederer's images of Theresiestadt, and David Olere's drawings of the work of the Sondercommando at Auschwitz/Birkenau, a horrible moment for which photos essentially do not exist.

Art of the second generation often draws from the experiences of the parents as transferred to their children, often with all the horror and trauma of the event itself. Many European and American artists have returned to mythic themes, Kabbalah, and other nonrepresentational modes, in an attempt to activate memory and an understanding of the Holocaust. Those not connected even through nightmares and a neurotic home life often have to play the game of historian in seeking sources for visual images or use their imaginations. This is a difficult formula, and the results can be terrible. Nevertheless, one senses that almost all artistic efforts are sincere, even if the results are below expectations or just visually unacceptable. What is "unacceptable" is not so difficult to explain. Art that is filled with images that are known too well, that repeat standard images of the camps and Holocaust itself, or attempt to be too literal without having "been there" often miss the mark.

The representation itself raises critical questions about using paintings in teaching. How is the teacher to use these images? Should the story be told as a narrative, or should students, at whatever level, be allowed to interpret on their own? This question is one not only for the Holocaust, but also for all realms of the arts. Visual artists usually do not like to explain their paintings. Usually, they prefer the audience to look and interpret for themselves. If there are too many didactics "explaining" what is going on, is creativity and expanded interpretation lost? This, I think, is a significant problem in education, as a painting from Theresienstadt might well serve to illustrate something where the camera had no access. However, imposed interpretations to fit existing narratives have

the capacity to subvert the artist's message. The best pedagogy with such works may ask questions but provide no definitive answers.

In the realm of visual arts, one more important question presents itself. I know of no artist who would like to be known exclusively as a "Holocaust artist." In the world where galleries have the capacity to make artistic reputations, as well as museum exhibitions, artists who try to sell themselves exclusively as working with the Holocaust might impose a death sentence on their careers. Museum curators have, by and large, not been able to identify a place for such art in their museums, or they simply think the subject is not valid. Or is it "too Jewish"? Does painting about Jewish destruction destroy the universalist message? One might cite certain successes to drive home the issue of the dichotomy between high and low cultures, universalist and particular agendas. The French artist Christian Boltanski is well known for his Holocaust-related works, which he has insisted, may not be that at all. Nevertheless, what Boltanski has achieved is to have taken ordinary photos from a Jewish high school year book from Vienna, 1931, and manipulated them to create a more universalist sense of victimization. Should there be doubt about Boltanski's modest obsession with the Holocaust, one need look only at his 1991 archeological project on Gross Hamburgerstrasse in Berlin, "The Missing House," where his students examined the lives of the Jewish residents from a now-bombed-out house, and made a memorial to their absence, and their presence in memory. The German artist Anselm Kiefer, taking cues perhaps from his German mentor Joseph Beuys, has used his impressive and complex canvases to work through questions relating to the German past, including the Holocaust. What strikes me as impressive, and what perhaps needs to be examined more closely, is how artists and poets have aligned themselves to enhance both sides of representation. Thus, Kitaj has used Eliot's "The Wasteland," as a motif for what happened later, and perhaps as a commentary on Eliot's own antisemitism. Kiefer uses Paul Celan's "Death Fugue," a poem well known in Germany, as well as expressions ranging from German myth to the Kabbalah. Arie Galles, a contemporary American artist, worked with poet Jerome Rothenberg to create an effective midrashic visual and poetic text about the concentration camps and God and evil. I cite these examples because they suggest models for interdisciplinary approaches to teaching the Holocaust. However, the difficulty is managing to cross academic fields with some level of competence.

THE FUTURE OF HOLOCAUST STUDIES

I feel insecure about the future of "Holocaust Studies" because I wonder if it has become an extended fetish driven by guilt on three continents or whether it can become a durable and legitimate topic, especially in the academy or in theological circles. A broad study of history, however, is a testament to many cases of mass murder, most cases of which are not remembered or have become footnotes in history. At a summer seminar the University of Minnesota in 1999,

Jacques Trocmé, whose parents helped engineer the rescue of Jews in Le Chambon sur Lignon in France, asked the appropriate question: "Who remembers the Albigensians?" If we do not know about the Albigensians, is this perhaps a sign that future generations will not know the Holocaust? There is one additional feature that drives this question. That is the academic versus legal definition of genocide. While it seems that the study of the Holocaust will eventually be subsumed into "Genocide Studies," the study of genocide itself seems unstable because of floating definitions, often by academics, that go way beyond Raphael Lemkin's definition or even that of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (1948). While the academic work of historians, sociologists, psychologists, and others have contributed substantial understandings to what genocide is, the current further defining of genocide will undoubtedly come via judicial systems, international courts, and cases involving accusations of genocide. While we may all wish that the issue of "intent to commit genocide" could be made clearer, it probably cannot. However, my sense is that the commission of genocide "in whole or in part" has become clearer as a result of genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia and the persecution of the perpetrators thereof.

In the end, I think all of my colleagues who work in the area of the Holocaust and genocide have a strong commitment to human rights. The ultimate frontier, however, is to not allow this subject to remain purely academic and theoretical, but to have some discernible human impact. What is missing in Holocaust Studies are surveys that attest to outcome after students have studied the Holocaust. I know of few studies that have measured in any way the long-term results of Holocaust education. Do we make better human beings? Do our students develop a sense of human rights? Can a study of the plight of the Jews and others during the Holocaust create empathy for the "other?" Richard L. Rubenstein once remarked that everyone who teaches the Holocaust is also teaching a "how to do it course." I take this response seriously, especially if one studies the biographies of many historical figures who were educated in the enlightenment and succumbed to terrible misdeeds.

As far as my own success with students goes, I can end with only three observations: First, I am certain that none of my students have become mass murderers, even serial killers. Second, I do not think that anyone who has taken my course has murdered anyone, but I cannot be certain of that either. Third, I do not know if any student who has taken my course, or anyone else's course, has written letters to government officials protesting human rights abuses in some part of the world. At some point, we have to know results.

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5

Teaching *Shoah* Matters: A Personal Memoir

Zev Garber

The prologue of the biblical book of Job suggests a question: Will the righteous Job, once deprived of the good things of life, abandon and curse his God? The Adversary (ha-Satan) answered the Lord, "Does Job have a good reason to fear God? Why, it is you who have fenced him round, him and his household and all that he has. You have blessed his efforts so that his possessions spread out in the land. But lay your hand upon all that he has and he will surely blaspheme you to your face. The Lord replied to the Adversary, "See all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on him." The Adversary departed from the presence of the Lord (Job 1:9-12).

The author(s) ask if God is just and in control of life, if righteousness is rewarded and wrongdoing punished, then why does the righteous Job (Everyman) suffer horrendous misfortune?

The traditional answers of Job's friends fail miserably due to their own need to rationalize tragedy, which in the end leads to justice delayed and thus justice denied. Eliphaz: No man can achieve perfection and the punishment is chastening for Job's own good. Bildad: Suffering is rooted in human fallibility. Zophar: Job's challenge is akin to blasphemy. Elihu: God leads man to the brink of death only to rescue him so that man might forever be grateful in blessing God the redeemer.

Job angrily rejects his friends' attempts to explain away evil at the sufferer's expense and demands justice now. By rejecting self-righteous answers, the book of Job sends forth a powerful message: the unnecessary suffering of innocents, unleashed by man's inhumanity to man, is a concern of Heaven, but the obligation to correct evil is incumbent on humanity to rectify on Earth. Only then can we think of the fulfillment of the biblical telos: justice and righteousness, exuberated by the siblinghood of Man and the parenthood of God, not in some distant eschatological future but in the here and now. In this spirit do I write on Holocaust matters.

WORDS AND LANGUAGE

I am impressed by the power of words. The sacred and the profane declare that Man is a unique species in the animal kingdom—s/he is a word producer. From the first embryonic word to the last word uttered by an expiring body—we are the word-making animal and in that rare species, those of us in *Shoah* education and religion are rarer still—we know the awesome power of words, and we should be more careful regarding words and how we make use of them.

> We must be more selective in our choice of words for criticism, praise, and sarcasm.
>
> We must avoid new words and overused words that mislead and confuse—words such as fundamentalism, ethnic cleansing, revisionism, "man's inhumanity to man."
>
> We must limit verbosity and repetitiveness for the overgrowth kills otherwise healthy words and ideas.
>
> We must discourage the cold, hot, lukewarm, and warmed-over war of words among scholars. They are not productive but destructive.
>
> We must practice more the basic words of humane vocabulary—words such as hello, sorry, you're OK–I'm OK, peace.

In short and to the point, scholars and doers who are practitioners of words and not merely believers in words are making one giant step forward to humanize humankind.

So it is with language. Despite its omnipresence, we normally do not think much about language as an instrument to do good or to execute evil, nor do we understand the working of its medium (words and syntax) in expressing how we think, feel, perceive, or desire. Understanding the constraints of language on what we can and cannot do to ponder the imponderable became the focus of my initial study on the terminology of Judeocide.

At "Remembering for the Future I," held at Oxford University in July 1988, Bruce Zuckerman and I called into question the validity of the label "Holocaust" to describe the extermination of European Jews during World War II (Garber and Zuckerman, 1989). We pointed to the shocking use of a specific religious term for the genocide, making the Nazi murderers priestly officiants of divine propitiation. We challenged Elie Wiesel's attempt to make the (aborted) sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis the biblical analogy for the "Final Solution." Going far beyond questions of terminological propriety, we discerned basic psychological attitudes in the conventional Jewish view of the *Shoah* (biblical Hebrew meaning "destruction, ruin," and suggesting no religious or sacrificial overtones), namely, that the Event is limited to Jewish victims of the Nazis, and a fulfillment of the Jews' traditional role as God's people, chosen to suffer for the redemption of humankind. We decry all this as theological gerrymandering, and see the *Shoah*

as the tragic consequence of "Thou shall not murder," in which both murderers and victims are ordinary people in an extraordinary situation, a secular event without saints or demons.

We fear that the attitudes behind the continual use of the term "the Holocaust" may lead to Jews seen as Christlike sacrificial "lambs of God" or extreme chauvinism. Still on some profound level of meaningfulness, the *Shoah* must be taken as emblematic. If it is to remain the paradigmatic genocide, then it must be a paradigm that shows true horror, that is, what all people are capable of doing and what all people are capable of suffering; its message of survival must be shared with all who have suffered and will suffer.

At "Remembering for the Future II," held at Humboldt University in Berlin in March 1994, Zuckerman and I probed the language of *Shoah* disputation, and we pointed out the many complications and difficulties that accompanied the Auschwitz convent controversy (Garber and Zuckerman, 1995). More than a text of faith and "facts on the ground," the conflict is circumscribed by religious and cultural differences expressed in language predisposed by certain choices of interpretation. We are suggesting that people who speak different languages cannot share the same conceptual framework, and conversely, different conceptual forms cannot be expressed in the same language.

For communication to occur, some prior agreement must exist between speaker/sender and hearer/receiver. But if our need to communicate arises out of our social nature, then our group identity determines a significant part of what we perceive to be moral goodness or blameworthiness, with our obligation to do right, be good, and damn evil. This may well explain why controversy and not communication prevailed at the Auschwitz convent.

The assumption is that the antagonists in the dispute must move beyond thought control and "herd mentality." We must rediscover—and in many cases, discover—the meaning of Auschwitz. Since meanings are not given independently of language, we must come up with a suitable hermeneutic that honors the dead and does not abuse the memory of the living. The cry of "Never Again" must never become the subtext, "Never Again for Us."

Loyalists of covenant or convent have created a virtual wall of words at Auschwitz; but we must believe that the wall is permeable. And by exploring the inside and outside of the language of bias, we can confront the cycle of contempt and move from strife to shalom. By way of example, at the third "Remembering for the Future" conference, held in Oxford and London between July 16–23, 2000, Zuckerman and I analyzed the language of biblical radicalism in a modern context, namely, the Yitzhaq Rabin assassination by Yigal Amir "in the name of God" as conveyed in the biblical confrontation between the Prophet Amos (religion) and the Priest Amaziah (state). In our paper we asked, what clues does the Bible leave us by which to judge whether the misguided actions of an assassin are on behalf of himself or the inspired actions of a prophetic agent on behalf of God. Of course, after September 11, 2001, the question can be extended to terrorist actions in praise of God.

REFLECTIONS: BECOMING INVOLVED IN THE *SHOAH*

I was born and raised in the Bronx, New York, to religious nationalist (European-born, Yiddish-speaking) parents, who exposed me early to a traditional way of life, exemplified by yeshiva learning and Orthodox observance. I dangled between the concepts *de-orayta* (regulations of the Torah) and *de-rabanim* (decisions of the old rabbis) and of being an American. I lived a Jewish way proscribed by the "four cubits of Halachah" and an American dream formed by the "four civil rights"; together they shielded me from the ideology of Jew-hatred.

But this was to change. My primary education was at the Rabbi Israel (Lipkin) Salanter Yeshiva in the Bronx, named after the nineteenth-century Lithuanian-born founder and spiritual father of the Musar movement of Jewish ethical concern. In the seventh and eighth grades at the Rabbi Israel Salanter Yeshiva in the Bronx, I was taught by refugee rabbis from the ghettos of Eastern Europe. More than once, they related painful accounts of European antisemitism and countered its catastrophic climax by teaching strict adherence to the Judaism of the Dual Torah (written and oral law) and halachic ethical behavior in the spirit of *musar* (moral deliberation). From the "tattoo rabbis" (so we children called them), I received my first-ever memory of *Shoah* commemoration, Warsaw Ghetto Day.

Warsaw Ghetto, American Innocence, *Shoah* Awareness

The Warsaw Ghetto can be seen as the prototype of all the Jewish ghettos established by the Nazis in Poland and other occupied territories during World War II. We remember it as a symbol of both the suffering and death of the *Shoah* and the Jews' spirit and will to survive against their oppressors in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of April 16, 1943.

When Poland was invaded and occupied by German armies in September 1939, Jewish ghettos were established in smaller cities throughout the country. It was not until the summer of 1940 that eight-foot walls began to seal off the Jewish quarter of the capital city of Warsaw, ostensibly to prevent the spread of typhus in the sector, but with sinister purposes, which soon became clear. In September 1940, the 80,000 non-Jewish Poles living in the sector were ordered to move out. On October 3, Rosh Hashanah, the Nazis declared the establishment of an official ghetto and began ordering still-dispersed Jews from the provinces to move in. This move concentrated almost 400,000 people, a third of Warsaw's population, into an area only one and a half miles long and comprising less than 3 percent of the total area of the city. Then, on November 15, 1940, the Ghetto was sealed off from the outside world.

Starvation and disease quickly took their toll, claiming 300 to 400 lives per day, not counting those killed in sporadic executions. Over 43,000 Jews starved to death in the first year; 15,000 died of typhus in 1941. But horrible as that

death rate was, it was not fast enough for the Nazis. In July 1942, soon after the gassing installations at Treblinka had been completed, trains began carrying 6,000 Jews a day from the Warsaw Ghetto to the death camp 50 miles away. By August of that year, the inhabitants of the Warsaw Ghetto had discovered the true destination and purpose of the "re-settlement" trains and began to organize armed resistance. The Jewish Fighting Organization (JFO) became the leading force in the Ghetto. With no help from the Allies or the Polish underground, the struggle to smuggle in and accumulate arms took months, but fighting groups were organized eventually.

In early January 1943, Reichsführer of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, visited Warsaw and was told that 40,000 Jews still remained in the Ghetto. He ordered the immediate deportation of 8,000. This time the troops sent in to carry out the order met armed resistance, which lasted four days. Although a thousand Jews were killed and 6,500 were transported to the death camps, the resistance electrified the Ghetto.

In February, Himmler ordered the complete destruction of the Ghetto. The final German assault began on April 19, Passover, but what was to have been a speedy destruction of the remaining resistance became stiff house-to-house fighting. On May 8 the Germans raided Mila 18, the headquarters of the JFO and the strong point of the resistance. The resistance was heroic but doomed. By May 16, 1943, the Warsaw Ghetto was destroyed completely.

The memory of the tragedy of the Warsaw Ghetto is painful, but it would be even more painful not to remember. Sixty years later, I continue to remember the Warsaw Ghetto and resistance, invoking a mishnaic passage I learned in yeshiva: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" (Tractate Avot 1:14).

Equally memorable as a life-changing experience—here I mean my American innocence—is the 1947 film, *Gentleman's Agreement*, which deals with a kind of antisemitism that was then widespread on the American scene: the clannish snobbery that excluded Jews from certain jobs, country clubs, and restricted suburbs and placed them on a quota basis in private and professional schools. Moreover, the intent of the film was to make complacent non-Jews feel guilty for denying Jews equality of opportunity. The point made was that if American Jews are treated "like everyone else," then the Jewish problem in America will be solved. To fight the "dislike of the unlike" on grounds of "likeness" is to insist that the only solution to the Jewish problem is for Jews to assimilate into the dominant WASP culture. Yet, if most Jews intend to blend—that is, to abandon their separate faith and culture—it would result in a serious loss to the spiritual and cultural strength of America in general and to Judaism in particular. Thus, by my Bar Mitzvah year (1954), corresponding with my graduation from Salanter Yeshiva, I discovered the terrible price—and honor—of being a Jew.

My high school years planted in me a young student's view of the war against the Jews (1933–1945). I was interested equally in learning the who and what, and in understanding the how and why. My formidable introduction to antisem-

itism and the path to the *Shoah* and the Final Solution, however, was at Hunter College in the Bronx (now Lehman College). There I read about the terrible fate of a noble faith, conceived in the Abrahamic covenant; forged at Sinai in thunder, lightning, and fire (Exodus 19:16, 18); and consumed in the smoke of Hitler's inferno. This sad story took a shocking twist when I read Malcolm Hay's *Europe and the Jews* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1961) and James Parkes's *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961). In them, I discovered the role of Christian antisemitism in contributing to and sustaining the longest hatred. And I was determined to learn more about the role played by religious doctrine and prejudice in abetting the mass murder of innocents in the cradle of Christendom.

This may explain my initial and sustaining interest in Shoah Studies along religious and theological, rather than historical lines. In this regard, the writings of Elie Wiesel, Emil Fackenheim, Eliezer Berkovits, Irving ("Yitz") Greenberg, Richard Rubenstein, and Franklin H. Littell have influenced my development as a teacher and a scholar in the discipline (Wiesel, 1958; Fackenheim, 1982; Berkovits, 1973; Greenberg, 1982; Rubenstein, 1966; Littell, 1975). If Elie Wiesel is correct that the *Shoah* transcends history, and that the living are neither capable nor worthy of recovering its mystery, then responses to the *Shoah* say more about the fears and concerns of the respondents than about the agenda for Judeocide. Wiesel himself relates witness-stories promoting Jewish survival as an unshakable dogma after Auschwitz. The theocentric religious philosophies of Emil Fackenheim, Eliezer Berkovits, and Irving Greenberg speak respectfully of an obligatory 614th Commandment (no posthumous victory for Hitler, Encounter Theology, and Voluntary Covenant, which together represent a mending of the Jewish world. Richard L. Rubenstein proclaims a letting-go of traditional Judaism's doctrine of God for a new symbol of God's reality conducive to the lessons learned from Auschwitz. Franklin H. Littell speaks of the iniquity of the *Shoah* as the indelible stain on the Christian world made near-permanent by the nearly 2,000 years of the hermeneutics of hate.

Zionism: Salute to the Heroic Dead

In the 1950s, my parents planned to make *aliyah* to Israel, and I voluntarily read my first Zionist volume, Itzhak Gurion's *Triumph on the Gallows*. I read about the hanged martyrs of the Jewish underground in Palestine, whose ideology maintained that a Jewish state must be won by force—force of character and blood—and whose heroism at the end of a rope contributed psychologically to the end of a 2,000-year-old foreign rule in *Eretz Yisrael*, the land of Israel.

I was charmed by the Irgun Zvai Leumi's careful justification of "terrorist acts" against the British gallows. I was moved by the words of Menachem Begin's salute to the heroic dead at the first anniversary of the hanging of Avshalom Habib, Meir Nakar, and Yaakov Weiss (in Safed, August 1948):

> From the depths of Jewish sorrow and anguish there arose those who stormed the enemy's fortresses and beat them back, those who went to the gallows singing a song to the very end. It is therefore no longer the voice of lamentation and bitter weeping which is heard but rather that of joy, gladness and delight, both from your own holy and pure souls and those of our fathers.
>
> For we neither shamed our fathers nor forsook their way when we embarked on our march toward freedom. And if many fell by the way, others have taken their place and carry high the flag of the war of Liberation, so that we are able to report to you that the vision from which you have fallen and sanctified the name of God has been fully realized. (Gurion, 1950, p. 99)

With awe and trepidation and a sense of mission, I identified with the heroic dead who sang the Hatikvah and fulfilled the command "*lamut o'likhbosh 'et ha-har*" ("to die or to take the mountain"). In blood and fire, my Zionist star was born. Only years later at "Remembering for the Future I" did I comprehend fully that my youthful Zionist embrace was a gut reaction to different armies of the Night: mass murders carried out by Hitler's Einsatzgruppen and perfidious hangings on Zion's shore by Europe's most tolerant country, England.

It is in this spirit of Zionist ideology that I lecture and have written on Roza Robota, an anti-Nazi resistance fighter at Auschwitz. On the afternoon of October 7, 1944, a shattering explosion ripped through the Birkenau/Auschwitz death camp complex, engulfing Crematorium IV in flames and signaling the uprising of the Sonderkommando, consisting of the Jewish prisoners who stoked the crematoria.

The Sonderkommando revolt was made possible by a small group of women slave laborers who were employed in the Krupp ammunition subsidiary ("Weichsel-Union-Mettalwerke") at Auschwitz. Here artillery pieces were assembled. For a period of eight months they stole minute quantities of gunpowder, hidden in the seams of their dresses or in specially sewed pockets (*boit'l*), which were passed to the camp's underground and made into primitive grenades.

The pivotal heroine in this drama was Ciechanov (Poland)–born Roza Robota, whose entire European family perished in the gas chambers. Two days after the revolt, Robota was arrested, beaten, released, rearrested, and tortured. Throughout her hideous ordeal, she revealed nothing. "Through her heroism, Roza saved the lives of about 30 of us in the Jewish underground, and most of us survived" (said Israel Gutman, then 21 and now a renowned professor of *Shoah* history at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem). On January 6, 1945 (Tevet 21, 5705), Roza and three of her suspected collaborators (Regina Saperstein, Esther Weissblum, and Alla Gertner) were hanged in the women's camp, the last public hanging at Auschwitz/Birkenau.

Roza Robota had been a member of *Ha-Shomer Ha-Tzair*, the left-wing Zi-

onist youth movement. Her heroism was etched in *hazak ve-ematz* ("be strong and bold"), her movement's ideology by which she lived, and *nekama* ("avenge"), the reported last words by which she died. I addressed the story of Roza Robota at the Silver Anniversary of the Annual Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches (March 5–8, 1995), held at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. What we can learn from the last public hanging at Auschwitz/Birkenau, furthermore, was the focus of the first "Dorothy Stuzane Lecture on Women and Judaism," which I gave at the Lipinsky Institute for Judaic Studies, at San Diego State University on April 17, 1996.

The pull of modern Zionism is nineteenth-century European nationalism, and its push is modern political antisemitism, which the political Zionist ideologue, Theodor Herzl, thought would last as long as the Jews (Garber, 1994, pp. 8–37). Similarly, the Nazi atrocities are atrocities forever and their consequences become part of the living fabric of the Jewish present and future. Therefore, the testimony, the bearing of witness, and the historical research are essential for all to hear in an age when many are indifferent, others deny the Event, and anti-Zionists invert the lessons into an anti-Israel propaganda (for example, the argument that Israel is a contemporary haven of Jewish Nazism engaged in daily Palestinian subjugation).

My current research on the *Shoah* and its aftermath has led me to a bizarre contemplation: no one, in truth, survives the ultimate violation of our basic humanity devised by the Nazi machine. Genocidal activity in Rwanda, religious and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, hatred of minorities in the former USSR, Germany, India, Pakistan and elsewhere, terrorist activity and bomb factories in Gaza, Judea-Samaria (West Bank), Tokyo, Ipil (south of Manila), Oklahoma City, and other domestic and world trouble spots by criminal cartels, secretive cults, nationalistic groups, liberation movements, government agencies and what have you, are couched in holocaustal language. And the ushering in of the Grave New World began at the world racism conference in Durban, South Africa, where Arab delegations succeeded in vilifying Israel—and only Israel—in the conference draft. This reached a zenith on September 11, 2001 when America was attacked and Zion was blamed, inspired by global Islamic terror resurrecting endemic European antisemitism and inflamed by anti-Jewish rhetoric in the guise of the current Israeli-Palestinian crisis (Garber, 2000b, pp. 1–4).

What is clear is that the world community is at a point where it is about to lose the very meaning of the *Shoah*—not only because we cannot really understand a past others have suffered but because we relate it to all other horrors of the past and the present, which is a politically correct way of diminishing it, compromising it, and finally dismissing it. And the ultimate travesty and disrespect—despite the fact that the General Assembly of the United Nations rescinded its "Zionism is racism" declaration (1975), or perhaps because of this reversal of injustice in Durban—is the twinning of the Nazi swastika and the Star of David as symbols of genocidal fascism.

So I have come full circle in explaining my train of thought from ashes to *Eretz* (Zion) to suggest the motivation of why I write and what I write on *Shoah* matters.

Teaching the *Shoah*

The subject of the *Shoah*, the destruction of the Jews of Europe, and others, at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators, is one of great moral significance in the history of human civilization. Genocide, the obliteration of all members of a national group, is the most horrible of crimes and one of the most difficult to deal with in the field of social studies, revealing the human race in its worst perspective. My views on what can and cannot be obtainable in teaching an introductory course in Shoah Studies are drawn from teaching experiences in a variety of educational settings: a one-day seminar, University of California at Riverside; adult education, University of Judaism; community college, Los Angeles Valley College; and a state university, University of Utah. In spring 1988, I offered Holocaust and Zionism within a singular course at the University of California at Riverside.

My way in teaching an undergraduate class on the *Shoah* alternates between a historical and thematic course: historical, which evaluates the *Shoah* as a prototype of genocide; and thematic, which delves into responses to the *Shoah*. The former describes pre–World War II Europe, emphasizes the nature of Hitler's Nazi movement in Germany, reviews the war years and program of genocide against the Jewish people of Nazi-occupied Europe, and considers reasons for the *Shoah*, roles of the perpetrators and victims, and results. The latter, after understanding the nature of prejudice, antisemitism, and the nihilism of murder, surveys a plethora of responses, including biblical, rabbinical, mystical, literary, religious, humanist, dialectic, dialogue, ecumenical, and media.

My goal is not to cover all the history, sociology, psychology, philosophy, theology, and so on, regarding the Great Catastrophe. Rather, my course provides a context for asking questions and providing a frame of reference in which insights are provided and further application is suggested. My emphasis is on tolerance, diversity, and understanding. It is important that a beginners' class in the *Shoah* (1) demonstrates a universal, humanistic, and parochial, religious impact; (2) focuses on the student rather than on the event, utilizing an interdisciplinary approach; and (3) endeavors to heighten the student's awareness of ethics, morality, and human tendency toward prejudice.

My personal acumen, developed from a wealth of experience in teaching the *Shoah* at Los Angeles Valley College and solidified by student feedback thereof, prefers the "response" model. My course outline clearly spells out purpose, objectives, method, topics, written assignments, and the evaluation of student progress. My concern is with attitudes and values, in addition to knowledge and skill objectives. For the most part, I have succeeded.

SINAI NOT CYANIDE: SIX LESSONS

On April 23, 1979, corresponding to Nisan 27, 5739 (the date set by Israel's Knesset as the official date for observing and commemorating the *Shoah* and the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising—*Yom ha-Shoah u-Mered ha-Getaot*—see my midrashic essay on why Nisan 27 was chosen for Holocaust remembrance in Garber, 1994, chapter 4), at the first National Holocaust Memorial Day under the sponsorship of President Jimmy Carter and the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, speakers collectively asked: What lessons must we learn from the *Shoah*? What must we strive to understand? And, above all, what must we ourselves remember? Elsewhere in this essay, I have attempted an answer by sharing linguistic, historic, and thematic points on the question. Here I suggest a personal manifesto and methodology on the *Shoah* in six lessons, a lesson a million, which guide my current thinking grounded in the tradition of *tikkun olam yehudi* ("repairing—nay, reclaiming—the Jew in the world").

Lesson One

We must never trivialize, minimize, compromise the *Shoah*. European Jews were exterminated as Jews. The *Shoah* is unique, and it represents the paradigmatic genocide in history. Its dead and maimed were not victims of war or famine or politics in the normal sense. They were "processed" by a state-sponsored bureaucratic killing machine. True, other nations (Polish, Sinti-Romani, etc.) and groups (gays, conscientious Christians, etc.) suffered under Nazi domination, but the Jews were the only group for whom the murder was designed, the only people whose right to live was denied in principle from womb to tomb.

Lesson Two

For the right linguistic and theological reasons, we should not exclusively call the Event the "Holocaust" but the *Shoah*. For the sake of the Jewish victims, we ought not universalize it. The Jewish victims died as Jews—and we have no right to take the "Jewishness" from the dead. Nazi Germany did not, we certainly should not. It is a travesty of justice and historical fact to say that Hitler's war against the Jews was part and parcel of the conventional World War II. Jews were classified by the Nazis not as Europeans or as human beings but as parasites and *Muselmanner* (zombie-like living skeletons); thus, the crime of the Nazi state was not just another example of "man's inhumanity to man."

Lesson Three

In remembrance of all people who have suffered at the whims of tyrants in the bloodiest century in human history, let us learn the words of Elie Wiesel

not to be neutral in time of crises, for neutrality always helps the aggressor, never the victim: "Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Whenever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe" (Wiesel, 1986). And the prooftext is from the Dual Torah: "You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor—You shall love him [the stranger] as yourself" (Lev. 19:16b; 34a) and "He who saves one life is considered by the Torah as if he had saved the entire world" (b. San. 4:5).

Lesson Four

The essence of *Shoah* thinking is "dislike of the unlike." It is the recognition of this force in our lives that must be at the core of any *Shoah* presentation and remembrance. The message of the *Shoah* for this generation and for future generations is not survival alone. There is something more important than survival and that is moral bankruptcy. When Auschwitz (survival at any price) contends with Sinai (a moral standard), then Sinai must prevail. Nazi Germany is an example of what can happen when Auschwitz prevails. Let our slogan be "Sinai and not Cyanide!"

Lesson Five

In the age of multiculturalism and politically correct relativism, let us be sensitive and supportive of *Shoah* inhistorization by survivors, many of whom are forever living the guilt of pain of surviving. (The testimonies from the "Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation," founded and initially funded by Steven Spielberg in June 1990, confirm this.) They acknowledge to honor the memory of the brutally murdered is never to forget and therefore to reveal what is concealed, denied, minimized, and destroyed by those responsible for these indescribable atrocities. Also, let us condemn in the strongest terms present-day Nazi clones: hate groups, deniers, and so-called "revisionists." Survivors believe that we cannot have too many meetings, monuments, museums, and they hope that school districts (public and private) provide students with instruction about *Shoah* in the classroom. Nevertheless, they are fearful about how their story is told in a multicultural setting without proper control. That is to say, they object to being downgraded and/or degraded from subject to object. With a nod to Torah (for example, Deuteronomy 30:11–20, especially v.19), the survivors' dream after the hellish Night is freedom to choose good over evil, life over death, so that all Earth's children may inherit their wish of dignity and freedom, prosperity and peace.

Lesson Six

Teaching and learning about the *Shoah* is an excruciating but necessary experience. Many educators and scholars deal with the catastrophe in controlled objective facts of historiography. It is my view, however, that an overtly elitist, academic approach tends to turn the lecturer into an accountant of facts rather than a teller of history. I hold that it can, and has, led to depersonalization and distancing in the classroom. I prefer passionate objectivity. In addition, I prefer to see the *Shoah* in terms of historiosophy. That is, a paradigm above the historical; attached to history but by no means limited by it (see especially the methodology employed in Garber, 1994). We must talk of the *Shoah* as tragedy, covenant, apocalypse, and visionary. The second generation after Auschwitz is obligated to provide data and testimony of the Jewish will to survive under the most horrible conditions of dehumanization. The major traits of Hitlerism—isolation, vilification, expulsion, slavery, and extermination—are not the will of Heaven but acts of evil people. Six million Jewish men and women, one and a half million children among them, were taken to die in gas and fire; their very ashes spewed from the chimneys of Auschwitz and other camps to mingle with the soft breezes of the air and spread, nameless and graveless, over a continent that had itself become a graveyard. Consequently, men and women of integrity, intelligence, wisdom, and moral will can penetrate the satanic edifice, then (in our accurate understanding of the past), now, and in the future. Respect, tolerance, and responsibility can depreciate the dreadful fear that one can get away with it. In this era of strife and suspicion, let the healing voices proclaim that humankind is improvable. We all must be reminded of this and, because of our proximity to the *Shoah* and our common belief in the coming of the Messianic Age, Jews and Christians, above all, must believe it.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

I see myself as an educator specializing in the study of the Jewish genocide during World War II. I prefer to refer to the Event as *Shoah* over the better-known term Holocaust: pre-Nazi dictionaries translate "Holocaust" as an equivalent to a whole-burnt offering, which in effect makes the Nazis the equivalent of officiants at a sacrifice. *Shoah* literally means "destruction, catastrophe, devastation." Furthermore, unlike Holocaust and *Churban*, which connote religious and sacrificial imperatives, *Shoah* suggests devastation and catastrophe in historical-cum-providential categories. As a descriptor of the most devastating events of the twentieth century, *Shoah* is slowly gaining widespread popularity, thanks in part to my efforts (*Los Angeles Times*, April 9, 1994, B1; also, *UPA News*, November 1996).

My main research focuses on the central issues of human life, meaning, and consciousness in a post-*Shoah* world. My writings and scholarly papers address

historical, literary, pedagogical, philosophical, and theological concerns. What unites my approach to the *Shoah* is the quest for a meaningful agenda to learn and teach the Holocaust sixty years later, when the entire horrific enterprise is either forgotten, questioned, revised, or denied. For an age that ponders technologically administered mass death, global indifference, tribalism, and God-forsakeness, my thinking is offered as a meditation in human responsibility and theological responsibility. To this end, I started the Studies in the Shoah series (University Press of America) in 1991 and twenty-five volumes later this series has helped define the field. Members of the series' editorial board, seventeen in all, come from a variety of fields and backgrounds. The mission statement incorporates a cross-disciplinary approach to Holocaust Studies.

Since 1993 I have been involved in a Christian-Jewish dialogue with my colleagues James F. Moore, Steven L. Jacobs, and Henry F. Knight to compare and contrast the temper of a post-*Shoah* age to the temper of tradition, thereby exhibiting the possibilities and dangers inherent in scriptural hermeneutics. I see my contribution thusly: (1) that Jewish norms, traditions, and culture, and Christian belief and behavior have been irreversibly challenged by the enactment of the *Shoah* on the soil of Christendom; and (2) that it is essential to recognize that there is something problematic in being a religious isolationist, *in casu*, eschewing dialogue between Christian and Jew in the post-Auschwitz age. That is, in sociological terms, the nearly two thousand–year separation between the Church and the Jewish people is no longer seen as desirable, feasible, or meaningful. My remarks are informed by the Hitlerian principle that Nazism is antisemitism and that antisemitism is anti-Christian and that supersessionist Christianity is anti-Judaism. Individual articles by the post-Holocaust Midrash Group of Four have been published in the *Proceedings of Annual Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches* (1993 and following). Collectively, their dialogue discussions have appeared in a special issue of *Shofar* (Moore, 1996) and in an edited volume soon to be released (Moore, forthcoming). Also, I have researched and written cutting-edge articles on the practice of Judaism during the *Shoah* and on the controversial role of St. Edith Stein in the shadow of the Holocaust (Garber, 1994, chapter 5).

I take pride in organizing and editing acclaimed volumes in Judaica and *Shoah* education, including *Methodology in the Academic Teaching of Judaism* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986); (with Alan L. Berger and Richard Libowitz) *Methodology in the Academic Teaching of the Holocaust* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988); and *Academic Approaches to Teaching Jewish Studies* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000). Finally, I serve as editor (with Dan Morris) of *Shofar, An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, published by the University of Nebraska Press, where articles, book reviews, and notices on the current state of the *Shoah* discipline are featured and noted.

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6

Reflections of a Holocaust Scholar/ Philosopher

Leonard Grob

My fiftieth year of life saw my entry into Holocaust Studies. Then a professor of philosophy for some twenty years at New Jersey's Fairleigh Dickinson University, I had been trained in phenomenological/existential thought. My choice of the study of contemporary European philosophy, rather than the Jewish studies in which I had been steeped in my youth, represented one aspect of a prolonged late-adolescent/early-adult rebellion against my traditional Jewish upbringing. Well schooled in biblical and Rabbinic sources, Zionist thought, and modern Hebrew, I rejected my early learnings and embraced, passionately, the universalist politics of the 1960s left. My strong identification with my Jewish heritage and my adherence to the observance of ritual until the age of twenty now seemed part of a largely benighted past. As a major in History, the Arts, and Letters at Yale University, 1956–1958 and 1959–1961 (B.A. Magna Cum Laude), I had become enamored of the cultural and intellectual history of the West, which I mistook for the history of all of humankind. Intentions to enter either the rabbinate or the field of Jewish education gave way before the desire to lead that "philosophic life," which I equated with freedom from adherence to all ideologies; I was to be an authentic humanist, moving on to a master's and doctoral studies in philosophy at The Pennsylvania State University (1964–1969; M.A. 1968 and Ph.D. 1975). I felt keenly the thrill of liberation. Enjoying my first taste of non-Kosher food—and a first taste of emancipation from the "shackles" of what I now saw as mere religio-ethnic particularism—I eagerly took on my new identity as the universal human.

Much was to change in the year 1989. My father, dead some twenty-six years, and I, then, age 49, had unfinished business. This "business" would lead me to study the Holocaust for the following thirteen years and, hopefully, for many years to come. Ben Grob was the sole member of his immediate family to escape the Holocaust. Born in 1904 in Stanislav (then Galicia, later Poland, today Ukraine), my father, the oldest son, immigrated to the United States in 1923.

His parents, three brothers, two sisters, nieces, and nephews, stayed behind. All were murdered by the Einsatzgruppen sometime between the June 1941 invasion of eastern Poland and the liquidation of the Stanislav ghetto in February 1943. My father was never to know the exact date of the slaughter of his family. What he did hear (from frequent trips to New York City to consult with members of the Stanislav *Landsmanschaft*, or fraternal organization) was that his entire family had been shot on the streets near their homes on Halicka Street in the Jewish section of this prewar city of some sixteen thousand Jews. Ben's life was unalterably transformed.

I grew up in Bridgeport, Connecticut. My parents were *shomrei kashrut* (strict observers of the Jewish dietary system), but kept their small dry goods store open on the Sabbath. Given the usual intensive Jewish education experience (i.e., Talmud Torah), I was largely uninterested in my early studies. I became concerned passionately with Jewish studies and observance of ritual only after attending the Conservative Camp Ramah at age 14; I then became active in the youth movement, becoming president of the New England chapter, and earning a scholarship to Israel at age 19.

My mother Lillian immigrated to the United States from Vilna, Lithuania, at the age of 2 in 1903. She was much more concerned with the assimilation of her two children (myself and my sister Anita), to American life than was my father. She was a social worker/family therapist who died in 2000. Lillian Grob tried to shield me from the tales of the *Shoah* told repeatedly by my father. She was concerned that I grow up to be fully Americanized; she was a bit ashamed of my father's lack of full command of written English. (He had emigrated at age 17 in 1921.) My mother saw me destined for an Ivy League school and life as a professional; my father was less future-oriented.

To return to him: His family's murder haunted Ben Grob's being, prompting him frequently to retreat in his thoughts to the world of his youth. An ineffable sadness pervaded his being. I, a young boy growing up in these years, felt alienated from a father whose greatest satisfaction, it appeared to me then, lay in the telling and retelling of stories from Stanislav. My eyes would glaze over at these tellings. Involved in friendships and sports, I lived at a remove from my father. At age 23, when I could have begun to understand better what was fueling my father's passion to tell Stanislav stories, I lost him to cancer. He was 58.

I had failed to move toward my father during his lifetime. Twenty-six years had gone by since his death. I had become middle-aged. During the intervening years I had married, had fathered two children, had divorced and remarried. As a self-proclaimed "super dad" I had tended my children with a devotion that was nothing short of fierce. In my late forties, I became an occupant of the proverbial "empty nest": My children had grown up, had set out on their own life paths, had left home for college. I realized at that juncture that some of the sadness I felt at their departure from the household had to do not only with the absence of children for me to father, but also with the absence of the person

who had fathered me. Freed from my day-to-day duties as a father, I was able to confront what it meant to be fathered.

Amid the many times I had failed to attend to the tales of Stanislav, one oft-repeated line had remained fixed in my mind: "I have only one wish in life," my father would say; "I wish to return to Stanislav to weep on the soil where my family was murdered." Lack of financial resources and an untimely death had prevented my father from fulfilling his wish. In the summer of 1989, I embarked on a journey to Stanislav (renamed Ivano-Frankovsk by the Soviets, to whom the city fell in post–World War II accords). My goal was to realize his dream and thus come close to a parent from whose inner life I had been largely estranged during his lifetime. I yearned, finally, to hear his tales of Stanislav.

During my visit to Ukraine, I succeeded in touching the walls of my father's house in the old ghetto area of Stanislav and in tracing the route to the cemetery where so many had been slaughtered. I wept, in fulfillment of my father's wish. In so doing, I had given the victims of the Holocaust a face, the face of the Grob family; I had learned about encountering the Holocaust one face at a time.

Before leaving Stanislav, I wrote the names of my grandparents, aunts, and uncles on slips of papers, tied them onto stems of flowers, and placed them on the window sills of the Grob family home. These victims had been cast, unnamed, into pits in the local cemetery; I had given them a memorial. I had named the dead.

Upon my return from Stanislav, I felt the tale to be pouring out of me. After writing a memoir for the journal *Judaism* (Grob, 1990), it became clear to me that I was to devote the later years of my scholarly career to Holocaust Studies—both to attempt to honor the memory of the 6 million murdered, and to continue to forge bonds, albeit much later than I would have wished, with my father. I have thought often, during these years, how pursuing Holocaust Studies was a prolongation of a "roots" journey to Stanislav.

Yet another aspect of my passion to study the Holocaust emerged when it became clear to me that my work as an academic philosopher, and my new vocation as a scholar of the Holocaust, were not only not incompatible, but also actually could serve to strengthen both fields of study. With regard to the influence of Holocaust Studies upon my philosophic abilities, I recall vividly the words of Professor John Roth, a Holocaust scholar and philosopher whose writings and whose person have influenced me deeply, at a "Lessons and Legacies" conference at Dartmouth College ("Lessons and Legacies III," 1994. "Engaging in Holocaust studies," Professor Roth argued, "has made me a better philosopher." I was to experience the same phenomenon. Issues that had always interested me were now "writ large" on the landscape of Holocaust scholarship. Within this landscape, I wrestled with key philosophical issues: existential and essential notions of human nature; a radicalization of the problem of evil, and, with it, new challenges to theodicy (the question of God and evil); the complicity of the bystander in the presence of evil; the failure of education in the Nazi

period to realize its alleged humanizing goals; and Enlightenment notions of progress and the perfectibility of humankind as contributors to, rather than checks upon, Nazi genocidal actions.

I first addressed the questions of philosophies of education and their bearing on either fostering or helping to prevent the formation of a genocidal mentality. At the March 1993 Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches held at the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, I presented a paper entitled "Higher Education in the Shadows of the Holocaust" (Grob, 1997). Taking as a point of departure the fact that of the Nazi leaders assembled on January 20, 1942, at the Berlin suburb of Wannsee to map out "the final solution to Jewish problem," fourteen had been recipients of doctoral degrees, I asked both what education had been like during the late Weimar and early Nazi periods, and to what degree higher education in the United States radically had rethought its own fundamental assumptions "in the shadows" of the Holocaust. I attempted, in other words, to respond to the unknown survivor who proclaimed: "My eyes saw . . . gas chambers built by learned engineers. Children poisoned by educated physicians. So I'm suspicious of education. My request is: help your students to be human" (Ginott, 1972, p. 317).

Examining the seminal 1983 U.S. document entitled "A Nation At Risk," I pointed to some parallels between pre-Holocaust pedagogy and curricula in Germany and our own educational aims and objectives in late twentieth-century America. Emphases on the importance of the instrumentality of knowledge in general and scientific knowledge in particular, for example, were common to both educational systems, as was a failure to give adequate attention to dialogical processes in the classroom. I argued that fostering ethical inquiry across the curriculum through dialogical interchange in the classroom was an important safeguard against the abuse of knowledge so manifest in post-1933 Germany. The research thus concluded would come to influence my own conduct as a classroom teacher: I would be more wary than ever of any instance when I might be tempted to "impart" knowledge, as if it were a parcel to deliver, an assemblage of data to transmit. I would renew my efforts, as never before, to become a co-learner—albeit, one more experienced—in interrogating and revisioning the world. I would assume greater and greater responsibility both for examining how it is that we have contributed to the construction of our world and how we might work toward its *tikkun* or healing. I would attempt, at every turn, to listen harder than I had before the contributions my students made to classroom discussions before entering the discussion with my own analyses. I would encourage students to bring philosophic insights "home" to the "lived world" of their everyday experiences.

A second way in which my immersion in Holocaust Studies helped me to become a better philosopher came to light in the course of my next project in the field: a study of rescuers during the Holocaust. Having read much of the literature on rescue and having interviewed two rescuers, Edith Hirschfeldt and Frieda Adam, in Berlin during the spring of 1994, I felt, prepared as I had never

been before, to wrestle with the question of "the nature of human nature." The witness of rescuers helped shed light on the perennial philosophical issue of the influences of nature vs. those of nature upon humans. I was encouraged by the testimony of rescuers, coming from many and diverse backgrounds, reaffirming the existentialist claims that: (1) human beings are neither innately good nor evil, and (2) that no one set of environmental stimuli will have a definitive effect on us humans who are in-the-process, morally speaking, of continuous self-creation. As Mrs. Hirschfeldt, a German rescuer who ran a safe house for members of the resistance, told me in response to my query about why she had done what she did, "You don't think, 'There is someone in my home, when they find me and this person, what will happen?' This was terrible—they were poor people. I would have helped somebody who was homeless and freezing to death." Mrs. Adam, a rescuer from the eastern part of Berlin, testified in much the same vein: "I was only doing what was right," she exclaimed, over and over.

Profoundly influenced, in particular by Philip Hallie's *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed* (1979), I left my study of rescuers on an activist note, a note to which I returned again and again in my future Holocaust scholarship. We must educate-toward-rescue, I argued. The witness of rescuers can open a clearing within which the young can envision an open moral horizon for their future acts. No longer bound by Freudian and Hobbesian determinist notions of the primacy of self-interest in our conduct, our children and our students can be empowered to see themselves as genuine moral agents. The behavior of rescuers, I argued, is not, as it is often deemed, "heroic"; it is as ordinary—and thus accessible—as are acts of cowardice or silent complicity in the face of evil.

I concluded my research concerning rescuers by rethinking the merits of the oft-repeated query: "What would I have done had I been there?" Given the impossibility of envisioning oneself in these particular circumstances, such a challenge had mostly failed to elicit an authentic wrestling with the moral issue of acting or failing to act in the presence of evil. Rather than pose this question, I contended, we must ask, "What am I doing in the face of contemporary instances of evil?" Although such instances of evil pale in comparison with those contributing to the massive and systematic destruction of Jews between 1933–1945, they, nonetheless, exist on a continuum with those heinous deeds. Thus, I concluded, the witness of Christian rescuers during the Holocaust constitutes no less than a call to action, a call to *tikkun olam*, the repair of the world. Their witness summons us to no longer avert our eyes in the presence of contemporary instances of genocide, or to rampant poverty, homelessness, and drug abuse—just to name a few contemporary issues we might face as modern-day "rescuers" ourselves.

Yet more was involved in the meeting of my scholarly life as philosopher and as scholar of the Holocaust. Indeed, the essence of the philosophical enterprise itself has been called into question for me in the course of my Holocaust studies. In preparing for my contribution to a volume of essays edited by John K. Roth entitled *Ethics After the Holocaust: Perspectives, Critiques, and Re-*

sponses (1994), I was profoundly moved by the work of the contemporary French Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas casting doubt, in the face of the Holocaust, upon the validity of my own discipline as it had manifested itself over the course of its history in the West. Although Levinas directly addressed the Holocaust in his body of work only infrequently, his insights into the appropriative nature of Western philosophizing—what he calls ontology—shed light on a mode of thinking that could well have contributed to that endeavor to master the alien other that stands at the heart of the Nazi enterprise.

For Levinas, Western philosophy has endeavored fundamentally to comprehend or take together all that is. This activity of "totalizing" all that is under the conceptual categories of the solitary ego constitutes, for Levinas, the essence of the philosophic mind at work. Other humans are not exempt from serving as mere objects of this endeavor on the part of the knower to grasp the whole. The endeavor to know other persons subjects them to my own categories of mind; another person can thus never be seen as truly Other, as a co-subject, or, in Martin Buber's terms, a "Thou." Ethical conduct, understood as the responsibility of co-subjects for one another, is thus removed from the realm of primary philosophical discourse. In the history of the West, ontology has always been "first philosophy"; ethics occupies a merely secondary or derivative place.

How does this bear on the study of the Holocaust? For Levinas, a line stretches from conceptual to physical mastery: Totalizing can become totalitarian. If philosophy fails to realize the primacy of the other as a fellow subject—if the other is merely objectified in accordance with the categorizing acts of the individual ego—then a continuum stretches forth from appropriative concepts to appropriative acts of violence. The alleged "ethical" thought within the Western tradition cannot help prevent genocidal acts, because the other to whom I am to relate ethically can never achieve the status of co-subject. He or she is always "for-me," subject to my own conceptual categories. Traditional ethical philosophy has not only not succeeded in preventing genocide, it may have played a role in contributing to a mode of thinking that has helped make the Holocaust possible! The failure to recognize the primacy of ethics in the history of Western thought has allowed the philosophical enterprise to contribute unwittingly to a mindset that can pass over into genocidal action.

As students of that discipline (philosophy), which perhaps more than others has modeled appropriative thinking, philosophers must take upon themselves a special obligation to rethink its fundamental aims. Philosophy after the Holocaust must model a mode of thinking that will help prevent new genocidal acts. My immersion in Holocaust Studies has thus made it impossible for me to simply research and teach the history of Western thought as it had been presented to me in my own philosophic training and in my early years as a professional philosopher. I have been moved to examine, from the bottom up, just what it is that I do as a philosopher. I asked, and continue to ask, myself, how what I do bears upon the endeavor of *tikkun olam* which, I have come to see,

should be a goal of all professional academics—indeed, the goal of all of us living in a post-Holocaust world.

I would like to believe that these insights have manifested themselves in my own classroom teaching of the Holocaust. In a course that I have taught once a year for the previous twelve years, "The Holocaust: Philosophic Issues," the Holocaust serves, in a substantial part of the course, as a point of departure for examining ways we may address contemporary instances of evil. This is not to say that I have taken sides in the ongoing debate between those who argue for the particularity of the Holocaust as opposed to its allegedly universal lessons. The Holocaust will always remain an instance of genocide that occurred to a particular people—the Jews—at a particular juncture in their history. Indeed, in order to address those elements of the Holocaust, which are shared by other instances of evil—and, in particular, other genocides—one must go through a detailed and focused study of that which is particular to this genocide of the Jews. Paradoxically, one reaches the universal only by going through the particular. Thus, after a brief study of the lives of many of those who were murdered—selections from Mark Zborowsky and Elizabeth Herzog's ethnography, *Life Is with People* (1952), are read—my course begins with an examination of key moral issues that arise during an in-depth study of the events of 1933–1945. We read, as an intellectual history of the period, Richard L. Rubenstein and John K. Roth's *Approaches to Auschwitz: The Holocaust and Its Legacy* (1987). Each chapter of the Rubenstein and Roth volume is accompanied by short readings that pose key moral questions. For example: 1. What does it mean to say "I was just following orders?" (selections from Stanley Milgram's *Obedience to Authority* (1974); 2. How might the conduct of many leaders of the *Judenrate* (Jewish councils established in the ghettos) be evaluated on moral grounds? (Yehuda Bauer's "The Ghetto as a Form of Government" (1979); 3. What constitutes an act of resistance during the Holocaust? (Raul Hilberg's "Forms of Jewish Resistance" (1980); 4. How might forgiveness be understood in the context of the Holocaust? (Simon Wiesenthal's *The Sunflower* (1997), 5). How might we evaluate, on moral grounds, American responses to the Holocaust (David Wyman's "The Bombing of Auschwitz" (1984). Students write frequent journal entries, offering their critical assessment of these issues and sharing the arguments for their positions with others in seminar fashion.

Although the course examines a variety of ethical issues that manifest themselves "writ large" during the Holocaust period, the course does not end with the year 1945. Rather, I ask of my students to probe more deeply one of the philosophic issues studied during the course of the semester and then to relate their learnings regarding their chosen issue to some manifestation of that issue in more contemporary times. Students have chosen topics such as the misuse of technology for immoral ends, the ongoing silence of most of the world in the more recent genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia, and abusive child-rearing practices in Germany of the 1930s and today. Students are challenged to come face to face with ongoing lessons to be learned from their study of the Holocaust;

they are challenged to memorialize the almost 6 million Jewish dead by addressing multiple ways to help realize *tikkun olam.*

One example of student work may help to illustrate some learnings my new insights into the philosophic enterprise have helped to spawn. Following the teachings of sociologist and Holocaust scholar Zygmunt Bauman, some students have examined distinctions between so-called instrumental or functional modes of reasoning and truly philosophical or ethical reasoning. As Bauman argues so persuasively in his work entitled *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), means-end thinking, part of the legacy of the Western Enlightenment, has permeated modernity. Such instrumental reasoning, exercised without reflection on the nature of ends-to-be-realized, has led us on a path to the ovens of Auschwitz. The unthinking glorification of science and technology—another "gift" of the Enlightenment—has allowed us to value the merely quantitative, objective, amoral thought processes of the bureaucrat. Students in my course have examined parallels between the "desk killer" mentality of Eichmann and other bureaucrats during the Holocaust and that same mentality manifested—albeit in much less destructive forms—in many forms of the contemporary workplace. They have come to look anew at their own conduct, and the conduct of those around them, in the offices they occupy, the boardrooms they frequent, the laboratories they inhabit; and, they refuse to accept calculative rationality as the sole mode of reasoning to be honored in the world of business. They refuse to accept technological "advances" as advances without questioning the nature of the ends to which such technology can be employed. I would like to think that engaging in such exercises has helped move us—ever so slightly—toward *tikkun olam.*

Although "The Holocaust: Philosophic Issues" is the only course I teach that properly can be labeled an offering in the field of Holocaust Studies, I believe that other philosophy courses I teach have been informed by learnings within this arena as well. Two examples: In my introductory philosophy course, issues surrounding obedience to authority, bystander behavior, and racism—to name just a few—play a prominent role in sections of the course devoted to ethics and to social and political philosophy. In a graduate course, entitled "Philosophy of Education," the issue of how to educate toward critical thinking is examined in depth: "critical literacy," so lacking in the education of German youth during the late Weimar years, is discussed at length.

Furthermore, the lessons I have learned in Holocaust Studies concerning education in general and pedagogy in particular have not been confined to the classroom; nor has my ongoing commitment to working toward *tikkun olam* remained something merely preached within a traditional academic setting. My personal development with regard to these concerns took a substantial and dramatic leap forward with the creation, in 1996, of the Pastora Goldner Holocaust Symposium at Wroxton College, Fairleigh Dickinson's British campus. Together with Dr. Henry Knight, Holocaust scholar and chaplain at The University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, I have organized a biennial conference of thirty-six Holocaust

scholars from seven countries at Wroxton. *Tikkun olam* is central to our undertaking. What follows is taken from our 1995 "Call for Proposals":

> This symposium will feature a broadly-conceived praxis orientation toward *tikkun olam*, the repair of the world. From a base in the study of the Holocaust, participants will develop projects to address the questions: How are we to respond in word and deed to a radically transformed world, the post-Holocaust world in which "business as usual" no longer applies? How are we to utilize our learnings from the Holocaust in order to face, responsibly, the genocidal potentials inherent in our own world? The symposium will thus afford scholars the opportunity to apply their research findings to concrete human situations in the present day. Scholars will pursue projects which call for personal, pedagogical, and/or political action, as well as more traditional scholarly activity.

Although most of the symposium's concrete "products" have been scholarly texts, the thrust of our publications, as well as the dialogical format in which they have been written, bears witness to an approach that emphasizes engagement in the world by responsible moral agents in a genocidal universe.

Unlike most academic conferences, at which the most fruitful dialogue often takes place away from the lecture halls—in corridors, at meals, in hotel lobbies—the Goldner Symposium attempts to make these more informal and unplanned encounters central to the conference's activities. Attempting to realize the preeminent place that dialogue must play if Holocaust scholarship is to prove faithful to some of its most important lessons, Dr. Knight and I have helped to create an authentic community of scholars. Wroxton conferees are dedicated to the endeavor on the part of each to honor the personhood of the Other—even while engaging in often spirited debate on difficult issues. Participants commit to attending the symposium every two years on an ongoing basis and to work with one another during the two-year intervals between symposia. I have attempted to put into practice the learnings about a truly humanizing education—a kind of education that was absent in the schooling of Germans in the 1930s and that might have gone far toward preventing both the overtly genocidal acts of the Nazi leadership and the complicity of so many ordinary citizens of the Third Reich. At Wroxton, I have thus endeavored to create a "safe space" in which the "minefields" of Holocaust scholarship can be walked through. Issues such as those that arise in the "uniqueness" debate, those that rear their head in the course of Christian-Jewish dialogue, those that arise in conjunction with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—all are addressed with a mindfulness about the need to engage the other person as a co-subject. Together with Dr. Knight, I have attempted to create a symposium that is to be self-illustrating with regard to the subject matter at hand: the dehumanization of the other that we study must not be echoed—however faintly—among those committed to working toward the prevention of future instances of genocide. The ongoing collegial relationships

we have formed at Wroxton give the lie to any notion that Christian and Jew or that German and non-German cannot proceed, with trust, in the work of post-Holocaust healing.

I will offer one example of what might have served as an obstacle to dialogical learning at Wroxton, and which, indeed, might be perceived as an important issue in Holocaust Studies in general. Although Holocaust Studies is by its very nature interdisciplinary, the role that history plays within the field has been called into question by some of our Wroxton participants. Some of the historians present indicated that the symposium as a whole might have acknowledged, more fully than it had, the central role that history plays in our common endeavor. History, it is argued, is the fulcrum upon which all other disciplines turn in the study of the Holocaust. Some other symposium members—philosophers, theologians, education specialists, psychotherapists, artists, to name a few—might well have understood this as implying that their disciplines are "soft." Given our commitment to realizing the fullness of hospitality toward one another at Wroxton, these matters have begun to be aired dialogically; as a result, potentially divisive and unfruitful dispute has largely been avoided. We have agreed that our sessions need to be grounded in thought that is the product both of the solid gathering of research data and of sound, careful analysis. While honoring history as our core discipline, we do not restrict "disciplined" discussion to any one discipline. Rather, we wish to extend disciplined thinking across disciplines—as we do across any allegedly solid divide between "then and now"—so that we can engage one another in thoughtful consideration of ways to live well in a post-Holocaust world.

Having reflected on my development as a Holocaust scholar over these last thirteen years, I will conclude by saying that perhaps the single most pronounced way in which my thinking has changed is reflected in my recent work relating learnings from the Holocaust to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Let me say at the outset that I believe that Holocaust Studies must move out from its base in the study of the events of 1933–1945 to the endeavor to shed light on other instances of inhumane conduct in our still genocidal world. As Holocaust scholars, I would argue, we must be concerned with any and all instances of the desecration of the face of the Other anywhere in the world, keeping firmly in mind the ever-present need to avoid facile comparisons with—shallow analogies to—the Holocaust itself. In this connection, the relationship between Holocaust Studies and Genocide Studies must continue to be explored carefully. While acknowledging the need for dedicated studies of individual genocides, it is certainly the case that much can be learned about each and every instance of genocide from those comparative studies that form the base of what has come to be called Genocide Studies.

To return to my recent work as a Holocaust scholar addressing the Middle East conflict: The specter of the Holocaust haunts the new Hundred Years' War in this region of the world. The conflict can be said to be fought in the shadows of the Holocaust. Although the Zionist vision has roots that are millennia old,

Israel itself was in some substantial measure born from the ashes of Auschwitz. "Never Again" is the central watchword of Israelis. Palestinians, in their turn, have argued frequently that they have suffered their own holocaust. The rhetoric of "My holocaust is greater than yours" is heard among many Palestinians. Holocaust denial has also made its appearance in the press and in many Palestinian schoolrooms.

The Holocaust is thus the backdrop against which this seemingly intractable conflict is being fought. As such, I would argue, we Holocaust scholars have a special obligation to address the ongoing hostilities in this region of the world. But how are we to accomplish this? As nonspecialists in this region of the globe, how do we dare to offer the fruits of our research as they might apply to that narrow stretch of land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River? What learnings from the Holocaust can be applied to this century-old conflict in the Middle East?

Let me address each of these questions in order. First of all, we must not be silent with regard to murderous struggle in the Middle East. To do so opens us to the charge of the complicity of silence—a charge that we, as scholars of the Holocaust, cannot avoid. The alternative to speaking out—silence—smacks of bystander conduct. This does not mean, however, that we speak as experts, in the traditional sense of that term. Insofar as the conflict takes place in the shadows of the Holocaust, we must speak; but our speech must be cautious, reflective, replete with the wisdom of humility. Presumption must be fought at every turn, as must the ever-present temptation to let our emotions run wild. Indeed, our very remove from the conflict as nonspecialists can be turned to our advantage. The distancing that necessarily attends our working in an area in which we do not possess certain kinds of expertise can offer us perspective not necessarily shared by specialists immersed in Middle East Studies; at the same time our peculiar closeness to the situation as Holocaust scholars allows us a special entrée to the issues at hand.

The second query—the choice of the lessons learned from the Holocaust to be applied to the Middle East conflict—poses yet more serious challenges to scholars of the Holocaust. From Rabbi Irving Greenberg, among others, we have learned that, in the post-Holocaust world, all totalizing narratives must be "broken." That is to say, after the flowering of Nazi racial doctrines, and the destructiveness to which they led, all claims to absolute truth must be questioned. In the shadows of Auschwitz—largely the result of the reign of ideology-run-wild—all position-taking must be rethought radically; must be made subject to doubt. Thus, what to Israelis and Palestinians may seem to be narratives-as-unquestioned-absolutes must now be demythologized, called radically into question. What we learn from the Holocaust is that each party to the conflict must query the master narrative within which it uncritically justifies its own existence, while at the same moment assigning its opponent the status of "other." Each party must accept the limitations of its own dominant "story": In confronting the "brokenness" of the narratives on both sides, Israelis and Palestinians might

then begin to escape the seemingly inevitable chain of violent action/reaction that has thus far characterized the ongoing struggle.

Although both parties have demonstrated much intransigence with regard to heeding this call to challenge any claim to absolute truth in their dominant narratives, I will here speak both as a Holocaust scholar and as a Jew in the endeavor to attempt to shed some light on the failure to heed the call from the Israeli side; much can—and must—be said to alert Palestinians to their own failures in this regard. The trauma of the Holocaust has permeated the soul of Israeli Jews; it cannot have been otherwise. An essential lesson learned from having undergone two thousand years of oppression, culminating in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, has been the need for Israeli Jews to assert that never again will Jewish blood be shed with impunity. This crucial lesson must be heeded. Difficulties occur, however, when this injunction becomes seen as the sole lesson to be learned from the Holocaust. The temptation to see oneself as the eternal victim is understandable. Isolated from other aspects of one's self-definition, however, it can lead to severely negative consequences. To paraphrase a warning issued by Zygmunt Bauman: Although Hitler did not ultimately succeed in turning the world against the Jews, he may yet, from the grave, succeed in turning Jews against the world.

The lessons to be learned from the Holocaust, I would argue, are myriad in nature. Included among them is the directive to honor the sacredness of the personhood of the other, most especially the other who is oppressed. The *Shoah* teaches that human dignity rests not only in having political power—a lesson to which our attention has repeatedly, and aptly, been called by Richard Rubenstein—but also that human dignity rests in welcoming the downtrodden, the other who is in need. With a history of ongoing oppression prompting Jews to no longer accept powerlessness as their fate, this same people must take special care to avoid becoming oppressors themselves. Only thus can the many and varied lessons of the Holocaust be heeded.

My study of the relationship of Holocaust awareness to the conflict in the Middle East has brought home to me a grave danger in our field of studies: the acceptance, as definitive, of one or another of the myriad lessons to be learned from the Holocaust. As Holocaust scholars, we must face the future fully aware of the danger of our inclinations to employ reductive thinking to an infinitely complex set of factors. We must realize a willingness to address, with humility, the multitude of learnings to emerge from Holocaust. But, as I have suggested above, we must go further to endeavor to apply such lessons to contemporary instances of dehumanizing conduct in a genocidal world. Addressing both these dangers will lead us on a path upon which we can be said to be truly endeavoring to honor the memory of almost 6 million dead.

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7

So They Care and Remember

Aaron Hass

Actually, I can remember the exact moment that I decided to devote a good deal of my academic life to lecturing and writing about the Holocaust. In 1976 I was teaching Abnormal Psychology in the Department of Psychology at UCLA, and, during a break, I overheard two of my students.

> "My mom and dad are survivors of the Holocaust."
>
> "Yeah, my parents had it just as rough. They lived through the Depression."

Previously, I had often bridled at facile, what I experienced as disrespectful, comparisons to the Holocaust—slavery, apartheid, the bombing of Hiroshima, and others. But this was too much.

As a child of Holocaust survivors I had always felt a responsibility to Holocaust memory. As a youngster I grappled with common themes of my tainted group: not feeling entitled to more, not wanting to cause further upset to my parents, trying to compensate in some small manner for what had been lost, and remaining vigilant for the safety of the Jewish people. The Holocaust shadowed me. As one child of Holocaust survivors quipped, "The most important event in my life occurred before I was born."

In *The Shadow of the Holocaust*, I told the following story about an event in my own life:

> The ritual began when I was eight or nine years old and lasted for about ten years. It took place on the night of Yom Kippur. In observance of Jewish legal restrictions, our apartment in Brooklyn was dark except for a shaft of light coming from under the closed door of the bathroom. This streak would be our lantern in the blackness. One was not permitted to switch on electricity for twenty-four hours during this holy period. The

story was brief, always the same. The somber environment and the mystical day on which it was told lent an eeriness to the account. We lay on my parents' bed, my father lying on his left side, I on my right side facing him. I could barely make out the outlines of his face. My father spoke in Yiddish. "We [the partisans] found out that a German officer would be at the farmhouse of a Pole who had betrayed Jews to him. The German was probably delivering the two bottles of Vodka as payment for the two Jews the Pole had handed over. We came in and they were drinking together. We tied them up and cut a small hole in each one's arm. For hours we put salt in the open wound. Then we shot both of them."

My father's voice reflected an increasing bitterness as the story progressed. I absorbed my father's determination as he spoke, and I felt my anger swell. I was fascinated. I was also frightened. I did not ask any questions afterward, and my father did not want to speak anymore. That was what he wanted to tell me. That was what he wanted me to remember. (Hass, 1991, p. 68)

But, like most in the Second Generation, I knew relatively little about the Holocaust. Yes, children of Holocaust survivors believe they know about the Holocaust because its aftereffects permeated the atmosphere of their home. But ask a typical son or daughter, "What took place at the Wannsee Conference?" or "What was the difference between a concentration camp and a death camp?" or "When were the Jews of Hungary deported?" and you probably won't receive an accurate response. (Moreover, many Holocaust survivors have little knowledge of the bigger picture. Of course, they know their own experience. Most, however, would invariably falter if queried about historical detail. Nevertheless, survivors are offended by any suggestion of a gap in their knowledge. While chatting with a survivor, I mention a recently published book about the Holocaust that she might find of interest. "I don't need to read books, I was in it," she testily replied.

My instantaneous decision to pursue Holocaust education as a vocation also coincided with (and was a result of?) a certain maturity I conceded in my own life. After many years of a hedonistic bachelorhood during the sexual revolution of the 1970s, I felt ready for marriage and a family. I was becoming more serious about my existential choices.

So I began my journey as a Holocaust educator over twenty years ago by reading widely and voraciously. Growing up I had been fascinated by some of the popular literature—Leon Uris's *Mila 18*, *The Wall*, and *Exodus*, to name a few impactful titles. But now it was time for serious study, and I began with Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*. My subsequent readings in history produced a confidence that I could become a teacher in the field. My thinking about the broader psychological setting for genocide informed the course I eventually designed. And a more specific investigation of extant research concerning children of Holocaust survivors helped me shape the inquiries

that structured my first book in this realm, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Second Generation.* (The Holocaust historian, Michael Berenbaum, told me, "Once you write a book about the Holocaust, you won't want to write about any other subject." In my case, this has not been prophetic. I have alternated Holocaust-related books with others in widely divergent areas. I need the relief.)

By now, most have read or heard of Santayana's famous words, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." An implied optimistic corollary is that knowledge of past mistakes will forestall future similar ones. Santayana's admonition is trotted out at virtually all Holocaust commemorations and academic conferences. We imperceptibly nod our head in somber agreement. The warning appeals to our common sense. It sounds right, particularly for those who value and use knowledge. The dictum is oddly reassuring because it offers the promise of control.

But the implied prescription, "If you are aware of your mistakes in the past, you will be prevented from repeating them," patently flies in the face of post-Holocaust events and even the personal experience of virtually each one of us. Did the vicious Hutu extremists, Serbs in Bosnia, or lackeys of Pol Pot never hear of the Holocaust? For that matter, how many of us have repeated past injurious behaviors (toward another or ourself) even though our memory is completely intact?

Unfortunately, the Holocaust taught us lessons about human nature, not human beings who happened to be Nazis or their collaborators. Men and women have needs, which, when frustrated, will result in unseemly and even vicious attacks against innocent neighbors. We need to feel safe and secure. We need to view ourselves in a positive light. When these conditions are not met, we will lash out, preferably at vulnerable targets. Indeed, on balance, we, *Homo sapiens*, are not a pretty sight. Highlighting the few Righteous Gentiles emphasizes the many who unleashed their darker selves.

We have also been told by some keepers of the Holocaust keys (e.g., Elie Wiesel), that the Holocaust is inexplicable, or even ineffable. An almost mystical dimension has been imposed, often shrouding rational understanding. Yet, there were a multitude of readily identifiable factors, fueled by long-standing, church-inspired, charges of deicide, and powerful demonic images of the Jew, which set the stage for the rise of Hitler and his implementation of the Final Solution: the Treaty of Versailles, the communist insurgency sweeping through Europe, the instability of the Weimar Republic, the Great Depression, the emergence of Social Darwinism, the "science of racism," the loss of German pride, etc. Predisposed hatreds, jealousies, and insecurities were unleashed subsequently.

To this historical amalgam, however, two levels of investigation must be added: (1) Humans have a primal, instinctual reflex to view Others in simplistic, negative, and stereotypic lights. We fear the stranger because he implies potential danger. As a result, we feel compelled to make hasty decisions about him: Is he friend or foe? Adopting stereotypic notions compensates for ignorance and

serves to simplify matters as well. We crave simplicity because it allows us to feel more certain of our responses. Finally, our need to maintain a positive self-image and assuage our insecurities inclines us to feel superior to others. On more than one occasion, all of us have reassured ourselves with the thought, "I'm better than him/her." (2) Which psychological mechanisms allow us to kill innocents with a clear conscience? How does one commit heinous acts and still consider himself "a good person"? How does one focus singularly on being a good soldier or doing a good job, and plead that it was never his/her intent to do harm to anyone? Furthermore, how do we rationalize so easily that he/she deserves whatever ill comes his/her way?

When interviewing Holocaust survivors for my book, *The Aftermath: Living with the Holocaust* (1995), I was struck by how many would shake their head from side to side and utter the word, "senselessness," when referring to the wanton brutality. The astonishment of the first-hand witness, however, obscures their understanding. We can make sense of the Holocaust. And, for those who fear rational analysis, "making sense of," need not imply "justification."

One central objective of the course ("The Psychohistory of the Holocaust") I teach every semester is to humanize the Holocaust. Only by having the perpetrators and victims come alive can the full horror of the Holocaust be appreciated. What prompts a church-going, family-oriented man or woman to act so viciously toward innocents? And, each murdered Jew was a loved one's mother, father, brother, sister, or child. At the very first course meeting I tell my students to forget the number 6,000,000, and, instead, remember the number, 5,962,465. I want to diminish the inherent, abstract quality of "6 million."

While there is a section of my course devoted to the history of the rise of Nazism and the implementation of the Final Solution, the preponderance of lectures and readings offer insight into the mindset of the perpetrators and the responses of the victims. Topics include:

- Historical antisemitism
- The Christian roots of antisemitism
- Volkish ideology
- The psychology of fascism
- The psychology of prejudice
- Ethnocentrism
- Images of the Jew
- How to inhibit conscience
- How an ideology is accepted and a mass movement begun
- The outlook of the ghetto inhabitant
- The conflicted role of the Judenrat
- Obstacles to resistance

- The response of bystanders
- Coping under extreme circumstances (e.g., the concentration camp)
- The postwar adjustment of Holocaust survivors
- Intergenerational transmissions of the effects of trauma

My students are predominantly of black, Latin, or Asian background. The great majority have never had any relationship of which to speak with a Jew. This void is filled with stereotypes and generalizations. Some students take my course because their peers have recommended it. Most find themselves in my classroom because my course is one of many that fulfills a general education requirement at the university (California State University, Dominguez Hills).

I hook this latter group of indifferent students by speaking early on about the flagrant and subtle ways our prejudices move us. Why does everyone evince the potential for condemnation without cause? As my explanations unfold, the men and women seated facing me nod their head in recognition, and their half-smile betrays a slight embarrassment. The power of our propensities for prejudice is unmasked as the universality of the phenomenon is demonstrated easily.

My own students' experiences of having been discriminated against leaves them open to identifying with the persecution of the Jews. The tears they shed when viewing the documentary *Genocide*, or the videotaped interview with a Holocaust survivor, spring from a mixture of their own pain and their empathy for those brutalized during the Holocaust. The narcissistic, unarticulated question, "What does this have to do with me?" is easily answered. And, as a result, my students care.

In an early section of the course I briefly explore the unique aspects of the Holocaust in contrast to other examples of genocide or mass oppression. Students sometimes confront me with their own historical grievances. In one form or another, the question is hurled at me, "Why is there so much attention paid to the Holocaust?"

I make no attempt to minimize the devastation of, say, slavery in contrast to the Holocaust. On the contrary, without any qualification, I clearly state, "Slavery was terrible. Period." I do, however, point out the crucial differences between slavery and the Holocaust (e.g., "Slaves were considered valuable. It was in the interest of the owner to keep his slaves alive and have them procreate. All Jews, however, were marked for death.") Engaging in a contest of comparative suffering is useless and counterproductive. By the time we have concluded the section of the course addressing the universality of prejudice, the anger of my students has dissolved to sadness and identification with the victim featured in my syllabus, the Jew.

While academics argue over the uniqueness of the Holocaust, the world attends to the daily stream of present events and attempts to divine the future. Nothing is to be gained (except self-satisfaction) by trying to prove a point or win an extra dollop of sympathy by emphasizing the unparalleled degree of

Jewish suffering. While generating a regard for the individuals murdered and maimed during the Holocaust, we should be inspiring interest in the background and foundational factors that set the Final Solution in motion.

It is the spring of 1987, and I have been invited to teach my course at Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany. (The telephone rings in my hotel room my first night in Frankfurt. It is my mother, the Holocaust survivor, verifying that I am still alive.) While this generation of German university students are apt to protest, "Enough of the Holocaust already," there is no evidence of resistance on the part of those who choose to sit in my classroom. They evince great sympathy (and a subterranean guilt?) about what their parents and grandparents wreaked on the Jews of Europe. They are interested and, while much more knowledgeable than their American counterparts, they hunger for more. They want to hang out with me, a child of Holocaust survivors, after class at a café across from the campus to which we retreat following every meeting. However, despite their anxious curiosity, they are somewhat intimidated, and wait for me to lead the informal discussion. They are wary and respectful of my Jewish sensibilities. Yet they want to know this remnant of the Holocaust.

Although I have no illusions of them being representative of their peers, I am impressed by my German students' devotion and sense of responsibility to the Jewish people—and the rest of humanity—for that matter. Their sensitivity assuages some of my anger and sadness.

One jarring note during my brief tenure at Goethe University: A fiftyish-year-old professor occasionally drops into my class and sits in the rear of the lecture hall. This day I am showing a videotaped testimony of a Holocaust survivor, Barry Bruk. After I shut off the recorder, an agitated voice from the back of the room bellows, "Why did you show us this video?!" I respond to the professor, "I believe it is important for the students to hear first-person, eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust. It provides a certain perspective." "You did it to make us feel guilty!" the professor shouts, as he storms from the wood-paneled venue.

The question, "Why do I teach this course?" is not unrelated to the question of my objectives. As a child of Holocaust survivors I feel an obligation to ensure that others learn about that catastrophe. I want those who were murdered to be known. However, equally important is my desire to illuminate the inner workings of human beings, to warn by teaching what we are capable of personally inflicting on our fellow man.

If I don't keep memory of the Holocaust alive, who will? It is primarily those Jews who are connected emotionally to the Holocaust who teach and write in this field. A few Christians, atoning for the groundwork laid by Church doctrine, involve themselves as well. Commemorations of the Holocaust are prompted mostly by Holocaust survivors and their children. Understandably, as Jews become more assimilated and more ignorant of Jewish history, they will want to move further and further away from the implied vulnerability of the Holocaust. (A rabbi tells me, "Aaron, I'd like to invite you to my synagogue to speak about

your books, but my congregants tell me they are tired of hearing about the Holocaust.") From where will the motivation to dwell on these frightening events come? Who will devote his or her life to this deadly memory?

If Holocaust memory is to be sustained, an audience is required as well. Popular feelings about Jews, oftentimes influenced by events in the Middle East, will determine how much of a space Jews and the Holocaust will be given in the arena of public discourse. Because "Jews" and Israel are inextricably bound together in the public's consciousness, the degree of sympathy evinced for Jewish suffering in the past will hinge on the perceived correctness of Israeli actions in the present.

I am aware keenly of wanting the Holocaust to occupy a prominent place in my students' memory bank. Like most, I remember relatively little of what I learned in college. As young adults, the men and women sitting in my classroom are more prone than other age groups to measure objective importance by the answer to the narcissistic inquiry, "What does this have to do with my life?" As I mentioned earlier, that overriding concern is satisfied by pointing out universal tendencies to prejudice, obedience, and ready rationalization of unseemly personal acts. The implication of the need to guard against these awful propensities in ourselves is grasped readily.

But what truly sets this course apart in my students' college experience is the addition of a powerful, associative, emotional component. The most influential reason that the facts and the lessons of the Holocaust will be retained results from the tears that are shed while reading Elie Wiesel's *Night* and the nightmares induced by the poignancy of Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*. Emotional memory clings more tenaciously than material simply encoded on an intellectual plane. For my students, the Holocaust is not retained as merely an historical event. On the contrary, it is ingested as a deeply unsettling human tragedy, beyond the scope of anything heretofore. I believe the seismic ripples of that shock will move them for decades. The Holocaust will always be something about which they care.

More than anything, pictures and voices move my students. Despite almost thirty years of practice as a teacher, despite the inherently interesting material embedded in my lectures, my students seem most impacted by the documentaries they view. Of all the documentaries, it is the single camera transfixed on a seated Holocaust survivor, dressed in a dark blue suit and red tie, as he grimly tells of what he experienced and witnessed during those dark years, which makes it most difficult for my students to move on to the rest of their day. And, when I have had occasion to invite a Holocaust survivor to speak in person, the responses of my students are even more empathic. From documentaries about the historical events of the Holocaust, to the celluloid record of a Holocaust survivor speaking into a camera, to the live presence of one who actually endured it, my students experience a more immediate reality, a sharper focus, and increasingly incontrovertible evidence. Whether it be through their own identification process or the shock of confrontation with the evil that humans have wrought, the more

the Holocaust is personalized, the more meaningful it becomes. (The documentary that produces the most outrage in my students is "America and the Holocaust," a powerful film that painstakingly marshals evidence of the antisemitic sentiments that drove the American populace and American government officials to ignore, downplay, or deny the massacre of European Jewry. As Americans, my students feel a particular anger toward the insensitivity and prejudice of their own.)

For my Christian students, evidence of the passivity of the Catholic Church and the German Protestant Church's complicity during the Holocaust engenders a shock of bewilderment. For some, the authorities behind their spiritual beliefs are brought into serious question. Of all the material in my book, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust*, my students are most discomfited by the opening paragraph of the chapter, "Jews and Gentiles":

> Lessons. The world, I learned, is divided in two. There are Jews and there are goyim. There are few of us and many of them. Goyim are different from Jews. They are brutish. We are sensitive, humane. They persecute. We study. We must stick to our own, for community and safety. Goyim are to be shunned. They are to be feared. And because Jewish survival is, and has always been, precarious, we must focus our energies on ourselves, our families, and our people. We live in America, but we are Jewish and alien here. It's been like this for generations. We live in their countries and they hate us. And, sometimes, they decide to murder us. (Hass, 1991, p. 106)

For my Christian readers, these words are an unfair, implied attack on their own culpability. Once again, the Holocaust is personalized, and my students are engaged emotionally.

My students are not the only emotionally engaged ones in my classroom. Despite over twenty years of researching, writing, and lecturing about the Holocaust, I find my voice involuntarily cracking and my eyes glistening over when I broach certain topics. Usually, it is when speaking about some aspect of Jewish children during the Holocaust. Last semester, it occurred when telling the story of Janusz Korczak and his transport from the Warsaw Ghetto with his young charges to the factories of death.

Sadness always accompanies my encounter with Holocaust material. However, in the past, going to academic conferences, viewing films, writing books, or delivering lectures related to the catastrophe always enervated me. For over two decades I have been on a mission to educate and fulfill my sense of obligation to the victims by telling the world what happened to them. Years of immersing myself in the *Shoah*, though, have taken some toll.

I now strike a greater balance in my own life between Holocaust and non-Holocaust matters. I feel less compelled to view every new movie or documentary. I may choose to read a novel instead of a recently published historical

rendering of the Nazi era. Although Michael Berenbaum warned me of the singular focus that the Holocaust compels, I have proven consciously his prediction wrong. I purposefully intersperse writing Holocaust books with books on other subjects. I find myself looking forward to delivering public lectures about topics related to but not specifically about the Holocaust, such as "Why we hate those whom we don't even know." I want to move back and forth between the universal and the particular. I also want to ensure that the Holocaust does not engulf me in despair.

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8

Reflections on a Decade of Teaching the Holocaust

Stephen R. Haynes

THE GENESIS OF MY WORK IN HOLOCAUST STUDIES

My direct encounter with the Holocaust began in serendipity, that inexplicable concatenation of events theologians call providence. In the fall of 1986, as I prepared to register for my second semester of doctoral course work at Emory University, a fellow student suggested that I take a class from Jack Boozer, a veteran of the Emory religion department who was retiring later that year. Since I had room in my schedule, I heeded my friend's advice and examined the course listings looking for Boozer's name. His only graduate level offering that semester was something called "Inclusiveness and Exclusiveness in Christology." Although the title did not thrill me, I preregistered in the knowledge that I could drop it if necessary.

When the semester arrived and I entered the poorly lit seminar room where the class was to be held, I was one of exactly four students in attendance (and the other three were undergraduates!). I briefly wondered if my friend had played some sort of joke on me, but it was too late to exit unnoticed. For the first hour of the seminar Boozer introduced the course, which turned out to be a critical study of Christian belief in light of the Holocaust. I was intrigued by this area of contemporary theology that had escaped my notice completely, but I feared that as the only graduate student enrolled in the course I would bear a heavy academic burden.

At the first break I politely informed Professor Boozer that, while his course appeared fascinating, I would be "dropping." In barely concealed desperation he explained that, according to university policy, without at least four students enrolled he could not offer the class at all. I agreed to stay, though it was more from a sense of obligation to him and the other students than from any interest in the subject matter. Though hardly voluntary, that decision turned out to be one of the most significant of my academic career. Over the course of the

semester something profound happened to me. In the process of reading and discussing classic studies of Christian antisemitism—including Rosemary R. Ruether's *Faith and Fratricide* (1974) and Edward H. Flannery's *The Anguish of the Jews* (1965)—and others—I realized that my faith tradition had been called into question by its complicity in a centuries-long hatred for the Jewish people.

Through another stroke of serendipity/providence, I learned that my own denomination—the Presbyterian Church (USA)—recently had commissioned a statement on Jewish-Christian relations and that two local theologians were among those working on the document. Professor Boozer encouraged me to speak with them and to write a critical evaluation of the statement as my final project for his seminar. I did so, and the experience was so stimulating that I began to search for a dissertation topic that would accommodate my newfound interest in Jewish-Christian relations. Eventually I decided to write on the theology of Israel (that is, the Jewish people) in the work of three influential twentieth-century Protestant theologians—Karl Barth, Jürgen Moltmann, and Paul van Buren. Naturally, I asked Professor Boozer to serve on my dissertation committee, but he died suddenly only a few months after his retirement. Despite his tragic end, his memory continues to inspire me to explore the importance of the Holocaust for Christian theory and Christian faith.

Fifteen years later, it is fascinating to recall the circumstances of my introduction to the Holocaust and Jewish-Christian relations. It is certainly ironic that the most significant experience of my graduate school career came in a course in which I was the only graduate student, a course into which I wandered and would have dropped if not for the teacher's personal appeal.

My actual preparation to teach the Holocaust began two years later, in the fall of 1989. During my first semester at Rhodes College, in Memphis, Tennessee, I was approached by Professor Robert Patterson, chair of the Department of Religious Studies. Aware of my interest in post-Holocaust theology (my dissertation had been accepted for publication by the American Academy of Religion; see Haynes, 1991), he asked if I would be willing to offer a course on the Holocaust. My response was, "I don't know anything about it." I was not being modest; while I was quite familiar with theological responses to the Holocaust, I had never studied formally the events themselves. My degree was in Religion and Literature, I reminded my chair. But he persisted, claiming that whatever my shortcomings, I knew more about the subject than anyone else in the department. I was afraid he was correct.

My chair's offer intrigued me, and against my better judgment I accepted the challenge. Since it was only a few weeks before the spring semester was to begin, I placed some desperate phone calls to local synagogues and the Jewish Community Center. I learned that the most knowledgeable person in the area was the Hillel Center Director at Memphis State University, so I contacted her. This turned out to be another stroke of providence, for Rachel Shankman, who is now the regional director of Facing History and Ourselves, an international

organization that trains educators in ways to introduce students to the lessons of the Holocaust, has been a dear friend for thirteen years. With Rachel's help I assembled a fledgling syllabus and in January 1990 began teaching the course. As I wanted to make the most of this opportunity to develop an elective course, I sent a letter to each of the twenty students who had preregistered for the class. I warned them that "Holocaust" would be a challenging experience—emotionally and academically—and warned them against taking the course unless they were willing to invest the required energy. Much to my surprise, I still had twenty students when the spring semester began. On the first day of class, I announced five outside-of-class sessions devoted to viewing the ten-hour documentary *Shoah*. Still, no one rushed for the door, and I breathed a sigh of relief.

As I look back at my syllabus from the spring of 1990, several things stand out. First, the course, "Holocaust: Event, Explanation, Response," was extremely ambitious. According to the course description, it would consider the Holocaust's effects "on contemporary philosophical and theological reflection, Jewish-Christian relations, as well as literature and world politics." Second, my attendance policy was particularly strict. The syllabus announced that "students who miss class three times without a sufficient excuse (e.g., illness, family or personal emergency) will receive an "F" for attendance and participation)," which would account for 20 percent of their course grade. Third, of the books I required in that first class—Rubenstein and Roth, *Approaches to Auschwitz* (1987), Lucy S. Dawidwicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933–1945* (1975), Elie Wiesel, *Night* (1960), Terrence DesPres, *The Survivor* (1980), and Emil Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History* (1970)—*Night* is the only one I continue to use. I have tried many different texts over the years, but now have settled on Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1985), "*The Good Old Days*," edited by Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess (1991), Inge Scholl, *The White Rose* (1983), *Is the Holocaust Unique?* edited by Alan S. Rosenbaum (1996), Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men* (1992), and the old standby, Wiesel's *Night*. Fourth, that original course focused overwhelmingly on the experiences of victims and survivors. It also emphasized contemporary religious responses to the Holocaust (including Fackenheim, Rubenstein, Irving Greenberg, Eliezer Berkovits, Jacob Neusner, A. Roy Eckardt, J.B. Metz, and Paul van Buren), and ended with a look at the Middle East crisis. Looking back now, the course resembled a graduate seminar (or maybe two seminars) more than an undergraduate survey course. In subsequent years I have scaled back my educational goals accordingly. The breadth of the course has narrowed while its focus has sharpened. For instance, my current syllabus includes sections on victims, perpetrators, resisters, rescuers, and bystanders, and explores the phenomenon of Holocaust denial and the issue of the Holocaust's uniqueness. I spend less time on religious responses to the Holocaust and more time on how other genocides are similar and dissimilar to it.

Further, my course objectives are now more closely tied to the college's

mission statement, which emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills, communication, synthesis, evaluation, and empathy. I have also added a series of pop quizzes designed to encourage students to keep up with their reading assignments. I provide more guidance for paper and journal assignments and, after much trial and error, I have been able to describe the kind of paper I want students to write. I call them "response papers," and according to my syllabus, they "should demonstrate integration of and thoughtful responses to course material. They are neither 'research papers' nor 'reaction papers,' but require students to incorporate a grasp of course readings, discussions, personal reactions, and questions." The first paper requires students to reflect on either the documentary *Shoah* or the CD-ROM "Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust." Students are asked to consider what these resources add to their understanding of the Holocaust—particularly with regard to the experiences of victims and survivors—that they have not gained from reading Hilberg or *"The Good Old Days."*

The journal is described as a personal venue for reflecting on readings, lectures, class discussions, and other matters related to the content and process of the course. These journals are collected three times during the semester and students are encouraged to make at least two entries per week. Specific journal assignments include one that asks students to surf the Internet for sites dealing with the Holocaust while reflecting on what can be learned from these sites: Which of them are most educational and why? Are some sites counterproductive educationally and why? Could a college Holocaust course be successfully conducted "online"? Why or why not? Another assignment asks students to report on at least one conversation they've had with a friend, acquaintance, or family member about their involvement in the course. They are to consider what the conversation reveals about the person's assumptions concerning the Holocaust, Jews, antisemitism, or college education. Finally, students are to reflect in their journals about how the course has influenced or been influenced by the other classes or activities they've undertaken during the semester.

The other major development in my pedagogy since that first course is the extent to which I utilize films. The first time I taught the course, I was simply unaware of the visual resources available for Holocaust education. Today, I introduce the course with two films from "the Western tradition" series that survey European history during the first third of the twentieth century. Other films I use include *The Longest Hatred*, *Night and Fog*, *Weapons of the Spirit*, *Shadow on the Cross*, *Purple Triangles*, and *Triumph of the Evil* (a *Frontline* exposé on the Rwandan genocide).

I have also come to use as many primary sources as possible in teaching the Holocaust. Among the primary textual sources I make use of are: Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (the chapter on "race and nation"); *"The Good Old Days"* (which I assign in combination with Hilberg and Browning so students can compare primary and secondary sources of the same events); Wiesel's *Night*, the pamphlets of the White Rose; writings by Martin Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer; and selec-

tions from Rittner and Roth's *Different Voices* (1993). Primary visual documents include *Triumph of the Will, The Warsaw Ghetto, Obedience to Authority*, and the *The Stanford Prison Experiments.*

Interestingly, some aspects of the course have changed very little over the past twelve years. I continue to require regular attendance by students, active participation, the keeping of a journal consisting of reactions to and learnings from the material covered in the course, and a series of short papers. I have suspended class presentations and self-grading (both of which were included in that first course). However, I now require more tests (a take-home midterm exam in addition to the final exam), and more writing.

When I reflect on the experience of that first course (and I try not to), I shudder at how little I knew, how often I was compelled to respond to student questions with the words "I don't know," how profoundly I experienced what academics call the "impostor syndrome." Nevertheless, the class was enough of a success that I decided to teach it again the following year, and I have done so every year since. At Rhodes' homecoming this past year I encountered a student who was enrolled in that first course in the spring of 1990. When she reminded me of the experience, I felt a flush of embarrassment. But then she thanked me for what she said was the best course she had taken in college, one she thinks of quite often in her work as a counselor. As I smiled and nodded, I was reminded that there is a great deal more to teaching than "mastery."

SOME PERSONAL BACKGROUND

My interest in the Holocaust is not explained fully by my relatively brief teaching experience over the last decade or so. As for many who labor in this field, salient connections with the subject matter are to be found in my family and other formative influences.

Uncovering my personal roots has been an abiding interest ever since I reconstructed my family history for a course I took as a freshman in college. In the process of interviewing my maternal grandmother, I discovered an ethnic identity I did not know existed in my family. During Thanksgiving recess, I listened intently for several hours as Martha von Lauenstein Ellyson spoke about growing up in a German Lutheran household, about her life before marriage and children, and about her German American identity. She spoke lovingly of her grandfather, a linguist with a doctorate from the university of Göttingen who immigrated to America to avoid military service and who established a German-language newspaper in Evansville, Indiana.

At the conclusion of our interview my grandmother performed an act of symbolic importance. She entrusted to me—the only one of her grandchildren to demonstrate such interest in her family's past—her copy of the Lauenstein Stammbuch, or family tree. She took great care to point out how the beautifully bound volume traced the generations of her aristocratic family back to the fourteenth century. Between two of the pages she found a photograph of a castle

she believed was part of her family's legacy, and she gave me that also. I have treasured the book ever since, in part because it reminds me of the proud and vigorous woman my grandmother was before her death, and in part because it is a tangible link to my family's European past.

When my family history project was completed, I sent my grandmother a copy. Then, when we saw each other again at Christmas time, Martha von Lauenstein Ellyson taught me something else about my German roots. She chided me for carelessly misspelling her maiden name "Lowenstein" throughout my paper, explaining that this was the "Jewish, not the German, spelling." I would vividly recall that comment ten years later when I began to study the Holocaust in graduate school.

As I consider the origins of my interest in the Holocaust I have to acknowledge another aspect of my mother's family legacy. This is my grandfather's vociferous bigotry, evidence of which was displayed each evening in a running commentary on the television news. My grandfather died when I was still in high school, yet his loathing for blacks, Jews, Catholics, Poles, and Republicans (roughly in that order) made a lasting impression on my adolescent mind.

Through the same family history project that awakened me to my mother's German heritage, I uncovered the roots of my father's family in rural northern Alabama. My father's parents had grown up on farms, but moved to Orlando, Florida, during the Depression and by the time I was born, they were owners of a retail furniture store where I often visited them with my parents. My chief memories of these visits revolve around the men and women who worked for my grandparents. I was struck by the fact that only white employees were to be seen on the showroom floor, while the black delivery men remained invisible to customers in the loading and storage area behind the building. At every opportunity I wanted to be with these men, in part because they allowed me to play in the great truck they used on their daily rounds. As I got to know them I was troubled by the way these black men, who treated me with such kindness, were regarded by my grandparents as little more than children. I remember distinctly that my grandmother referred to them as "the nigras," a Southern variation on "Negroes" that I interpreted as a racial slur.

Over time, these negative racial messages were counteracted by my experiences in communities where ethnic and racial differences could be examined first-hand. I spent my grade school years in two Miami neighborhoods, each of which had a substantial minority of Cuban Americans. The object of my first unrequited love was the daughter of Cuban exiles. In addition, my parents had Jewish friends with whom we celebrated Passover. After a brief stint in mostly white private junior high schools, I attended a fully integrated public high school where I befriended several African Americans. I recall one trip with the high school track team on which I was the only European American. Afterward my black friends referred to the excursion as "Haynes' education."

Looking back, I believe these encounters with "difference" during my formative years helped instill in me a largely unconscious empathy for persons

unlike myself, a sentiment that over time came to outweigh the negative modeling of my grandparents. It was in part my learning to value difference that motivated my return to south Florida following college to teach remedial math to disadvantaged students at a public high school. Later, as I worked my way through graduate school as a university track and field coach, my exposure to and appreciation of African American culture deepened.

By 1987 my personal and academic pilgrimages coincided in a marvelous way. In January of that year, the news media in Atlanta and around the nation broadcast images of a small group of demonstrators being pelted with rocks and bottles by a hostile crowd in all-white Cumming, Georgia. The victims of the attack, led by activist Hosea Williams, vowed to return to Cumming the following week, joined by whomever would march alongside them. Over the objections of friends, I joined hundreds of others who traveled to Cumming for a march and rally at the Forsyth County Courthouse. I will never forget walking arm in arm with African Americans down Cumming's main street as hooded white supremacists hurled abuse from the sidewalks. Marching in Cumming was a small gesture, but because I was born too late for Washington or Selma, it became an important personal milestone.

These episodes give some idea of my evolving personal interest in matters of human interaction across racial and religious barriers. I could also mention the many teachers and mentors—especially James Dyson—who quickened my sense that people are loved by God in equal measure. I believe this sense is instinctive in us all; but I know that it can be suppressed by childhood influences. In my case, by the time I was confronted with the Holocaust and Christian antisemitism during my late twenties, the egalitarian impulse had begun to triumph in my personal life over an innate fear of difference.

THE EVOLUTION OF MY THOUGHT, KNOWLEDGE-BASE, AND PEDAGOGY

Slowly, but steadily over the past twelve years I have grown as a student and teacher of the Holocaust. Along the way I have been aided immeasurably by attending conferences (especially the Annual Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches, held each March), by reading books and journal articles, by communicating with other scholars, and by pursuing research projects on the Holocaust and Holocaust education.

My earliest (and most ambitious) attempt to broaden my knowledge base came in the summer of 1990 when, with the assistance of Rhodes College and the Memphis Jewish Federation, I attended a month-long seminar for educators on teaching the Holocaust and antisemitism at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. The seminars, which convened twenty-five scholars from the United States, Europe, Australia, and Turkey, focused on such issues as the unique and universal aspects of the Holocaust, Christianity and antisemitism, Nazi propaganda, Jewish identity in the modern world, stages of the "Final Solution," Jewish responses

to the Holocaust, models of rescue, allied responses, the institutionalizing of memory, Holocaust literature, Holocaust curricula, and Holocaust denial. The month was an intense one: The group met in a classroom at Yad Vashem from 8:30 A.M. to 4:59 P.M. five days a week, and discussions often continued when we returned to our hotels. To study the Holocaust in the presence of some of the world's leading authorities (including Emil Fackenheim, Yehuda Bauer, Mordechai Paldiel, Yitzhak Arad, Steven Ascheim, and Robert Wistrich) was an unparalleled academic experience. To do so in Jerusalem as the first intifada raged and the Gulf War loomed made it unforgettable.

As it turned out, the seminar brought me a rare opportunity to present my own nascent ideas on the Christian roots of the Holocaust. Franklin Littell was scheduled to address the group on "Christianity and Antisemitism," but at the last minute was prevented from traveling to Jerusalem. Sensing that the seminar director, Yaakov Lozovick, was having difficulty finding a replacement, I volunteered to lead the session. Yaakov was reluctant, but lacked a better alternative so he agreed. That weekend I read everything I could get my hands on related to the topic, and although I was prepared, I faced a tough crowd on Monday. Most of the seminar members were considerably older than myself and very few were non-Jews. Both these factors fueled the group's suspicions, and there was quite a bit of resistance to my interpretation of Christianity and antisemitism (which I later published as *Reluctant Witnesses: Jews and the Christian Imagination*). But I learned something valuable through the experience: In discussions of the Holocaust, emotions are never far from the surface. This applies to scholars no less than students.

I had another formative experience that month in Israel. Before leaving home I had arrived at a personal decision that I could not travel to Jerusalem without taking the opportunity to study the Israeli-Arab conflict as well. I planned to spend my free days traveling throughout Israel and the West Bank in order to learn of the conflict first-hand. Since no other member of the group would join me, I went alone. Based on my interactions with Palestinians and Israelis during that month, I wrote a later article "Between Holocaust and Uprising: Reflections Dilemma" (2002), in which I wondered about the unwillingness of Christians and Jews (especially those interested in the Holocaust!) to engage in critical dialogue about the problem of Israel/Palestine. To a large extent, the "Christian dilemma" I described in 1990 still exists today.

This dilemma arises, I wrote, when Christians feel trapped between the Holocaust—with all it represents about the modern world's threat to Jewish survival and the church's history of ambivalent responses to that threat—and the Palestinian quest for justice. I wrote that while the Holocaust and the Palestinian uprising were historical realities about which any concerned Christian should have an opinion, they are also powerful metaphors for Christian perceptions of Jews. The Holocaust evokes images of the powerless Jew who is dispersed throughout the earth, subject to the ebb and flow of anti-Jewish prejudice. The Palestinian uprising, on the other hand, had become a metaphor for the empow-

ered Jew who resides in a modern Jewish state, with influence enough to determine the destiny of those inhabiting historically Jewish land.

After spending a month in Israel I felt trapped within that dilemma. I had traveled to Jerusalem to engage in a month of intensive study of the Holocaust. Yet I was surrounded by the images and ethos of the intifada. I read daily newspaper accounts of the harassment and murder of Palestinian "collaborators." I spoke with an Israeli man whose windshield had been smashed by stone-throwing youths just minutes before. I was in downtown Jerusalem when soldiers cleared the street in response to a bomb scare. I experienced the eerie quiet of Jerusalem's Moslem Quarter on strike days. And I ventured into East Jerusalem and the West Bank—to Bethlehem, to Beit-Sahour, and to Ramallah, which even then resembled a war zone.

When I returned from Ramallah, word of my trip circulated among my classmates, most of whom were American Jews. Yaakov asked me with characteristic Middle Eastern tact whether I was brave or stupid. A little bit of both, I said; but I assured him that I had not journeyed into the "administered territories" in order to prove anything. I went, I said, because as a Christian and as a student of the Holocaust I felt an obligation to go. How could I sit comfortably at Yad Vashem and study maps of Nazi concentration camps, I asked him, while ignoring real refugee camps only a few miles from my hotel? Yaakov seemed to understand. In fact, during our month together we engaged in many fruitful discussions of the political situation, and I came to appreciate his Israeli perspective on the Palestinian question. After I returned to the States, in fact, Yaakov wrote me several letters, including one from the Lebanese border where he was on reserve duty with the Israeli Defence Forces. But my most vivid memory of Israel, sadly, is the way my desire to understand the Palestinian situation made me suspect among my fellow students.

After some new experiences—participating in an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue group, watching a peace rally in a Jerusalem park, spending an evening at Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Bethlehem, or meeting with a Palestinian theologian in East Jerusalem—I was eager to debrief with my American colleagues. But they simply could not talk about these things, for the issues(s) created too much cognitive dissonance. The truth is, I became a lightning rod as well. It is still painful to talk about that month in Jerusalem. And occasionally the pain is revisited. Just a few months ago I attended a conference with one of my fellow students from Yad Vashem. To this day, he avoids me as if I carry the plague.

I must emphasize that this refusal of American Christians and Jews to address the Palestinian question in mixed company did not apply to the Israelis I met, who were more than willing to discuss critically the vicissitudes of Israeli politics, the uprising, a two-state solution, and the Middle East in general. In fact, looking back, I do not remember one of the students in my group, whether Jew or Gentile, using the word *intifada*. Yet I heard candid references to the "occupation" and the "uprising" by our Israeli teachers—and this usually in the context of lecturing on or answering questions about the Holocaust.

In fact, on the very first day of our month-long seminar, our Israeli hosts led the group through an exercise in which unthinkable thought was thrust before our minds with ruthless honesty. "Statements" were hung on the wall of our classroom, and we were asked to write reactions to those about which we felt strongest, whether positively or negatively. These statements included declarations on the "death of God" after Auschwitz and on the uniqueness of the Holocaust. Several "statements" were actually cartoons that inverted Holocaust images, describing Zionists as "Nazis," Palestinians as "Jews," etc. My colleagues and I found most of these unhelpful, if not obscene distortions. But one "statement" grabbed my attention. It was a poem by Israeli Holocaust survivor Tommy Lapide, written in response to the shooting of a Palestinian girl in Nablus by a middle-aged Israeli Jew, himself the son of a Holocaust survivor. It was entitled "Can You Compare? Can You Not?" The lines I found most powerful were:

> No one is closer to my heart than the son of a Holocaust survivor from Hungary.
> No one is farther from my heart than a baker in Nablus.
> No one is farther from my heart than a man who shoots a small child.
> No one is closer to my heart than a father whose daughter is killed in front of his eyes.

I cannot say whether I agreed or disagreed with the poem, only that it resonated with all the tensions I felt as a Christian in Israel studying the Holocaust in the midst of the intifada. My visceral response to the statement helped me realize that the same parts of my psyche that lead me to study and teach the Holocaust are at the basis of my concern for the fate of the Palestinian people. Thus, in my response to Lapide's poem, I wrote that I feared hearing my children ask me, forty or fifty years hence, what I had done to ease the Palestinian suffering that I had witnessed first-hand. All this points to a troubling paradox relating to Holocaust education. One might well expect study of the Holocaust to generate more, not less sensitivity to contemporary episodes of human suffering. But in the United States, where Jews are a minority and where the Holocaust has a larger role in defining Jewish identity than in Israel, there often is a negative correlation between attention to the Holocaust and concern for Palestinians. This paradox is just as evident among Christians as it is among Jews, and it ought to trouble us that it is not discussed more among scholars of the Holocaust.

The following summer, in 1991, I was a Fellow of the Coolidge Colloquium of the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life, where equal numbers of Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant scholars reside together for a month of worship, discussion, and research. It was there that I conducted the bulk of my research for my book *Reluctant Witnesses: Jews and the Christian Imagination.*

In 1993 I organized the Religion, Holocaust and Genocide Group of the American Academy of Religion (AAR), which sponsors scholarly sessions at

the AAR/SBL (Society for Biblical Literature) annual meeting each November. With the support of established scholars such as Richard Rubenstein and Franklin Littell, the group has met every year since 1994. Rochelle Millen of Wittenberg University served as my co-chair through 2001, and the group is now led by Susan Nelson of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and Oren Stier of Florida International University. Over the years, this AAR program unit has sponsored sessions on Holocaust uniqueness, gender issues, and genocidal events in Africa, Europe, and the Americas, and panel discussions of important new texts in the field. Participants have included Martin Rumscheidt, James Moore, Alan Berger, Edward Linethal, John Roth, Paul van Buren, Edith Wyschogrod, Gershon Greenberg, Doris Bergen, Marc Ellis, and many others.

I have also enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with Facing History and Ourselves and have lectured on the religious roots of antisemitism at Facing History institutes across the country. Finally, I have been privileged to serve on the Tennessee Holocaust Commission (THC) (1996–2002) and the Church Relations Committee of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council (USHMC) (2001–). The THC was led in its formative years by Beverly Asbury, University Chaplain Emeritus at Vanderbilt University. The USHMC's Church Relations Committee is chaired by Father John Pawlikowski, and includes such notables as Michael Berenbaum, John Roth, Eva Fleischner, Eugene Fisher, Hubert Locke, and Burton Nelson. Both appointments have contributed to my understanding of the role of Holocaust education in public institutions.

In my experience, however, a great deal of time and energy is devoted to fundraising or public relations. Since academics are generally uninterested in these activities, their role on such committees is often ambiguous. For instance, much of a recent Church Relations Committee meeting was devoted to considering complaints about the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's permanent exhibition's film on antisemitism, which had just been altered in response to earlier complaints. In exasperation, I suggested that if our committee of experts was happy with the film and believed the content to be accurate, why should we concern ourselves with the opinions of a vociferous carper with connections in government? The answer I received was that it was easy for someone who doesn't have an office in Washington to take such a flippant attitude. The response was accurate, and it makes me thankful for an academic position that shields me from these sorts of politics. But the truth is that anyone who works in the field of Holocaust studies must negotiate the politics of remembrance, whether or not they are asked to serve on official bodies. I learned this very early in my academic career. At the first Holocaust conference I ever attended, a Christian leader who is widely regarded as the founder of American Holocaust Studies delivered a luncheon address that turned out to be an all-out attack on Herman and Rosemary Ruether's book *The Wrath of Jonah*. One would have thought that by authoring one of the seminal texts on Christian anti-Judaism Rosemary Ruether had earned the right to dissent from Israeli government policies without being condemned as an antisemite. Yet the speaker engaged in a

vicious personal attack on the Ruethers, whose nadir was a clever rhyme that indicated the faddish dilettantism of which she was being accused: "When a woman's undersexed, God knows what good is coming next." I sat there in disbelief: That someone of the speaker's stature would make such a demeaning and sexist comment about a fellow academic, and that not one of the several hundred scholars present would raise a protest. For those who, like myself, were just entering the field, the message was clear. If you want to be respected by the guardians of Holocaust studies, discern the parameters of acceptable opinion and remain within them.

PRIMARY GOALS OF MY WORK IN THE FIELD OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

My primary goal as a Holocaust educator has been to have a lasting impact on the way my students understand their world. Many of those I teach come to the class with strong religious convictions and with little experience of ethnic or religious diversity. Thus, one of my goals is to get them to consider what implications the Holocaust might have for their faith and their understanding of "the other." More broadly, I want my students to be transformed by the experience of studying events and behavior that seem inexplicable. I want them to ask how such things happen, whether we, or the institutions to which we belong might be capable of acting similarly, and what it means generally to live in a post-Holocaust world.

In addition, I want my students to relate their study of the Holocaust to the rest of their lives—curricular and extracurricular—and to become lifetime students of the forces that make genocide possible. As I will discuss below, I believe Holocaust education can be a model for the sort of pedagogy that transcends the mastery of content and seeks to liberate students from passive forms of learning.

INDIVIDUALS AND SCHOLARLY WORKS THAT HAVE MOST INFLUENCED MY WORK

On one hand, I have been influenced by many of the standard works on the Holocaust, particularly Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Wiesel's *Night*, Scholl's *The White Rose*, and Richard Rubenstein's *After Auschwitz* (1996). As explained above, I have used each of these texts in my classes, and continue to rely on Hilberg as my main textbook. On the other hand, my approach to the Holocaust owes a great deal to authors in other fields who have stimulated my thinking about teaching and learning. These include Paulo Freire, Ira Shor, bell hooks, Gerald Graff, and Parker Palmer. These authors, who are often referred to collectively as "liberative pedagogues," have helped liberate my own pedagogy from captivity to a "banking model" of education, according to which teachers make deposits into students' information accounts for future

withdrawal. In the liberative paradigm, teaching is a process of developing critical thinking skills that can be applied to the object under study, as well as the culture and institutions in which learning takes place. While I don't believe that teaching the Holocaust is qualitatively different from teaching all other subjects, I do think the subject matter lends itself to pedagogies that recognize that teachers are also learners, that they bring experiences and expectations to the classroom, and that unmastered history is best taught in "decentered" classrooms in which the object of study occupies the center of a learning community that is built around it. Everyone, including the teacher, brings their experience to the learning process. The teacher's special task, in the words of Parker Palmer, is to create a space in which obedience to the truth is practiced.

PERSISTENT AND CONSISTENT FOCI IN MY THINKING AND PRACTICE REGARDING HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

In my teaching of the Holocaust, I have focused increasingly on perpetrators and bystanders rather than victims and resisters. Since this is a conscious decision, I should explain it. The simple fact is that the students I teach have much more in common with the perpetrators of the Holocaust than with the victims. Overwhelmingly, my students are white and Christian; however, their natural desire to identify with those who resisted the Nazis or suffered at their hands can obscure their natural links with the "bad guys." Victims are an essential part of the story, of course, and studying rescuers is important as well (partly since many people approach the Holocaust thinking they would have been rescuers); but if my course has a single sustained focus, it is probably the sorts of things that are done by "normal" members of a majority culture under pressure from cultural, institutional, or ideological forces.

HOW MY WORK HAS CHANGED IN PRACTICAL TERMS AS MY THINKING HAS EVOLVED

One change I've noticed is that over the years I've subjected my students to fewer and fewer "bodies." When I started teaching the Holocaust, I used films (e.g., *Hitler's Henchmen*, *Genocide*, and *Night and Fog*) that others had suggested or that were available easily. Many of these depict Nazi crimes in graphic fashion and constituted a visceral assault on my students. I began to realize that while these images certainly got students' attention, they did not necessarily facilitate learning at an intellectual level. What students tended to remember, it seemed to me, was that they were so sickened by a certain image that they skipped lunch that day. But what they had learned was not clear. Increasingly, my goal has been to find resources that contribute to affective learning (which includes emotional reactions to shocking material) while resisting the temptation to hold students' attention by shocking them.

At this juncture, there are only two or three points during the semester that I

present students with horrible images of liberated camps, mass graves, and bulldozed bodies. We take class time to discuss these images, and I encourage them to record their reactions in course journals. Generally, I have become a more critical consumer of Holocaust resources. Some I use as a way of getting students to consider how the subject should not be taught. For instance, ever since I learned from a survey I conducted that *Night and Fog* was the most popular video resource among university-level Holocaust educators, I have shown it to my class as a way of demonstrating how well-meaning filmmakers can lead us to misinterpret the Holocaust. On a related note, but in regard to a textual example of this problem, I use a chart from Hilberg's book on comparing Nazi and canonical anti-Jewish measures. While the chart's content is accurate, the way the information is presented lends itself to the mistaken impression that Nazi and Christian antisemitism are ideologically identical.

These and other Holocaust resources can be utilized to help students understand that access to "information" is not synonymous with learning in an accurate and thorough fashion; that some images and ideas may be counterproductive in the learning process.

MAJOR OBSTACLES I HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN MY WORK

Thankfully, I have encountered few obstacles. My students, my institution, and members of the Memphis community remarkably have been supportive of my work in Holocaust education. Early on, of course, a major obstacle to effective teaching was my lack of formal training in Holocaust Studies. But I have found opportunities to address this and no longer feel underprepared. Recently, however, I have begun to wonder how some of my colleagues feel about my teaching of the Holocaust. Two years ago I received the college's highest teaching award. A year later, my bid for promotion was rejected by a faculty committee. Clearly, there is ambivalence among my peers with regard to my teaching. I fear that the success of my class—and the fact that it doesn't fit neatly into a single academic discipline—creates misapprehensions. I also know that there are some who believe a pedagogy that highlights the affective aspects of learning is somehow less than "rigorous." But I have decided that in teaching the Holocaust, as in many other things, following one's instincts is important.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD OF HOLOCAUST STUDIES

I would characterize my contribution to the field of Holocaust education as twofold. First, I published a book in 1995 (*Reluctant Witnesses: Jews and the Christian Imagination*) that offers a comprehensive explanation of the way Christians have thought about and treated Jews through the ages. While the book is not perfect, it does offer an interpretation of the profound ambivalence that

has always characterized Jews in the Christian mind, an ambivalence that is still very evident (as I show in the book). Second, I have persistently tried to keep teaching and learning on the agenda of the broader field of Holocaust Studies which, like other academic fields, easily loses sight of the fact that its primary task is to educate students and that education includes formation as well as information. Many university-level scholars of the Holocaust seem to believe that pedagogical concerns are beneath them, unworthy of their time or energy, but I do not feel that way; and thus, in research projects, book reviews, conference papers, and conversations, I have tried to keep the pedagogical art on the agenda of our "interdiscipline."

MY PERCEPTIONS OF THE FIELD OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

There are still some topics that are taboo in the field of Holocaust Studies. In some cases I have discovered these taboos by accident; in others I have transgressed boundaries in order to produce fruitful tensions. Some of the questions that I wish were more openly discussed in the field include: Are Jews alone qualified to teach the Holocaust? What is gained or lost when the subject is taught by non-Jews? These are variations of the "who owns the Holocaust" question that get at the value of objectivity and advocacy in teaching.

Another taboo issue is the way Holocaust education is inscribed in contemporary politics, both national and international. I often wonder—and I do not think the answer is self-evident—whether studying and teaching the Holocaust creates more or less sympathy for the suffering of other victim groups. Ideally, Holocaust education makes us hypersensitive to suffering of any sort, but in my experience there is an "atrocity fatigue" that can actually diminish our ability to be shocked or moved by similar events. In order to bring this problem to students' attention, I now end my Holocaust course with the film *Triumph of Evil,* which explores the way the U.S. government ignored the Rwandan genocide at the very moment when it (the U.S. government) was involved in public celebrations with the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. This film has a sobering effect on students, as it should. They leave the course asking what difference the Holocaust and Holocaust education make to the way we live in the world.

A different but related matter is the way Holocaust education portrays Jews as innocent victims (which they were) and thus perpetuates unbalanced views of present-day conflicts in the Middle East. For instance, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often viewed in the shadow of the Holocaust, either making Israelis into righteous Jewish victims under assault by "new Nazi" Arabs, or Palestinians into "new Jews." None of this is very helpful, and I wonder whether Holocaust educators might assume more responsibility for treating contemporary Middle Eastern politics as part of the Holocaust's legacy. As indicated above, I have abandoned this topic in my own course; still, I wonder if a Holocaust course is

not the ideal place for introducing the Middle Eastern conflict that continues to vex us. I suspect Holocaust educators tend to avoid this topic because it is notorious for producing more heat than light.

CURRENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS IN WHICH I AM ENGAGED

My current project (to which I am devoting a year-long sabbatical) is a book on Dietrich Bonhoeffer. When my father heard of my plan, he asked if there were anything left to be written about the man. It was a good question. My answer is that I am interested primarily in understanding what other people have written and what it tells us about the meaning(s) Bonhoeffer has for us in the post-Holocaust world. My tentative title is *Bonhoeffer Phenomenon: Portraits of a Protestant Saint.*

THAT WHICH REMAINS TO BE DONE IN THE FIELD OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

More projects like this one undertaken by Samuel Totten, Steven Jacobs, and Paul Bartrop need to be published. Scholars of the Holocaust need to acknowledge that we are teachers; that we teach the Holocaust because we care about the future of humankind; that we have a role to play in training tomorrow's leaders; and that we are drawn to the Holocaust and Holocaust education, in part, by personal concerns.

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Teaching the Holocaust: A Mission

Nili Keren

AN AWAKENING

In the year 1960, Adolph Eichmann, who was one of the major Nazi war criminals who escaped to South America after World War II, was apprehended in Argentina by the Israeli Mossad and brought to trial in Israel to be judged as a war criminal for committing crimes against humanity and against the Jewish people. I was then a high school student in the twelfth grade in Tel Aviv.

The Holocaust was not a chapter in the history curriculum, and I knew almost nothing about it. In my school there was a ceremony on Holocaust Memorial Day (*Yom Hazikkaron L'Shoa Velagvura* or Memorial Day for the Holocaust and the Heroism), but it meant nothing to my generation, especially because there was another Memorial Day a week later that was much more meaningful to us all: The Memorial Day for the soldiers who were killed in action in our wars and, especially, the Day of Independence.

I remember myself walking along the street in Tel Aviv, when, all of a sudden, I heard the voice of Ben-Gurion, the Israeli prime minister, coming from a radio, announcing in the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) that Adolph Eichmann had been caught and brought to Israel. That was May 23, 1960.

The lengthy opening speech of the prosecutor, Gideon Hausner, began on the day before Holocaust Memorial Day. I could not move from the radio; the whole speech was broadcast, and I was shocked by the descriptions of the treatment of the Jews by the Nazis, which I had not heard previously. As a student in my last month of high school I was upset with my teachers for never having told us anything about that horrible event.

I decided to write a letter to Mr. Hausner, and in that letter I expressed my feelings through a poem. He replied promptly and invited me to come to the court. Sitting in the court and watching this "ordinary man," Eichmann, inside the glass cell and answering so quietly the questions asked of him was an even

greater shock. As the trial continued, I collected every newspaper article and kept every piece of information written about the trial. So, for me personally, the Eichmann trial was a turning point that changed my life completely.

At that time I began to ask questions about the Holocaust, about the Jewish people, about the world, about humanity. Indeed, it became obvious that my future academic studies in history could not be accomplished without a deep penetration into the world of the Holocaust. And still later, as a history teacher, I came to the realization that many issues concerning world history, Jewish history, and Zionist history of the twentieth century could not be understood fully without a thorough study of the Holocaust and its consequences.

MY INITIAL EFFORTS TO TEACH THE HOLOCAUST

I began teaching the Holocaust in my secondary level classes many years before the Israeli educational system began doing so. As a result, I had to create my own agenda, collect material, and evaluate my own work. I had nothing to compare it with although by that time (the early 1970s) certain educators at the university level had begun to focus some attention on the Holocaust.

In reality, my early experience in teaching the Holocaust, along with the reactions of my students, were my sole compass for several years. Their questions were often better than mine, their interest was authentic and sincere, and I truly believe that they guided me much more than I guided them.

THE IMPACT OF THE ISRAELI ETHOS ON MY TEACHING

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the official name for the National Commemoration Day of the Holocaust was "Holocaust & Heroism." For those of us who were brought up in the State of Israel, it simply meant that there were two kinds of Jews during the Holocaust: those who were taken to be killed and those who fought back in the ghettos, in the camps, and in the forests. We mourned the dead but also criticized their passive deaths while we praised those who fought back and, by doing so, kept their (and our) Jewish dignity intact. Military strength was a major component in the Israeli collective consciousness, and the events of the Holocaust were judged according to this standard. Indeed, the phrase "Holocaust & Heroism" appears in every official document and in every official expression of the Holocaust in Israel. For example, the law establishing official remembrance of the Holocaust is entitled "The Law for the Commemoration of the Holocaust & Heroism—Yad Vashem, 1953."

That said, one needs to appreciate the lack of historical research of the Holocaust in the 1960s. Only after the Eichmann trial did the first historical research begin, and it should be mentioned that these books were not translated into Hebrew, and only a small number of Israeli scholars read and related to them. Even later, books like Primo Levi's *If This Is a Man?* (1960), were not available

in Hebrew. In fact, this book was not published in Hebrew until 1986![1] Most of the publications on the Holocaust available in Israel were diaries and memoirs, the majority of which dealt with ghetto fighters, partisans, and Zionist youth movements.

Over and above that, younger generations of Israelis were brought up on the ethos of the "solitude of Israel," of "the need to be strong," and on the heroic myths of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). The only meaning of "Gvura" (heroism) was the military strength and the heroic acts of soldiers on the battlefields. This sense of solitude became even more pronounced in the days prior to the Six-Day War in June 1967. At that time, there was great anxiety, especially among Holocaust survivors, and also among Israelis who felt that the Jewish people were, once again, confronting potential annihilation, or destruction. Even soldiers expressed their commitment to defend the existence of the State of Israel "in order to avoid another Holocaust."

The quick military victory and especially the "Return to Historical Jewish Lands" as well as the unification of Jerusalem started a new discourse that gave new meaning to the role of the Holocaust in the Israeli ethos. On one hand, the military meaning of "heroism" was reinforced by the results of the war. More specifically, even though Israel was attacked by Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, the victorious Israeli Army took the whole West Bank of the Jordan River, including East Jerusalem and the Old City, as well as the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights. Again, it was proved that only by being stronger than our enemies and by relying only on our military abilities would we be able to survive. On the other hand, we could not ignore the ambivalent feelings that were aroused in many Israelis while watching the Palestinian civilians, and especially the refugees (men, women, and children), who became the subordinates of young Israeli soldiers, the latter of whom, from that point on, were obligated to rule a civilian population. These two issues preoccupied me not only as a history teacher, but also as an Israeli. I felt that this situation might lead to a process of dehumanization among the young soldiers, and I could not avoid the feeling that this could lead to inhuman behavior toward those who were defined as "enemies." I felt compelled to deal with both issues in my classroom.

I remember one event at my school when all the students of the twelfth grade gathered in the auditorium to discuss the meaning of "heroism" during the Holocaust. Most of the students were caught up in the concept of heroism as represented by military actions through uprisings in ghettos, partisans operations in the forests, and uprisings of prisoners in the camps. Suddenly, a girl stood up and said: "I have listened to you very carefully and keep thinking of my grandparents in the camp. They were religious and made efforts to keep the demands of the Jewish tradition. When Passover arrived they preferred not to eat bread, although sometimes it was the only food they had. They remained faithful to their own beliefs even when the price meant starvation. I think that they were no less heroes than those fighters you all are talking about." It did not take long before another student stood up and told about his parents' ex-

periences during the Holocaust and how they, as teenagers, had to provide the family with food and how the older brother took care of the little ones. The discussion went on much longer than we planned. I was very excited. The upshot was that my students had given a broader meaning to the concept of "heroism" during the Holocaust a good number of years before the academic milieu and Israeli society were ready to accept such a position.

At about the same time I was confronted with another major educational problem in my efforts to integrate Holocaust Studies in the curriculum. The high school I was teaching in was located in an area where students came from many origins. While most of them were from North African families, many families also came from Poland, Romania, and other European countries. Previously, I had never thought there was any difference between the "Askenazi" students and the "Sephardic" students regarding their interest in or attitudes toward the study of the Holocaust. Yet, many of my Askenazi students brought personal experiences into the classroom regarding the Holocaust, while the Sephardic students brought none. And thus, it was during this period of time that I realized for the first time that for the Sephardic, the Holocaust was an Askenazi issue that did not concern them. Indicative of this is the following story: A student of North African origin returned to school after the celebration of a Moroccan holiday (the Mimuna, which is a highly significant event for the Moroccan Jewish community as it has to do with their collective identity as North African Jews; but, as it so happens, is celebrated very close to the date of the Israeli Holocaust Commemoration Day), and I asked him how his celebration was. He answered, "It is not your concern. We celebrate the Mimuna and you have the Holocaust to celebrate."

In the early 1970s, the political debate over the question of "the occupied territories" preoccupied the Israeli public and many politicians "used" the Holocaust to support their argument in favor of keeping the territories and ruling the civilian population, despite the deprivation of human rights of the latter. Those who saw the Palestinians as innocent victims felt that the Israelis, whose people were once themselves victims of terror and humiliation, should leave the territories and let the civilian population lead their own life. That said, both sides agreed that the safety of the Israeli population must be considered. This was the starting point for academic debates that focused on such questions as: Is the Holocaust comparable to any other human phenomenon? Is the Holocaust a unique phenomenon or a universal one? It also resulted in public debates over such issues as: (1) The behavior of the Nazis—Is it a German behavior or a human behavior?; (2) The responses of the Jews—Were they Jewish responses or human responses?; and (3) If the Holocaust is an event that should concern all Jews, then how come Jews from oriental origins feel themselves cut off?

These questions, as well as the two events I have described previously, increased my confusion as a teacher. It was clear to me that I had to go back to the university and broaden my knowledge and explore these dilemmas.

STUDY OF THE HOLOCAUST AT HEBREW UNIVERSITY AND IN FRANCE

During my study at the university I was not alone; that is, I carried with me the faces of my students who had raised so many questions throughout the years. I felt a heavy responsibility weighing down on my shoulders, and as a result, I have never been satisfied with academic arguments, alone. Rather, I always looked for the educational significance in the issues I studied and explored.

Ultimately, I chose to study contemporary Jewish Studies and to focus on the Holocaust. I felt that I needed to know more about this history, including a deeper understanding of its many complex issues. At Hebrew University, I took courses with such prominent Holocaust scholars as Professor Yehuda Bauer, Dr. Avraham Margaliot, Professor Franklin Littell, and Professor George Mosse. But the most influential aspect of my studies was the dynamics of these courses in which we, the Israelis ("sabras"), sat together with survivors, who were the majority among the students and who brought into the classroom their academic insights combined with their personal experiences during the Holocaust. This experience gave me the feeling, on the one hand, that I was not allowed to deal with the Holocaust ("Who am I to deal with such issues that were experienced by my classmates?"), and, on the other, that the fact that I am an educator obliged me to develop a "musical ear" that listened to the survivors' stories in order to integrate them into the historical narrative for the purpose of creating a relevant educational program.

My interest in education influenced my decision to focus on the lives of Jewish children during the Holocaust. More specifically, my Master's thesis dealt with the "Rescue of Jewish Children in Occupied France (1940–1944)" (Patkin, 1975). While collecting documents of all kinds, I discovered a whole new story of men and women, Jews and non-Jews, who dedicated themselves to defending the haunted children, tried to save their lives, and provided them with food, clothes, warmth as well as education. Besides sitting in archives and libraries, I traveled throughout those regions of France where Jewish children were hidden, and there I located and spoke with peasants, priests, and other ordinary people who risked their lives to hide and care for Jewish children.

I recall one Frenchman, who was a janitor in one of the children's homes and later helped to hide them, who told me about the Jewish children during the ceremony of Hanukah, and suddenly he stood up and began to sing the Jewish song they sung there using the melody of Handel's Oratorio "Yehuda Hamaccabi."

Another moving experience was on a small farm when the farmers took me to the hiding place where they hid the Jewish children. When I asked them why they risked their lives, they gave me a look full of surprise that seemed to ask: "What kind of question is that? What would you have done?" What would have I done? I really could not answer.

The people I met in France worked with children during the Occupation.

Some of them were professional educators, some social workers, and others youth instructors in youth movements. But most of them were young non-Jews who chose to dedicate their lives to the haunted Jewish children. As an educator who had just arrived in France after the "October War," during which I had to work with very worried and stressed Jewish students, all the while helping them to try and lead normal lives, including continuing with their studies, I was amazed by these men and women and by their natural talents that helped them to keep the Jewish children normal and even happy under the conditions of the Occupation. There was Betty Hirsch, for example, who, as a social worker, took care of many children on a children's farm and who created all kinds of after-school activities in order to give their lives some meaning and to encourage them to prepare for the postwar period. There was Andree Salomon, who took young children in groups to the Spanish border in order to smuggle them to a neutral country. There was a man, whose name I cannot recall, who took children to the Swiss border and invented all kinds of ball games and competitions during which the children "disappeared" one by one until all of them arrived safely on the Swiss side of the border. Two young instructors—Mila Racine and Marianne Cohen—gave their lives near the Swiss border. They were caught and killed by the Nazis. I heard about their dedication from their colleagues. Janusz Korcaz was not alone. There were many such figures. I felt privileged as a human being as well as an educator to have met these people and to have spent time with them. They taught me that if you believe in your profession and consider it a mission you can overcome almost any obstacle.

So, from these encounters I learned a lot about the meaning of being an educator during times of life-threatening crisis. Indeed, this experience proved to be more than an academic research project; rather, it had an enormous impact on my view of education and on my ethical values.

CO-AUTHORING A TEXTBOOK ON THE HOLOCAUST

During this time I was also involved in one of the first attempts to create a textbook on the Holocaust for use by Israeli high school students. The head of the project was Dr. Chaim Schatzker, who was one of the first history professors that tackled the issue of educational problems in teaching the Holocaust. The advisers to this project were Professor Israel Gutmann and Professor Yehuda Bauer, both of whom are noted Holocaust historians and were affiliated with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Bauer was my professor and mentor during my years at the university, and he had appreciated my devotion to education and the study of the Holocaust and encouraged me all along to integrate academic knowledge into my educational work. He also stood behind my ethical views—which reflected my humanistic values and my tendency to care for "other" victims during the Holocaust as well as the Jewish victims—which, at that time (the 1970s), were considered exceptional in the eyes of the main stream. Our textbook, *Antisemitism & Holocaust* (Schatzker, Keren, and Bal-

berg, 1977), began with the origins of antisemitism that led to the rise of the Nazis and then focused on the Jewish responses, including the military uprisings, and concluded with the birth of the Jewish state. This was in concert with the Israeli view of the Holocaust.

During this same period, another textbook, *The Holocaust: A Subject for High Schools* (1977), was prepared by another educator, Dr. Arye Carmon. Interestingly, the concept of his book was much closer to my personal views. He suggested the need for scholars and students to examine the developments that led to the Holocaust by looking at the processes that Germans and German society had gone through. He also suggested the need to look at the unique structure of the Jewish communities in Europe, their organization, and their culture, and, through them, attempt to analyze the Jewish responses to the atrocities of the Nazis. Carmon dared to demand that teachers look at the Holocaust as a human phenomenon and to develop a moral consciousness as a result of learning about it. His textbook was too revolutionary for the educational system and, especially, for the educational establishment. Be that as it may, I was encouraged by his views and his suggestions and, although it was very unpopular, I used his book even more than the book that I co-authored.

THE 1978 MINISERIES *HOLOCAUST*

The 1978 American series *Holocaust* by Gerald Green marked another stage in my personal and professional development. In spite of my reservations about this "soap opera," I appreciated its impact on young students. This miniseries brought the ghettos, the camps, the partisans, and the Nazis into every living-room. It was a fictitious story, but it was one through which the students could develop empathy toward the Weiss family whose story was the centerpiece of this series. Although it was very hard work to place the events in the film back into real historical perspective, I realized that television and movies would have a major role in shaping my students' attitudes toward the Holocaust. I felt the need to confront the challenges of the visual media and to be aware of its limits and its dangers. That said, the more the visual material was available, the more complicated my teaching became. That is, I had to come up with new ideas and methods for using these films as a trigger for learning, without giving them too much merit or space in my curriculum. This was particularly true since throughout the 1980s and 1990s more and more movies and television shows about the Holocaust were being produced, many of which were quite popular with teachers. Among the most popular, of course, was Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*.

CHANGING EVENTS IN ISRAEL AND THE IMPACT ON HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

I had begun to feel very strongly that Holocaust Studies should be integrated officially into the history curriculum of public schools in Israel; and thus, I was

greatly disappointed when, in 1979, the Ministry of Education came out with a new history curriculum for high schools in which it demanded that several mandatory subjects be taught, and the Holocaust was not one of them. This was the beginning of the struggle from the "bottom" and from the "top" to include the Holocaust in the new curriculum. As a result of heavy pressure applied by Holocaust survivors' organizations, survivors who were members of the Knesset, and educators and historians of the Holocaust, the Ministry of Education finally agreed to mandate that the Holocaust be taught in all Israeli high schools. To say the least, I was quite satisfied.

While I was pleased, most history teachers felt threatened by this mandate as there was no official textbook with which to teach this history, there was no official curriculum to follow, and above all, very few teachers had enough knowledge to enter such a "minefield." My personal involvement in training history teachers, especially in Holocaust Studies, began during that period. My experience as a teacher and my knowledge of Holocaust history drew me to this new educational field. As a result, I was called upon by Tel Aviv University to organize and lead courses for history teachers who were eager to both learn more about the historical events of the Holocaust and also to share their teaching problems. The more we worked on these issues, the more teachers asked for assistance.

In 1979, my professor and mentor, Dr. Yehuda Bauer, asked me if I would be willing to join him in writing a textbook on the Holocaust for students in the United States. At that point in time I was more than ready for such a venture, primarily because I felt that the time was ripe to combine the historical knowledge of such an esteemed scholar with the pedagogical knowledge of someone like me. The fact that he chose me was very important to me because it validated my devotion to teaching about the Holocaust and was an indication that such a focus was appreciated by a noted scholar.

Our mutual effort to write the book opened a new avenue of dialogue between Professor Bauer and myself on educational matters that previously did not seem to be of much interest to him. Further, the book *A History of the Holocaust*, (1982) became very popular among teachers in American colleges and high schools. Even now, all these years later and after so many others texts have been published, it is considered a good text. It was this experience that planted the seeds and gave me the confidence twenty years later to create my own textbook on the Holocaust for Israeli students.

This was a time (1980s) in which Israelis were confronted with the unique needs of the students of the third generation who now filled the classrooms and who carried the daily burden of the political events that occurred during that time. One of these events was the ongoing Arab-Israeli crisis. In June 1986 the Israeli Army entered Lebanon in order to attack and destroy Palestinian terrorist bases, but this operation soon turned into a full-fledged war that resulted in much destruction, even in Beirut, where Yassir Arafat's headquarters were then

located. The civilian population suffered immensely, and the internal rivalries between the political groups in Lebanon became increasingly complicated as did the overall situation. Several situations in this war had a profound impact on the Holocaust consciousness of the Israelis, and, particularly on that of the younger generations in Israel. Prime Minister Menachem Begin, for example, compared Yassir Arafat, who was living in a bunker inside Beirut, to Hitler, who had hid in a bunker in Berlin toward the end of World War II. Also, there was a siege on Beirut, and some high army commanders even proposed stopping the supply of water and electricity to the civilian population. Protests and demonstrations in Israel against the latter policy erupted and reached their climax in September 1982, after the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians by Lebanese forces in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatilla, directly under the noses of the Israeli military forces. There were rumors that high commanding Israeli officers were aware of the situation and had not taken any steps to prevent it.

These events had a strong impact on many of my colleagues and on me personally. In a strange associative way, I could not avoid the feeling that my views on the educational goals and the broad meaning of Holocaust education would not be the same any more. In my mind, the time had come to open up the moral discussion of the Holocaust in regard to its universal significance for Israelis, Jews, and humanity in general.

I felt strongly enough about such matters to raise questions as a member of the Public Council of Yad Vashem (the Holocaust and Martyrs' and Heroes Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem), where I was heavily attacked by politicians. But the heaviest blow I suffered was when Holocaust survivors denied my right to speak my mind since "I was not there," meaning that I was not a Holocaust survivor. These events took place while I was in the middle of my doctoral research on the history of Holocaust education in the State of Israel up through the 1980s.

Being so deeply involved in education, for the focus of my dissertation I chose to explore the impact of public opinion, the media, and the changes in Israeli society on the development of Holocaust teaching in Israel (Keren, 1985). This research enriched my knowledge and my understanding of the complexity of the Israeli collective consciousness and of the role of the Holocaust in shaping the collective memory of Israelis. I learned a lot about the role of Holocaust survivors in promoting issues of the Holocaust and bringing these issues to the public stage. It also became very clear to me that even in the educational decision-making process, when it came to discussions vis-à-vis the issues of Holocaust Studies, political and social arguments were stronger than educational arguments. Toward the end of the 1980s I came to understand that Holocaust Studies in the national education system had become a political issue even more than other subjects that were taught in the Israeli school system, for example, the Arab-Israeli conflict.

A TRIP WITHIN A TRIP

During the summer of 1985 I was asked by two educators from a kibbutz (Kibbutz Be'eri) to join an educational project involving a trip to Poland. I considered this request as a challenge for I had never been to Poland, and I had always refused to step on German territory. I did not feel that my studies, my views, and my understanding were incomplete because of that. Yet, as an educator I wanted to be part of such an experience. A group of teenagers and their instructor came to me, in my role as an expert, and asked for my assistance. It was the first time that a whole class (twelfth grade) in one school had chosen to work on such a project: They had to collect money for the trip and, based on my recommendation, they had to be willing to dedicate six months to a process of learning. I also recommended that a formative evaluation be conducted throughout the process.

The program we agreed upon was concentrated on the sites we chose to visit and the relevant historical events. We also involved the parents and other people from the kibbutz in an open meeting with Holocaust survivors who were impressed by the project and by the deep involvement of the students in the issues.

The trip to Poland, in April 1986, became one of the most significant experiences of my life. Even though I had attempted to prepare myself for what we were about to see, I was shaken by the sights of Majdanek and by the site of Treblinka. I found myself looking for the Jews who, for hundreds of years, had filled the streets, and I felt the absence of the Jews in the villages, towns, and in the main cities. For me, this feeling of emptiness became stronger and stronger. At the same time, though, I realized that my young companions did not share these same feelings. They were totally taken by Holocaust sites and Holocaust events, but they did not have the same sense of loss since they had not learned anything about flourishing Jewish life in Poland up until the Nazi occupation. They cried and they mourned the death of people about whose life they knew nothing. Yet, it was a very enriching experience for the students, and I tried my best to fill their gaps in knowledge and in understanding.

Then we arrived at Auschwitz. Until that moment I thought I had known almost all the details about Auschwitz for I carried with me the pictures of that place in my mind from the documentaries I had seen and the testimonies I had heard. But what I met there was a totally different experience. Suddenly it struck me that "Auschwitz is real!!!" And later, standing on the gate-tower of Birkenau, I became almost paralyzed: Up until then, what I accepted cognitively, the heart refused to accept. Subconsciously, there was a part in me that kept saying: "Yes, it was horrible, it really happened, and Auschwitz was the worst of all, but within certain limits. Human beings could not create a Death-Factory!!!" In Birkenau I lost the remnants of my innocence; there were no doubts, no concessions: Auschwitz was not an idea; Auschwitz existed and it spread out in front of me from horizon to horizon, endless, frozen, and threatening. Following that moment, I lost my ability to speak for several days.

The company of the students and, of course, my husband who had joined us on this trip, enabled me to continue. But back home, I was not myself any more; looking back after fifteen years, I truly believe that this trip had changed my life in many different ways.

In Poland I felt, for the first time, a feeling of mourning my people. I felt the vacuum they left in all the villages and towns and the streets of the cities. I felt it as a personal loss. This was a new experience for me. Only after the trip did I go to my mother and ask her to tell me about her family, and especially about their life before the war. She had left home in the town of Sarney in Belorussia in 1933 and immigrated to Palestine in 1935, and she never saw her family again. After her death, I found a postcard from her father that he had sent from Sarney on June 16, 1941, a week before the Einsatzgruppen invaded the area. She had never told me about the postcard, although she followed my studies and my writings and encouraged me to go on. I believe, now, that, through me, she wished to build a gravestone for her parents and her brothers and young sister.

From an educational viewpoint, it was very clear to me that the teenagers had gone through a very meaningful experience, partly cognitive but mostly emotional. The Israeli media that covered our trip opened channels for the students to share their feelings and thoughts with the Israeli public, and with the younger generations in particular, and I was moved by the students' sensitivity and by their ability to share their views. At the same time, though, their conclusive phrases worried me. They returned with many assertions but very few questions:

- "In Poland, I understood the Holocaust."
- "In Poland I decided that I'll never leave Israel!"
- Now I understand why we should be strong, and next year, when I serve in the army, I'll know what I am fighting for."
- "In Poland, when I saw the Polish people, I realized that they were no better than the Germans."

The Israeli establishment—from "doves" to "hawks"—were very satisfied with most of these expressions. And not only were the politicians satisfied; among the educational milieu, beginning with the Ministry of Education through the educational staffs of the kibbutz movement, many educators "jumped" on this new opportunity to foster national values and patriotism. What was shaken during the war in Lebanon could be, they concluded, strengthened through such visits as Holocaust sites.

As for myself, I returned with so many questions and so many reservations that for more than two years I refused even to think about another trip to Poland. During this time, I began to wonder if students of that age (16 to 17) were not too young and too mixed-up to absorb the full scale of a visit to Poland. I was also afraid that the adults involved in the trips were too manipulative and were using their authority to foster their values and their lessons gleaned from the

trips which were, sometimes, too narrow (especially in regard to the Zionist-national lessons they were most wont to teach). I also was not sure about the participation of Holocaust survivors on the youth trips, since some of them became like the "piper of Hameln" for the students and prevented the students from drawing their own conclusions and sharing their own authentic feelings.

Unwillingly, however, I became the main adviser for educational organizations who wished to follow in the footsteps of my group. Emotionally, it took me awhile to recover and get to the point where I was able to go on with this work and to be balanced enough to share my views of the project, including all the mistakes I made during the preparation period. I spent many hours discussing all the issues that needed to be worked on, especially those topics that were never taught in school such as Jewish life in Poland up until the Nazi occupation as well as the need to know about Poland and the Polish people. These were heavy demands that my colleagues didn't necessarily agree with, but that I strongly believed were absolutely necessary as background in order to open the eyes and the minds of the students to the complexity of these events. I feared the trend of oversimplifying both the questions and the answers. The direct road from Auschwitz to Israeli patriotism worried me.

But nothing could be done since the trips became more like a pilgrimage than anything else. Beginning in 1988, the trips to Poland became a project of the Ministry of Education, and under the umbrella of the youth department more than three thousand Israeli high school students visit Poland every year. The rest, about seven thousand students, travel under the auspices of their respective schools. So, more than ten thousand Israeli high school students now visit Poland every year and thousands of Jewish students from all over the world arrive in Poland every year to participate in "The March of the Living," which seemingly serves as an instrument to rebuild their Jewish identity. It seems to me that the trips have become an instrumental and manipulative tool for a Jewish-Zionist education. The danger was that it would replace real learning and sincere commitment to one's Jewish or Israeli identity.

Among the many questions I brought back following my trip, a major one was: Should our teenagers even go to Poland? This question accompanies me constantly; and whenever I am invited to speak before educators who are preparing themselves for such trips I urge them to ask the same question as I share my reservations and my educational views very openly. I cannot stop this stream of movement to Poland, but at least, I can try to convince them to do it correctly.

BROADENING THE SCOPE OF MY WORK

While my involvement in creating educational programs, textbooks, and other educational aids began in the early 1970's, between 1979 and 1981 I was fortunate to work with Professor Bauer, on *A History of the Holocaust* for American students. It was a significant opportunity to broaden my educational

thinking beyond the borders of Israeli society. My work with Professor Bauer and other historians convinced me that the combination of historical knowledge and educational knowledge and experience is crucial in order to produce an accurate, interesting, and relevant textbook on the Holocaust for students.

At that same time, I started working as a trainer of teachers, and that was a result of having discovered that there were no Holocaust courses offered in Israeli teachers colleges. I convinced the directors at the Kibbutzim College of Education in Tel Aviv, where I teach, that such courses were necessary since the Holocaust had become a mandatory subject in the curriculum.

My experience in such efforts led me to become involved in national committees as an adviser for educational programs about the Holocaust. One notable example is that I was asked to become a member of Yad Vashem's directorate, and I join the steering committee of the Yad Vashem International Research Institute. Likewise, I was asked to participate in the Pedagogical Council of Yad Vashem Education's Department. In January 1999, I was nominated by the Directorate of "Massua—An International Institute for Holocaust Education" to be the chairwomen of its Pedagogical Council. Also, over the last ten years I have been invited to many international conferences, seminars and symposia—from Romania in the East to the United States in the West—in order to discuss a variety of issues related to Holocaust education. Each trip brought with it new acquaintances with colleagues from whom I have learned a lot and with whom I have shared my educational dilemmas. I have also learned that in spite of the typical Israeli self-confidence that we have all the "right" answers to Holocaust education, very important educational work has been done in many places by many devoted educators from whom we are able to learn a great deal.

At my college, the Kibbutzim College of Education, I now serve as the Head of the School for Advanced Studies and the Head of the History Department, and for fifteen years I have directed the Holocaust education center that I founded. The Holocaust Education Center was founded in my college as an answer to the needs of many teachers in elementary and junior high schools who felt it was necessary to deal with the Holocaust in their classrooms but who had no knowledge or experience as to how to do so. We believed that as a college of education we needed to meet their needs and to provide the teachers as well as our students, the future teachers, with the knowledge, tools, and professional support they needed and wanted. In addition to offering courses and personal guidance to teachers and to students, the center works in cooperation with other centers in Israel such as Yad Vashem and the Ghetto Fighters House. The center also produces educational programs on issues that we find suitable for students in the range of 12 to 16 years of age.

In 1989, I was asked to moderate a discussion on the "Children of Theresienstadt," which took place in the Diaspora House (an educational center) in Tel Aviv. The participants—three former child inmates—described their childhood in the ghetto as a very meaningful period, in which they experienced many hours of creativity and happiness and remembered with gratitude many

instructors and educators who devoted all their time to their welfare. People in the audience began to shout at these three "children," accusing them of distorting the facts. They claimed that Theresienstadt was not a "paradise" as the former children inmates described it, but rather it was hell, like all the ghettos. People died from hunger and disease and such "idealistic descriptions" drew a false historical picture.

I was left with the question: "Theresienstadt—was it Hell or Paradise?" As a result, I began to read historical accounts about Theresienstadt and to interview survivors of this ghetto, and gradually a whole amazing story was constructed. The story of the educational system was founded in Prague in 1939 and continued in the ghetto as well as in the "Families' Camp" in Birkenau (from September 1943 through July 1944). It is the story of young men and women who made the critical decision to give high priority to the care of the children, even at the expense of the rest.

I was fascinated by this "Pedagogical Poem" and especially its result. Holocaust survivors who made it through the ghetto and through Birkenau, and who were the only survivors of their families—ended up humanistic people, optimistic, and very modest. The book I have written on this issue is *Resisei Yaldut* (*Fragments of Childhood*). It is dedicated to the Jewish education programs and the Jewish educators during the Holocaust. Ultimately, this research and, especially, meeting these people, made me a better educator—even in this late stage of my professional life. It is my sense that this book constitutes a very special chapter in Holocaust history, one that was ignored previously by most historians, despite its obvious relevance.

A NEW BOOK

For a long time I felt the need to contribute my own personal voice to the field of Holocaust Studies. The 1990s, I found, was ripe for me to create a textbook in which I could express my own historical views and educational concepts as well as convey what I learned from my experience in teaching about the Holocaust. I desired to create a book that approached the issues from an interdisciplinary perspective, and above all, one that would tell the story of human beings—perpetrators, victims, bystanders, righteous gentiles, and the rest of the world before and after the Holocaust. I also hoped to create a book that would be read not only by students but also by their parents so that they could share the learning experiences of their children. And so, during the last decade of the twentieth century, I began and completed my book, *Shoa: A Journey to Memory* (1999).

The work on the book was an exciting experience. I could not move from my computer surrounded by tens of books that were spread out on the carpet. It was almost a sacred mission for me. Throughout a period of eighteen months I was accompanied by the memory of my late parents, of my friends who sur-

vived the Holocaust, and of those who were murdered. In my mind's eye, I could see the generations of students I have taught and the teachers I have instructed. I owed this book to them, but especially to their children and grandchildren. But of all these beloved people I carried with me most was the image of my two-year-old granddaughter. I wished to tell this story to her and her brothers and sisters to come. Through this book, I wished to assure her a better world, a better human society and a safer life. The publishing house fulfilled all my demands, and a copy of the book was handed to me in April 1999.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?

In many ways the answer to the above question is "Yes." The reactions to my book have convinced me that I have succeeded in transferring the spirit of my work through its contents and its message to a larger audience—and that is true despite the fact that the book was criticized by certain Israeli historians, among them Dr. Daniel Platman from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, who were not able to accept a deviation from the traditional concepts that still prevail.

Since my first encounter with the Holocaust, in April 1961, until this very moment—March 2004—I have come a long way. For 39 years my life has been shaped and reshaped by my preoccupation and my dedication to the Holocaust and to its pedagogical aspects.

At this stage in my life, I have realized that my self-identity has changed. More specifically, the events of the Holocaust and my educational and academic work on Holocaust issues has had a strong impact on my Jewish identity. Through the study of the Holocaust I came to feel much more strongly the personal loss of my mother's family, who were probably the source of my mother's Jewishness and her respect for Jewish holidays and Jewish tradition even though she was not religious. Indeed, I began to feel very strongly the fact that a whole generation of Jewish culture had been destroyed. When it came to Diaspora Jews, most Israelis my age grew up with a sense of superiority—we were better and stronger than the Diaspora Jews; however, in studying the Holocaust I found that Israeli Jewishness is much poorer as a result of the Holocaust for the Holocaust created an abyss between what could have been left us and what has been left, and most of the people who could have passed this richness on to us were murdered.

Now that I have published my latest book, I feel that I can go on with my educational work with teachers, helping them to find new methods with which to teach Holocaust history, offering them ideas and methods in regard to implementing interdisciplinary and humanistic concepts, and guiding them in the twisted roads of education in which they are going to march toward the next millennium.

NOTE

1. It is important to make several distinctions here. When I mention Primo Levi's *Is This a Man?*, English readers need to understand that the latter is the title Israeli publishers gave to *Survival in Auschwitz*. Later, in 1986, a book was brought out in the United States, entitled *If This Is a Man*, which contained three books—Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz, The Reawakening*, and *Moments of Reprieve*—under a single cover and that single title. The original version of *Survival in Auschwitz* was published in Italian in 1958 and in English in 1960.

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10

Seeking the Fire in the Ashes: A Journey into the Holocaust

David Patterson

ENTERING THE LABYRINTH

One afternoon in the fall of 1979, when I was teaching comparative literature at the University of Oregon, one of my best students came into my office. He had four books cradled in his arms. The two of us shared a love for books and ideas, so I was eager to see what he had brought along. In the course of many conversations on life and meaning I had recommended a number of books to him, and he had read them all studiously. Now, it seemed, he had something for me to read. He gently placed the volumes on my desk, and, with a certain intensity in his voice, he said, "Here: you have to read these."

Wanting to teach by example, I could not very well refuse his urging. I took the books in hand and scanned the titles on the wrinkled bindings: *Night*, *Dawn*, *The Accident*, and *The Town beyond the Wall*—Elie Wiesel's first four works. I ran my fingers over them. They felt unusually warm. The memory of that sensation came back to me when later I noticed a reviewer's comment on the back of one of the volumes: "To read Wiesel is to burn with him." The young man announced that he would return in a couple of weeks for a talk and then left. The messenger had delivered his message, and now my task was to receive it. Thus, someone who was hardly more than a child introduced me to a man whose writings are haunted by the outcries and the silences of children.

A year went by. I was still reading and rereading, still digging for the fire in those ashes, still wrestling the light from that darkness. And, like Jacob at Peniel, I wrestled with my own soul. Every volume, every page, every silence between every word, made me into something other, destroying me and raising me up again. Another year went by, and, in the fall of 1981, I wrote to Wiesel in a faltering attempt to express my gratitude for his testimony. And, knowing that in this case gratitude was not enough, I begged his forgiveness, even though I

knew that such a gesture was empty and absurd. He answered by inviting me to see him, if I should ever be in Boston or New York.

As the summer of 1984 approached, I was looking forward to my first visit with Elie Wiesel. I had planned to be at Harvard that summer for some study and research on Russian literature, so I contacted his office at Boston University to find out whether it would be possible to see him. Yes, his secretary told me, it might be possible: Professor Wiesel would be in and out of the country in June and July, but she would let me know if a visit could be arranged. As soon as I arrived in Cambridge I had a phone hooked up and called his secretary to let her know my number. Once again she promised to contact me if a meeting could be arranged. Three weeks later I got the call: Professor Wiesel would see me on Monday, July 16, at 11:00 A.M., at his home in New York.

On the subway to the airport, on the flight to La Guardia, on the bus to Grand Central, I wondered, trembling, how I could avoid collapsing to the floor in Wiesel's presence, how to keep my feet steady when the ground started shifting, how to utter a word when the silence grew too intense. It was not nerves that gripped me as much as a mixture of fear and shame: standing before him, I knew I would be standing on the threshold of a world that I had no business peering into. Once again I would incur the debt; once again I would have to answer. All the things I had prepared to say, all the words I had thought to offer, now seemed shallow and ridiculous. Realizing how much would turn on my capacity to listen and to respond, I wanted to flee. But somehow the eleventh hour found me at his door. He opened it, and I entered.

In his study, books in a variety of languages line the walls from floor to ceiling and are stacked three-feet deep around the room's perimeter. A piece of paper was in the typewriter, and above the typewriter was a photograph of his childhood home. What had he been writing? His desk was less cluttered than I expected. It was next to the open window, through which the noise of the traffic on Central Park West could be heard. Seeing my awkward demeanor and hearing my quaking voice, he made a effort to put me at ease, if one can be at ease in a room where so many collisions have occurred. He offered me a seat in one of two chairs positioned at a slight angle to each other. I gave him a book that I had brought for him and another volume as a gift for his son Elisha. It turned out that the one for his son, a book on the meaning of the Hebrew alphabet, had been written by a former student of his. After asking permission, I switched on a tape recorder and asked him the question that set the tone for the meeting: How did he deal with the prospect of perhaps being the last to remember? A moment of silence, and then he answered in soft-spoken yet powerful tones. Thus began the face-to-face encounter that led to my first book-length reflection on the Holocaust: *In Dialogue and Dilemma with Elie Wiesel* (1991).

During those hours I spent with Elie Wiesel I was transformed into a messenger, into a witness, into a teacher, into a student. What led me into the labyrinth of Holocaust Studies was neither a book nor a lecture nor a topic nor a theme; least of all was it a matter of curiosity or personal interest. No, it was

the face of a child hidden in the face of the one with whom I sat that day. It was a myriad of voices that vibrated in his voice. It was a question that came to me from another shore and that would not allow me to hide, the first question put to the first man: Where are you?

LEARNING AND TEACHING TRANSFORMED

Over the next two years I struggled to respond to that question by reading and writing enough on the Holocaust to develop a course in Holocaust Studies. I was not very far into the course, which I first taught in 1986, when I realized that teaching the Holocaust was transforming my understanding of teaching as such. The Holocaust is not something that can be taught as a course among other courses in a curriculum on history, philosophy, literature, or what have you. Because it deals with questions that implicate the whole learning endeavor, what we decide about Holocaust education affects the essence of education. For the Holocaust was perpetrated by graduates of the finest universities in the world. Eight of the fourteen men who sat at the Wannsee Conference to discuss the murder of the Jews of Europe had doctorate degrees; three of the four commanders of the killing units had Ph.D.'s; the medical profession had the highest proportionate membership in the Nazi Party, with professors comprising a close second. Those who teach Holocaust Studies must, as teachers, respond to the man who crushes a baby's skull with a copy of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* sticking out of his back pocket, or to the man who returns to his quarters to listen to Mozart and sip brandy after a hard day's work in the murder camp.

Yes, the Holocaust is pedagogically demanding. Just as a scholar cannot study the Holocaust without some knowledge of many of the languages of Europe, a teacher cannot teach the Holocaust without accommodating most of the subjects taught in the university. I have discovered, for example, that my students in pre-med, pre-law, film, literature, philosophy, religion, journalism, engineering, history, political science, art, music, and on and on could easily find a research topic on the Holocaust that pertained to their major. In contrast to every other course I have taught, my students learn the most not from lectures delivered by experts but from seeing the faces and hearing the voices of men and women who had been inside the sealed ghettos, the sealed trains, the sealed antiworld. Teaching and studying the Holocaust requires an understanding of Western religious and intellectual history, of scientific method and cultural values, of political ideology and human responsibility. Above all, it requires a profound understanding of the Jews and the Judaism targeted for annihilation. None of us is adequate to the task, and yet all of us must engage it. For in addition to mastering these numerous disciplines, the essential task is to meet a responsibility that grows each time it is met, a responsibility to and for the infinite dearness of the human being. Because our own humanity is at stake in meeting this responsibility, all of us must engage the task.

Over the years of my engagement with Holocaust education, first at Oklahoma

State University and now at The University of Memphis, my students have always been drawn into the depths of the questions that arise from the Event. Indeed, these are the questions of G-d and humanity, of good and evil, of meaning and history that they craved to address in order to acquire a deeper sense of meaning and mission in their own lives. Gazing into the faces of these students, I have realized what, above all else, is most needful to learning about the Holocaust.

Teaching the Holocaust, moreover, transforms teaching into testimony, so that what is taught is not only the subject matter but also a sense of urgency and care. Early on I realized that if I was going to teach such a course, I not only had to learn more—I had to be more. I had to remember that you cannot teach people you do not care about, that my students are somebody's children, and I had to treat them as I would my own children, that something very precious from the past—something that the Nazis tried to obliterate—gazes into my eyes from theirs, asking me, "What will you make of us?" That is the pedagogical challenge of teaching the Holocaust: It is about teaching questions, not answers, about living with a maddening frustration, not solving problems.

Underlying my whole endeavor, in some profound way, is the very thing that Emil Fackenheim once told me had haunted his work for more than thirty years. I was sitting with him on the veranda of his apartment in Jerusalem, listening to his words, when he suddenly fell silent. Huge tears ran down his cheeks, his lips trembled, and he whispered: "I just realized what I have been trying to do for the last three decades: I have been trying to undo it. But I can't! I can't!" Anyone who has struggled with this topic knows exactly what he meant—knows the maddening frustration and the consuming fire that lurks in the ashes.

And so it is with me: As I teach the Holocaust, as I strive to bear witness to it, all the while some part of me wants to undo it. I see the same longing in my students. The ache and the impotence, the outrage and the anger, have become part of the fabric of our being. This is why: One day in 1986 a cloud of radioactive material was released into the atmosphere from a chimney at a nuclear reactor in Chernobyl; two weeks later the radiation levels in Montana went up. When we speak of the Holocaust, we speak of dozens of chimneys bellowing smoke for a thousand days. So you see, we are connected to the Holocaust in the very core of our being: For a thousand days the winds spread the ashen remains of Jewish mothers, fathers, and children over the face of the earth. Those ashes—and the divine spark that sleeps within them, which is the fire I seek in the ashes—abide in the soil from which we harvest our bread. Thus, eating our bread, we join ourselves to the body of Israel. The Holocaust is not behind us—it is within us. Maintaining an awareness of this graphic fact is among the greatest challenges of teaching the Holocaust: We deal with the dead and the living—with the dead within the living—in order to decide a matter of life and death for those who are yet unborn.

Therefore I have not set a goal for myself in my teaching and study of the Holocaust; rather, a goal has been set for me, in spite of myself. The goal is to

sustain the never-ending effort to respond not only to the Hows and the Whys that eternally haunt the Holocaust but, more important, to the questions I have already mentioned: Where are you? and What will you make of us? Just as urgent, are the questions put to Cain: Where is your brother? and What have you done? The aim, in other words, is not to prevent it from happening again. Neither teaching nor studying, neither memory nor testimony, can prevent the horror from happening again. Only by becoming better than we are now, in the light of a higher relation to an absolute good, can such an event be averted. Only by determining an absolute prohibition against murder, an absolute holiness within the other human being, and an absolute responsibility on the part of each for the sake of all can there be the slightest hope for prevention. All of these absolutes are among the Jewish teachings that the Nazis and the postmodernists after them attempt to eradicate. My goal—the goal that has laid claim to me—is to retrieve from the ashes, to the extent that I can, the "black fire on white fire" of Jewish teaching. For history has shown us—and postmodernism confirms—that without the absolutes of Jewish teaching, nothing is true and everything is permitted.

INDEBTED TO MY TEACHERS

I have not drawn these conclusions from hearsay. No, I have come to these conclusions after having studied hundreds of texts, among which are Elie Wiesel's *Night*, Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*, Sara Nomberg-Przytyk's *Auschwitz: True Tales from a Grotesque Land*, Ka-tzetnik's *Shivitti*, Isabella Leitner's *Fragments of Isabella* (1978), Charlotte Delbo's *None of Us Will Return*, Simon Wiesenthal's *Sunflower*, Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira's *Sacred Fire* (2000), and dozens of others, as well as the overwhelming diaries of Chaim Kaplan (1973), Emmanuel Ringelblum, Zelig Kalmanovitch, Rabbi Simon Huberband, Yitskhak Katznelson, and many more, all of which attest to the attempt to rescue some ray of light from a sun turned to darkness and some life from along the edge of annihilation. These voices—most of them from beyond the grave—have been among my teachers.

Both what we teach and how we teach are always influenced by our teachers. And the how is as crucial as the what. Elie Wiesel (1970) has said that, like the Talmud, the truth will never be written; rather, it is transmitted from mouth to ear, from eye to eye (p. 10). So it has been in my study of the Holocaust: face to face, mouth to ear, eye to eye. And I believe I have had some good teachers. To be sure, when I think of them, I am reminded of a statement made by the talmudic sage Rabbi Eleazar. When a student once commented on the rabbi's great learning, he answered, "Perhaps I have learned something, yet I have but skimmed from the knowledge of my teachers as much as a dog lapping at the sea" (Sanhedrin 68a). I have already mentioned the two from whom I have perhaps learned the most, through both the depth of their words and the intensity of their presence: Elie Wiesel and Emil Fackenheim.

If I have said less about Fackenheim than about Wiesel, it is because my relationship with Fackenheim is perhaps more intimate than my relation with Wiesel. He is a true philosopher—a word that I use with care—and my philosophical inclination has drawn me to his works. He grasps as no one else the ramifications of Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira's statement that G-d turned away during the Holocaust because his infinite sadness would have swallowed up Creation (quoted in Fackenheim, 1978, pp. 287–288). He perceives in an instant what it means for two Jews, whom the Nazis viewed as rats, to run into a burning synagogue in order to save the Torah scrolls, only to be shot: for rats, as my teacher told me, do not run into burning buildings to save anything. More than any other philosopher, Fackenheim has understood the implications of what the Nazis made of the divine image within the Jew, as well as all humanity, by transforming the Jew into a *Muselmann* (zombie-like living skeleton). And, more than any other philosopher, he has understood the implications of the Event for the Jews and Judaism.

There are others: I have learned a great deal from the flames etched into the eyes of Yehiel De-Nur, the author known as Ka-tzetnik 135633. He died in 2001. The first time I went to see him at his apartment in Tel Aviv, in 1989, he sat in silence, staring at me, measuring my words, as I spoke with his wife, who was also his translator, Eliyah De-Nur. An amazing woman. She told me the story of how she had read De-Nur's "novel" *Sunrise over Hell* (1977)—the first Holocaust "novel"—and then spent a year searching for him; no one, not even his publisher, had known who he was or where to find him. Years later his children read their father's works in high school and did not know he had written them. On my first visit to see him, Eliyah finally convinced her husband that it was all right to speak with me. I think she was the only human being he really trusted; she literally saved him from the streets of Tel Aviv and brought him back to the world. Or did she? During the many hours of conversation I had with him, he spoke of nothing but Auschwitz. For Ka-tzetnik, the "world" was Auschwitz; any "normalcy" in his life was an interruption of the antiworld in which he lived.

Another teacher, Haim Gouri, arranged that first meeting with Ka-tzetnik. A renowned Israeli poet, novelist, essayist, and filmmaker, he is the author of what I believe to be the best book on the Eichmann trial; it is called *Facing the Glass Cage: Reporting the Eichmann Trial* (2004) and should soon be released in English. He also made the film *The Eighty-First Blow*, a Holocaust documentary nominated for an Academy Award. No one, I think, understands the implications of Auschwitz for the Jews in their homeland better than Gouri. Then there is Isabella Leitner, a beautifully remarkable and remarkably beautiful woman whom I have recently come to know and who, like no one else, can convey what it means to live in a realm in which the ashes of the dead steadily rain down on you, cover you, and coat you to your very core. The ashes and the smoke were so thick, she says, "the sun couldn't crack through. The scent was the smell of burning flesh. The burning flesh was your mother" (Leitner, 1978,

p. 94). So you see, she too has taught me something about what we seek when we seek the fire in the ashes.

There are still other teachers whom I have known, face to face, and to whom I am indebted for their teaching and their courage. Among them are the Christian scholars A. Roy Eckhart, Hubert Locke, and Franklin Littell; I was especially close to Harry James Cargas, of blessed memory. All of these men have responded to the Event with a courage perhaps unmatched by any other Christian thinkers. They were among the first to see the implications of the Holocaust for Christianity and to speak out—because and in spite of the religious tradition that, to my mind, had been discredited utterly. But then that is perhaps my bias as a former Christian, whose shame over not only the Christian history of antisemitism but also over Christian doctrine of inherited sin—which, like Nazi ideology, determines the being of the Jew to be sinful and unredeemed—drove me to Torah, whose truth, in the end, led me to Judaism. There are, however, other Christians for whom I have immense respect for what they have taught me: There are the senior scholars, such as my friend John Roth, and the young brilliant minds, such as Didier Pollefeyt and Jürgen Manemann.

In addition to these survivors, scholars, and sages, I would include my students among my teachers. With their burning passion, their fervent commitment, and their innocent sense of urgency, my students have been among my greatest influences—simply because of the fervor with which they burn. Many of the students who take my course on the Holocaust have taken other courses from me; but in the course on the Holocaust, good students turn brilliant, and average students are suddenly outstanding. They invariably rise to the intellectual and emotional challenges of the Holocaust. They are invested in their work. They take a care that marks a movement to another level of study and understanding. In a word, they have a sense of something precious in their work, something that requires concentration and focus. And their focus has helped me to get focused.

GETTING FOCUSED

Over the years of my engagement with Holocaust education, I have come to realize what, above all else, is most needful to learning about the Holocaust: It is the faces of the Jews who were murdered. If anything is the focus of my endeavor, it is those faces. Why? Because, in the words of Emmanuel Levinas (1985), the face forbids us to kill (p. 86). And the prohibition against killing, if it is to mean anything, comes not from social convention or from philosophical speculation—to be sure, the Holocaust demonstrates the bankruptcy of both—but from the mouth of the Holy One. That prohibition enters the world through the Jewish texts, the Jewish tradition, and, above all, the Jewish people that the Nazis set out to exterminate. The absolute, divinely based prohibition against murder, which finds its way into the world through the Jews, cannot exist in the same universe with Nazi teaching.

Chaim Kaplan (1973) articulated this tension that defines the Holocaust in an entry from his Warsaw Ghetto diary dated 10 March 1940: In the aftermath of the Nazi assault on the body and soul of Israel, he affirms, "either humanity would be Judaic, or it would be idolatrous-German" (p. 130). That is to say, either humanity would have a Judaic understanding of the value of our fellow human being, or it would succumb to a Nazi view. From the standpoint of Nazi ideology, the value of a human being derives from a natural and cultural accident: One who happens to be born an Aryan in a German culture has more value than one born otherwise, and with whom the Aryan has no essential connection. Within the category of Aryan, a person's value derives from resolve or a will to power. According to the Torah of Moses, on the other hand, the value of a human being derives from a divine image in which every human being is created. And since all of us are the descendants of a single human being, each of us is connected essentially to the other, both by blood and by responsibility.

This opposition between Jewish testimony and Nazi ideology on the value of a human being echoes throughout Elie Wiesel's (1968) lament that "at Auschwitz, not only man died, but also the very idea of man" (p. 230). It underlies the title of Primo Levi's memoir *If This Is a Man* (1959) (Se questo È un uomo). And it constitutes the "two streams" alluded to in the title of Abel Herzberg's Bergen-Belsen diary *Between Two Streams* (1997), what he calls "two irreconcilable principles of life" (p. 4). This radical tension between Judaic teaching and Nazi ideology concerning the human being is the focal point of my concern with the Holocaust. For here lies the singular horror of the Event: In the extermination of the Jews, the Nazis set out to exterminate the very thing that makes other horrors horrible, and not just matters of personal catastrophe or academic curiosity.

Because my thinking about the Holocaust has evolved along the lines of its specifically Jewish dimensions, my work has posed certain demands in practical terms. First of all, I had to undertake a thorough study of Judaism and Jewish history, familiarizing myself with the texts and the teachings of a vast tradition. Indeed, I do not think the Holocaust can be understood without a thorough understanding of Judaism, since that was what the Nazis set out to obliterate in the annihilation of the Jews. Further, in order to incorporate the holy texts of the Jewish tradition into a study of the Jewish response to the Event, I have had to acquire a working knowledge not only of Hebrew but also of several European languages. Without access to the original texts of diaries, memoirs, and other literary works, I would remain even more distant from the Event. And understanding this event entails bridging an abyss, in every way possible, between myself and those souls that ascended to the heavens in columns of smoke.

Because that abyss is not only conceptual or spiritual but also cultural and geographical, I had to journey to at least some of the murder camp sites. And so, in the summer of 1991, I traveled—alone and yet not alone—to Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Majdanek. *Yes, Majdanek.* As I ascended the steps to the mound

of ashes kept there like a grave above ground, my own sleep was disturbed by the troubled sleep of the souls that haunted the place. Standing before the dreaded mound piled far higher that my mind could fathom, I could see fragments of bone, traces of human being etched into that nothingness. Leaning against the short concrete wall that separated me from the ashes, my soul was flooded by a terrible temptation to dive into them, to cover myself with them, to place a handful in my mouth and thus find a way to let them speak. And an image rose before my eyes: It was the man who threw himself on top of the mass grave that covered his family and community and begged them not to refuse him. The only thing that stopped me was the fact that the sides of the structure that was home to those human remains was slanted and polished as smooth as a mirror. Once inside that mirror, it would be impossible to climb out. Yes, impossible: Once you entered those ashes, there could be no return. Once you enter those ashes, those ashes enter you. And so they entered me. They are scattered over every page I write.

Another practical change in my method of study was the necessity of binding myself to Israel and the Surviving Remnant that established that land. I made my first trip to Israel as a Jew, in fact, by way of the murder camps of Poland, by way of Majdanek. I had converted to Judaism in 1990, not by choice but, like every Jew, in the light of having been chosen. (My reasons and what it has to do with my engagement with the Holocaust I discuss in my book *Pilgrimage of a Proselyte: From Auschwitz to Jerusalem.*) Once in Israel, I realized more powerfully than ever, the absolute necessity for anyone who hopes to have even the slightest understanding of the Holocaust to spend some time in the land where the eternal enters time. I realized that there is no understanding of Auschwitz without dwelling in Jerusalem. And, as I drew nigh unto the center of holiness that emanates from the Temple Mount, I realized, more fully than ever, the nature of the radical evil that had slated holiness itself for annihilation.

In *Derekh Erets Rabbah* it is written that the world is like an eye: The white of the eye corresponds to the ocean surrounding the world, the iris is the inhabited world, the pupil is Jerusalem, and the face in the pupil is the Temple (9:13). If the face in the pupil is the Temple, the Temple is itself the eye of G-d gazing upon the world, the eye that wept ashes. When I work, I work under the gaze and under the reflection of that eye. And I strive to generate a reflection of that reflection in my work. Although such a striving may be doomed from the outset, we are not free to refrain from the task.

THE NECESSARY AND UNNECESSARY FAILURE OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

The Holocaust is the most radical proof of the collapse of Christendom—both Eastern and Western—as well as Western civilization. To be sure, in 2002 the Vatican, the Orthodox Church, and the Protestant churches of Europe have once again shown their antisemitic stance through their 1930s-like silence in the

face of the rising tide of violent attacks against the Jews of Europe. If anything of civilization or Christendom is to be retrieved from the collapse of the absolutes of our lives, Holocaust education is absolutely necessary. If, however, we continue to proceed according to the categories of Western Christendom and Western civilization—categories such as the inherent "sinfulness" of the human being (for the Nazis determined the Jew to be inherently sinful), the identification of freedom with autonomy (for no one was more radically autonomous than the Nazi), the self-centered equation of will with being (for the Nazis were justified by will alone), cultural and moral relativism (as preached by the ideological grandchildren of the Nazi Martin Heidegger, namely the postmodernists), and the like—then the *tikkun olam*, the mending of the world, absolutely necessitated by the Holocaust cannot even be approached.

Why? Because the categories of *tikkun olam* belong to the categories of Jewish thought, the Jewish tradition, and the Judaism that the Nazis attempted to obliterate. The confident assertion of the Nazis to the potential survivor that "no one will believe you" rests upon the confidence that the categories of Jewish teaching and tradition had been obliterated once and for all with the annihilation of the Jews. So far the assertion of the Nazis has proven to be accurate and their success far more pervasive than we think. For the Jews are being erased not only from Eastern Europe but also from the study, the teaching, and the memory of the Holocaust. More and more we do not speak of Jews at all. Instead, we speak of victims and trauma, dialogue and healing, representation and remembrance, textual analysis and ethical implications—everything except the singular assault on Jews and Judaism. If it should happen that we do comment on the Jews, we generally say nothing of what it means to be a Jew. But what can it mean to speak of the murder of Jews without addressing the Judaism that makes them Jews?

The thinking that has not found its way into Holocaust education is a Jewish thinking about education as *chinukh*, the Hebrew equivalent of education. *Chinukh* can mean "education," "dedication," and "consecration," as in the education of a child, the dedication of the Temple, and the consecration of a home. If Holocaust education is to meet with any success (whatever that means), then it must come to terms with these distinctively Jewish dimensions of thinking about education. It must, in other words, determine what ties the sanctity of the school (the *beit-sefer*) to the sanctity of the Temple (the *beit-HaMikdash*), and to the sanctity of the home (the *bait*). The difficulty for Holocaust education lies in the very notion of the sacred: Where, in any American college or university, can one get a course on the Holocaust approved because it might address the assault on and the mending of a sense of sanctity about anything? The term sanctity is neither postmodernly nor politically correct.

And yet, as the Hebrew equivalent *chinukh* suggests, unless we determine that something sacred is at stake in our learning, there can be no Holocaust education, and the Nazis knew it: No one will believe you, the Jew, because no one will believe in anything your tradition represents. And secretly they will be

glad that it is gone; after all, it could not save the Jews, and it interferes with our "enlightened" notions of freedom. And so the Nazi joins hands with the postmodernist; indeed, the Nazi is a postmodernist. A postmodernist "Holocaust educator," in fact, has declared to me that he resists terms like good or evil when speaking of the Holocaust, because they smack of religious connotations; a postmodernist "Holocaust educator" has declared to me that the Nazis were not interested in eradicating Judaism, because they left the synagogue in Amsterdam standing; a postmodernist "Holocaust educator" has declared to me that "the Nazis had their *good and evil*, and we have ours, but there is no ultimate "good" or "evil." If that is the case, then there is no Holocaust education, except the Holocaust education that betrays the dead and the tradition they represent by exploiting them in the name of the intellectual fashion or fad of the day.

Thus, we have the necessary failure of Holocaust education and not because of the "unimaginable" nature of the Event. Indeed, my work as translator on *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry* (2002) led me to realize that what the Nazis did was not unimaginable. On the contrary, they did everything imaginable, since they had no limiting principle to curb their actions; when it came to murdering and dehumanizing the Jews, it was impossible to go too far or to be too cruel. No, the necessary failure of Holocaust education lies in the erasure of the categories of the sacred—the very categories slated for obliteration in the annihilation of the Jews. While it is true that Judaism did not save the Jews from being murdered, neither Christian doctrine nor modern thought saved the Europeans from becoming murderers. But things do not have to be that way.

WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE?

During my attendance of the 2001 Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches a friend who is a survivor told me that she had come to a horrifying realization about the relationship between Holocaust scholars and Holocaust survivors. Speaking in a whisper, as though afraid of her own words, she said to me: "I know now what they want us to do: They want us to die." My initial reaction was shock. For reasons I did not grasp immediately, her words brought to mind one of the conference sessions on Holocaust education. At one point the discussion in that session revolved around the question of whether one should include something about religious tradition in a course on the Holocaust. The religious tradition referred to, however, was Christianity; there was no mention of Judaism, and for a moment I had the sense that the Christians—as well as a number of Jews—would like for Judaism basically to go away. True, it was suggested that the richness of the prewar Jewish culture and *Yiddishkeit* should be included in such a course, but not a word about Judaism.

And then the connection between my friend's words and the discussion on Holocaust education hit me: We teachers and scholars who pretend to deal with the Holocaust do not want to deal with the Jews because we do not want to

deal with the flesh and blood of Jewish life, which is rooted in Judaism. We do not want to look into the faces that put to us the question of what is ultimate in life, from beyond life. From the depths of the surviving remnant, the 614th Commandment, as Emil Fackenheim (1978) calls it, reverberates throughout the world (pp. 19–24). The 614th Commandment reminds us that we are commanded absolutely to embrace an absolute truth through the embrace of G-d and humanity as Jews. It tells the Jews that they do not have the luxury of regarding their tradition as a cultural curiosity, and it tells the Christians that their Christianity is, at least in its traditional forms, a scandal. That is why the scholars want the survivors to go away. In their presence, we collide with the cry of an absolute commandment that, like a *shofar*, shakes us from our complacent sleep. What remains to be done in Holocaust education is to introduce that commandment—and the tradition it signifies—into the study of the Holocaust.

What remains to be done, in other words, is to keep before us a question that is among the first that students ask about the Holocaust: "Why the Jews?" To talk about scapegoats, Christian antisemitism, nineteenth-century race theory, or the humiliation of Germany after World War I is hardly a response to this question. And our students know it. They may not know what an adequate response would be, but they often know when one is inadequate. If a reply to the question is to have any depth or add anything to our understanding of the Holocaust, then it must address the question of what the Jews signify by their very presence in the world, so that we may develop some inkling of what was targeted for destruction in the murder of the Jews. Whatever the Jews may signify, it has been shaped by the Torah and Talmud of Judaism. There can be no understanding of the Holocaust without an understanding of the Judaism—of the sacred tradition of Torah and Talmud—that was marked for extinction upon the extermination of the Jews.

If the Jews are to be part of Holocaust Studies, then some understanding of what makes the Jews who they are—namely, Judaism—should be part of a Holocaust curriculum. The teachings that arise from the texts of the Jewish religious tradition form the contexts for any encounter with the accounts of the survivors in their diaries, memoirs, and other testimonies. Taken in the contexts of the Torah and tradition marked for destruction, these texts inform the readings of other texts—works of history, literature, philosophy, and theology—to make clear the singularity and the sanctity of the subject matter. Unless that is made clear, then not only do we remove the Holocaust from Holocaust Studies, but we also slip into a subtle form of Holocaust denial driven by an antisemitism that would pass itself off as a sophisticated liberalism couched in the pseudointellectual slogans of postmodernism. Because the Holocaust is characterized by an assault on the Absolute, there is no engaging the Holocaust without engaging the Absolute. And wherever we engage the Absolute, we come before a judgment, both from on high and from within. For wherever we teach the Holocaust, the ashes in the bread we harvest from the ashen earth—the ashes now saturating

the blood in our veins—are listening to us. What remains to be done in Holocaust education is for us to listen to them, with our ears, our hands, and our mouths. What remains to be done is to set our ashen souls aflame with accountability.

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11

The Past Is Not Dead: Memories, Reflections, and Perspectives

Hanns-Fred Rathenow

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH IN DIVIDED GERMANY

At the time of my birth, life in Berlin in mid-1943 was still almost normal—in contrast to what was about to happen in the fall of 1943 when the Allied bomb attacks began in Berlin.

The fact that we were living in Hohen-Neuendorf—my parents, my aunt (my mother's younger sister), and my grandmother—protected us from the fate of the 1.5 million Berlin citizens who became homeless as a consequence of the bomb attack and from the fate of the countless dead who were buried under the collapsed buildings. So the "total war," which Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels (1897–1945) declared in 1943 in the Berlin Sportpalace to frenetic jubilation from the German crowd, ended for millions—not just in Berlin—in rubble, ashes, death, and tears. Our family survived this terrible war—none of my close relatives died during this time, no one was missing in action or was injured critically, no one was deported to a concentration camp or murdered there. I realize that, in comparison to my classmates at primary and secondary school, this was a tremendous exception, since nearly a third of my later classmates grew up fatherless.

SCHOOL YEARS IN THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (GDR) AND IN WEST BERLIN

The fact that I grew up in Hohen-Neuendorf—several hundred meters from the border to West Berlin, and attended a primary school in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), also known as East Germany, for four years—certainly is not without influence on my later political socialization.

I began school in the fall of 1949, at age 6—before the German Democratic Republic—the "first worker's and farmer's state on German soil"—was formed.

For the first half-year I attended a German comprehensive school (*Deutsche Einheitsschule*), as it was then called, in keeping with the reform-pedagogical tradition. At this time our family was still separated as a result of the war. In the spring of 1946 my father was released from a British prisoner of war camp in Kiel, on the Baltic Sea, and he registered with the police in Berlin. My sister, my mother, and I lived in Hohen-Neuendorf with my grandmother and my aunt. My father was working as a *Prokurist*—an authorizing signatory—at the company Katadyn, which had survived the war and was continuing to build water filters and chemical products for disinfection in the beverage industry. Before the war, the company was in the western part of the city, so shortly after the end of the war my father returned to his old job there, in what would become West Berlin. He was registered with the police in the late 1940s as a "subletter" (or renter of an apartment) on Gottschalkstrasse, but came back home to Hohen-Neuendorf after work every day. Later, in the early 1950s, he rented a small apartment two streets over in Stettinerstrasse 59, because the political situation was becoming increasingly difficult for people like him. GDR border guards, who wanted to know exactly where he worked, increasingly stopped him. At this time, the family began seriously to consider moving to the West. My father was a so-called "border-crosser," as it was called in East-West jargon—just like my grandmother, who was registered with the police as living in Hohen-Neuendorf, but worked in the West Berlin Finanzamt in the district of Moabit. Border-crossers, who commuted between the worlds of West Berlin and the "Zone," as the formerly Soviet-occupied zone (SBZ) was referred to—the West didn't recognize the GDR as a state—were a thorn in the side of the GDR government. Their West Berlin employers paid them 40 percent of their salary in "West" money and 60 percent in "East" money. Then they could exchange the 40 percent of their "West" money to their advantage in any of the countless money exchanges in the West. They changed the money at rates ranging from 1:4 to 1:10, which enabled them to live a fairly good life in the East. And so it was that the GDR, struggling under the weight of high reparations, couldn't match up to the "golden West," which had set the true standard of value. Heavy industry had to be built up from scratch on the east side of the Elbe River. In addition, the economy suffered from the fact that many industrial firms were dismantled and shipped off to the Soviet Union. Even the iron train tracks from train lines that had been laid down before the war in two tracks, were dismantled and in some places were only reconstructed after the reunification of Germany.

The differences in the economic situations between the East and West were already clear to me even as a small child. It was especially obvious in school, where it was clear which of my classmates had "West contacts"—either friends or relatives in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) who sent packages or brought gifts and "goods for daily use" with them during visits, or "border-crossers" in their own families. For example, the notebooks from the GDR supplies were made of gray paper that still had flecks of wood in it, whose

covers were printed with a ideological slogan, whereas the "West" notebooks were made from shiny, wood-free, white paper.

I was often embarrassed when I had something with me from the West. I remember one situation in particular, when I had received a new, Bavarian-style lederhose, because it was impossible to buy lederhose like that in the East. My mother insisted I wear the pants, because they were incredibly practical, since they were durable and didn't stain. Much to her horror, I used every possible form of dirt to try to make the pants appear as if they had been worn for a long time. Of course I didn't succeed in this very well, and so my first day of school with these new West lederhose was, for me, dreadful.

I believe it was in grade three, in the *Heimatkunde* class (a cross-cutting subject in the GDR that encompassed geography, biology, history, and social studies), that we compared our situation with that of children in the past. There was a moving image at that time in our social studies textbook that accompanied Friedrich Engels's text *The State of the Working Classes in England.* Children not much older than us had been forced into slave labor all day long, dragging like animals, on the ground on all-fours, carts of coal in pairs along a narrow tunnel.

"What kind of world must that have been, that children had to suffer so much? Why did their parents allow it? Why didn't they attend school and learn? Why did they look so undernourished?" our teachers asked. The image of this type of exploitation affected me deeply and presumably influenced my fundamental convictions about the inviolability of the worth of human beings—convictions that became stronger over time. The fact that Friedrich Engels later wrote his text in Wuppertal-Barmen—the same place I would study to become a teacher and where the theologian Karl Barth wrote the "Barmen Theological Declaration" (1934)—which later became the foundation for the activity of the Confessional Church during the Nazi dictatorship—remains a footnote here and a question, in terms of the extent to which the *genius loci* may have influenced my positions about human rights education.

AS A YOUNG "COMMUTER" BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

The youngest students in the GDR were expected to be members of the Young Pioneers (JP). When I was in the third grade, my teacher approached my parents and urged them to register me finally with the Young Pioneers. The Young Pioneers was the youth group of the communist party in the GDR, which—unlike other countries, was not called the "Communist Party," but rather was known as the "Socialist Unity Party of Germany" (SED), after the forced unification in 1946 of the Social Democratic Party of Germany with the Communist Party in the Soviet-occupied Zone.

Most children's life path in the GDR was clearly laid out for them. Boys and girls in grades one to three were Young Pioneers with a blue handkerchief for

their necks, in grade four they became Thaelmann Pioneers with a red handkerchief, and at age 14, they became members of the FDJ, the "Free German Youth." When they reached adulthood, they became candidates for the SED and finally, full members of the party.

My parents refused to enroll me in the Young Pioneers and justified this not with their experiences during the time of National Socialism, but rather because I was still too young and weak physically. As the pressure became too much, as of Easter 1953 (in the West the school year began at Easter, unlike in the East), I found myself enrolled in the fifth grade at a West Berlin primary school in Berlin-Wedding. From this point on I became a commuter-student like many others who lived in Hohen-Neuendorf or in other border areas in the East, commuting daily by subway one or two stations to the closest primary school in the West. Here, I began to learn English, learned the third stanza of the (West) German national anthem as the new national hymn, and suddenly had to deal with the fact that the school books, teachers, and political relationships that I had valued previously were not to be valued by me any longer. This was the time of the Cold War. Thus, for example, I experienced the practical effects of the political stiffening between East and West after Stalin's death on October 18, 1953. One morning without warning all of the children commuting on the subway from Hohen-Neuendorf, were removed from the train and taken to the basement of the town hall. We were interrogated, asked why we didn't go to school in Hohen-Neuendorf, and asked about which school we attended now. The representatives of the educational office examined the Western textbooks with particular interest. Here they saw an affront to the GDR's interests, since the social studies books didn't speak of the state in which we lived as the German Democratic Republic or the GDR, but rather in the terms used in the West: "the East Zone," "Zone," or "Soviet-occupied Zone" (SBZ). The Hallstein Doctrine was still in place in the East-West relationship, according to which the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) took on the responsibility of representing all of Germany, and did not recognize the GDR as a state.

From this point on, my sister and I were registered as children who lived in the East but went to school in the West. True to the phrase "Wes Brot ich essí, des Lied ich sing" (a German idiom that loosely translates as "whoever's bread I eat, it's their song I'll sing"), we were soon given the choice of either enrolling in a school in Hohen-Neuendorf and being allowed to continue living with our family, or to move to the West and continuing to go to school there. The family decided, without question, for the West solution, which meant that I only returned to Hohen-Neuendorf during vacations or on weekends. My childhood ended at this moment. It was here that the larger politics became noticeable in the details.

THE BERLIN WALL

I was on summer vacation on August 13, 1961, and our family was vacationing in southern West Germany. During the night from the 12th to the 13th

of August, units of the "people's police," the national people's army (NVA), and the so-called "factory defense groups" (*Betriebskampfgruppen*) sealed off the border between East and West. All of the street connections that were still open between East and West Berlin were shut down without warning. This happened despite the fact that Walter Ulbricht, the party leader and head of the GDR government, had answered a reporter's question at a press conference on June 16 with the sentence that later became famous: "No one intends to build a wall." In the days before August 13, the headlines came thick and fast, and I remember how the *Berliner Zeitung*, West Berlin's largest tabloid, registered the number of GDR citizens who had fled the country in large letters on its title page each day. The number of refugees was between one thousand five hundred and one thousand eight hundred daily.

As we came back to West Berlin from vacation, we found our grandmother in our apartment in Wedding. Like many others, she was apprehensive about returning to the GDR. She was already in West Berlin when she was surprised by the news of the Wall. If she stayed in West Berlin, she would have had to leave the family of her second daughter, including her son-in-law and her small grandchild, behind in Hohen-Neuendorf. After several days, she decided that she would go back, which meant that she would have to be separated from the family of her first daughter, my mother. Just a few days after August 13, the border was completely sealed off. In this stretch there were 155 kilometers of border between East and West Berlin and between West Berlin and the surrounding portions of the GDR. West Berlin was made into a complete political island—or, as it was often called, the "outpost of the free world inside the communist area of power." A so-called "antifascist protective wall," the Berlin Wall, became the image for the confrontation of the Cold War, the division of the Warsaw Pact, and NATO blocks. And it became the deadly obstacle for the 238 people who tried to get over it. Many of the cases of the estimated one thousand deaths on the wall and on the inter-German border were exploited for propaganda, such as the death of the teacher Egon Schultz, who was a member of the GDR border troops. He was killed in connection with the flight of a GDR citizen. In the eulogy, Erich Honecker, East Germany's leader, spoke of a "victim of an imperialistic attack." After the archives were opened—after the political changes in the early 1990s—it became clear that he was actually killed by a comrade's bullet. Over the decades, and not suprisingly, I experienced the border regime of the GDR as an abuse of the freedom of rights.

Even more than the construction of the Berlin Wall, its collapse was one of the most moving experiences of my life. After more than ten years, I'm not the only person who gets tears in my eyes during conversations about these events. I still can see the situation clearly on the morning of November 10, 1989, as the streets leading into West Berlin were jammed with "Trabbis," the typical small, plastic GDR cars. We could practically smell the changed political atmosphere in the air in the form of the sweet exhaust gas of their two-stroke engines. This initial euphoria about the fall of the Wall and German unification lay over everything, but it ended when the reality of every-day politics arrived.

West German households met noticeable financial burdens, through the eradication of subsidies or the introduction of a "solidarity supplement" on top of the normal income tax. East German families were faced with the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs and their comprehensive social security net. Above all, they were forced to adapt to a completely foreign societal system. I was overcome at times by a feeling of tremendous bitterness after 1990, as I saw how people from the GDR, the "oppressed brothers and sisters from the Zone," as they had been called for decades, were out-maneuvered..

For our immediate family, it became clear from the moment the Wall went up that we would look for a mutual future together in West Germany, outside of the island of West Berlin. So I became the first to take this path, in the spring of 1962, and began my studies to become a teacher at a West German university. This decision—to study at the Paedagogische Hochschule Wuppertal in Nordheim-Westfalen—would have broad and sweeping consequences for my later political socialization.

POLITICS AT THE DINNER TABLE

The relationship of my parents' to the respective political conditions was divided. Both came from small middle-class families. My father was born in 1909 as an illegitimate child, grew up in humble circumstances, and worked his way up. I learned as an adult that his natural father was a teacher in the Kaiserreich and his stepfather, who later adopted him, was a mason. My father completed his apprenticeship in sales during difficult economic times, between 1923 and 1926, at Artur Blumenthal, a wholesale iron goods company in the Wrangelstrasse in Berlin-Kreuzberg. He worked his way up until 1937 in this small Jewish company, "with time, until he was in the first post," as his report noted. After 1937, he worked as a sales manager, later as a Prokurist—an authorizing signatory—for the company Katadyn, which produced water filters, including some for mobile troops in the military. He met my mother in 1941 during an air alarm (*Fliegeralarm*), while he was seeking protection in the church in Berlin-Frohnau. They were married in August 1942.

At the end of October 1942, the Gestapo arrested my father with a preventative detention order that was only issued afterward. Along with three of his colleagues in the management at his business, and based on the denunciation of an SS man who was an employee at his company, he was accused of "undermining of military strength and price-setting/profiteering to the detriment of the state." After eight months of preventative detention and six months imprisonment while awaiting trial, he sat through a lengthy trial and was set free. Then, however, he was drafted immediately into service for the war. Later indications and letters from my father to my mother show that he developed a great deal of clarity during this time about both party and state. During his imprisonment in 1943 he left the National Socialist Party. After his death, I learned from his denazification application that he had registered for the Storm Abteilang (SA)

in Borgsdorf, not far from Hohen-Neuendorf, where he had lived until his marriage, because that location offered the only athletic facilities in the small village. Later, the SA automatically registered him for the National Socialist Party, the NSDAP. I became conscious of this period of his life only after my mother gave me a box of his papers while she was moving, which was after his death. The box contained all of the paperwork concerning the trial, as well as an entire collection of letters from 1943–1946. We spoke about this very little within our family. In retrospect it is difficult to understand who was affected more by this imprisonment—my father or my mother. For my mother the arrest of her husband just a few weeks after her wedding and before the eyes of her neighbors remained a lifelong trauma. Aside from the fact of the physical separation, for my mother—who was just 20 years old and pregnant with me—the deepest disgrace was that her husband had been brought to prison. The political background of the imprisonment was secondary for her.

My mother, who was born in 1922, had an unconscious and conformist relationship to political events. She grew up in an unpolitical household, in which her father was seldom at home and where her mother, as a result, was forced to care for her two daughters more or less as a single mother. She was 11 years old when Hitler came to power. The greater part of her school years was during the time of National Socialism, where every classroom displayed the portrait of the Fuehrer on the wall. At that time, like almost all of the other girls her age, she became a member of the (National Socialist) Group of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Maedel*, or BDM). When she reached the appropriate age, she completed the so-called *Pflichtjahr*—a year of substitute military service that young women were required to complete in hospitals, orphanages, or other social settings—in the Buckow youth hostel on the eastern edge of Berlin. Between 1930 and 1943 she worked in the telegram reception of Berlin's main telegraph office, until my birth in 1943, after which she did not return to work.

I remember well how she occasionally pointed out someone who was Jewish—well into the 1950s—using an inimitably negative tone. If my father happened to be there on such occasions, he always intervened, and on, at least one occasion, in my presence, reminded her that he had learned his trade in a Jewish-owned business and had never had any negative experiences with Jews. This probably did not have much of an effect, since I suspect that she was hardly conscious of her own childhood and youth socialization: antisemitic prejudices had taken root in the first twenty years of her life and were too strong to be eradicated—despite all the efforts at reeducation, particularly American ones. Born into a time of economic need and personal difficulties—her parents were divorced after just a few years of marriage—prejudices against the "greedy" Jews, among others, were widespread among the middle class.

In her immediate circle, she must have had hardly any contact or experiences with Jews. First of all, of the 63 million people living in the German Reich in the mid-1920s, only a half-million citizens were Jewish, and they were highly concentrated in the big cities. In the capital city there were, indeed, a high

number of Jews (4.3 percent of the residents), but they were concentrated in districts that my mother would—most likely—have visited seldom. For sure, she might have encountered one or more Jewish doctors as a small child, since the proportion of Jews in the medical profession was especially high. But at the edge of the city, she would not have seen anything of the street terror that the Nazis were enacting against the Jews. Her unreflective antisemitic views could not have developed as a result of her own experiences. Rather, they must have been the result of her contact with prejudices and antisemitic views, whether in school, in the Group of German Girls (BDM), or at least in her home. Today, she only can remember having had a single Jewish schoolmate at school, Hedda S. My mother's political thought and behavior in postwar Germany was influenced certainly by the negative everyday experiences in a dictatorship, which she later carried over to our everyday life in East Germany. Maybe her refusal to enroll me in the mass organization of the Young Pioneers was based more on instinct than on rational conviction. I remember well hearing sentences like, "don't speak too loudly or openly about political events," "the walls have ears," or "don't take a stand on anything publicly, because we've had a bad experience."

Later, when I traveled in the 1960s to Poland and to the USSR, my mother, along with a family friend who worked in the West Berlin federal intelligence agency (*Verfassungsschutz*), warned me not to endanger my position as a teacher through my travels in the "communist territory." My readiness to defend the weak, the losers, or victims of discrimination were cemented through these confrontations—with my mother, when she occasionally spoke in derogatory terms about a business with a Jewish-sounding name, and in school, when students were attacked or when the "East" was dismissed categorically in the West. There are two additional impressions that need to be mentioned when I ask myself what brought me to make the Holocaust a central topic of research and teaching at the university.

SACHSENHAUSEN AND CECILIENHOF

I must have been about 15 when the GDR government retightened border controls between the GDR (with the exception of East Berlin) and West Berlin. The four-power status of Berlin enabled border crossings within the city, but West Berliners needed a special traveler's permit in order to cross the GDR border into the surrounding suburbs to visit friends and family. My grandmother, aunt, uncle, and cousin still lived in Hohen-Neuendorf outside of Berlin, and my father's mother lived not far away in Borgsdorf. I can remember clearly the roughly 100-meter long line in the East Berlin district of Pankow, where people waited patiently in front of a school to apply for the permit to visit the GDR. After a lengthy wait, our family also received this type of traveling permit, which allowed us to go to Hohen-Neuendorf for a weekend. This short weekend trip was, however, only possible with several Prussian-bureaucratic style papers,

which included a page for the stamp in the regularly controlled *Hausbuch* as well as a form for registration with the police in Hohen-Neuendorf. When we arrived at the police station in Hohen-Neuendorf, we learned that the city government was inviting all of the West Berlin visitors to attend a one-and-a-half day tour of the district of Potsdam. I found the offer appealing, and my parents agreed that it would "look good" to have at least one member of the family take part in this kind of propaganda seminar. At the agreed-upon time, I found myself on Saturday afternoon in the city hall of the neighboring community of Birkenwerder, along with about twenty other West Berliners. We were received by countless functionaries of the SED, the city council of Oranienburg and the district of Potsdam. This and other seminars like it, which were largely organized by the SED, were intended to show the Western visitors how the "peace-loving GDR" differentiated itself from the "imperialistic FRG." The seminar in which I took part focused on the question of which of the two German states had kept their word about the demands laid out under the Potsdamer Agreement of August 1945. Ex-General Major Dr. Otto Korfes, a former member of the "National Committee for a Free Germany" offered us authentic evidence, supported by descriptions, of how this committee laid out in the Soviet Union by captured military officers worked toward goals that could only be realized in the GDR, not in the FRG. After that, we visited the former concentration camp of Sachsenhausen, which was just a few kilometers away, near Oranienburg, and then drove to Potsdam, where we stayed overnight in the Hotel Cecilienhof—which was part of the last German Kaiser's property and was built in the style of an English landowner's manor. In the summer of 1945, it had been the site for the negotiations of the victorious powers.

On this trip, I felt torn in many directions: For the first time, as a 15-year-old, I felt accepted as a full member in a circle of adults, where my questions were answered in all seriousness. But underlying this was my parents' characterization of the seminar as pure propaganda. And there were indisputable facts I had to deal with—the fate of the concentration camp inmates in Oranienburg, which for many ended with death in Sachsenhausen, in one of the extermination camps like Auschwitz, or on a death march from Sachsenhausen to the northwest. The word "Holocaust" was certainly not used in this connection, and I only learned about the suffering of the Jewish prisoners in passing. But this was the first time I had seen a memorial site for the victims of National Socialism—at a time when my own history class was dealing with the topic of French mercantilism, and would only begin addressing the topic of "National Socialism," at the earliest, a year later. This little journey into recent German history had tremendous meaning for me. It stirred a latent historical interest. As a small child, I had listened with "open ears" when adults—men who had come back from the war—discussed how they had escaped from the war through various kinds of tricks. Their tone was often blustery, as they bragged about some heroic escapade. Among those telling these tales there were no war invalids, no one

who sat there had a wood prosthetic or half an arm; they had obviously left their dead comrades behind them long ago.

ROLF HOCHHUTH'S *THE DEPUTY*

As I was writing this essay, I read in the "historical calendar" section of *Dolomiten*, a south Tirol newspaper, under the date of August 14, 1941, on this same day, exactly sixty years ago, the Fransciscan monk Maximilian Kolbe saved the Polish man Franciszek Gajowniczek's life by allowing himself to be sent to the gas chamber in Gajowniczek's place. About twenty years later, in memory of Maximilian Kolbe and the Berlin Domprobst, the until then relatively unknown playwright Rolf Hochhuth published his "Christian tragedy" *The Deputy*. In the summer of 1963, during my first year of study at the Pedagogical University in Wuppertal, I saw *The Deputy*, directed by Erwin Piscator, who was a representative of political theater in the tradition of Bertolt Brecht. The play's content was fruitful for me: I had recently enrolled at a small, eight hundred–student university in Wuppertal to study teacher education for history and political education. Here, through my encounters with Professor Guenter van Norden, who was a member of the faculty in History as well as Education in History and Politics, I found the focal point for my studies: the history of the Third Reich.

One of my professors and the rector of the university for some time was Oskar Hammelsbeck, who—like about half of the faculty—had been a member of the Confessional Church during National Socialism. His lectures always carried the echoed thought of his friend Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Protestant theologian who was a part of the theological resistance and was killed by the Nazis in April 1945 in the Flossenbuerg concentration camp. I spent the three most significant years of my personal and political development here in this confrontation with history and pedagogy, in particular reform pedagogy. I moved to campus at age 18 and soaked up the atmosphere like a sponge. It was at this time that the play *The Deputy* opened, in which Hochhuth posed a question that for his time was incredible—"Did Pius XII ignore the deportations of Rome's Jews that were taking place at his front door, as well as the information that had been provided to him about the extermination of European Jews?" As it is known, the pope consciously remained silent and hence provided Rolf Hochhuth the subject for his Christian tragedy. For many years, one scene continued to grip me: The director Piscator used a cattle transport car to reenact the Nazi deportations of Jews. The depiction of the deportations into the extermination camps and the selection on the ramp in Auschwitz—this characteristic and elementary experience of the separation of people, of families, of dependents who belong together—is what affected me so fundamentally about this play. This scene has not let me go since, and the fact that I still remember it so clearly means that the emotional experience I suffered in a theater as a 20-year old definitely affected my subsequent practice as a teacher and university professor.

My attempts to convey the Holocaust to students in the framework of human rights education, as the abuse of the most elementary of human rights, can be traced back to the *The Deputy*. When I saw this play, I was certainly experiencing what the Czech pedagogue Johann Amos Comenius (1592–1670) noted: *Nihil est in intellectu, quod non prius in sensuî*—that which is not experienced with all the senses cannot be understood intellectually. About twenty years later I tried to integrate this idea into the conceptions I developed about the pedagogy of visiting concentration camp memorials, as is described in the 1995 volume I co-edited, *Praxis der Gedenkstaettenpaedagogik* (Ehmann et al., 1995).

The 1960s were a time when I breathed in political theater eagerly, like fresh air. Piscator's production in the Free People's Theatre has always pulled me back into the current political confrontations. What this artist—who during his exile in the United States became a professor of drama in New York—said in a speech at the (re)opening of the Free People's Theatre in 1963 in West Berlin, replaced my previous history and social studies instruction and expanded my study of history. He said, "Over 100 million dead—who died through violence—tarnish the path of my generation. Let us use the theater to become human again—using means that shut out violence! Let's celebrate humanity! Let the most holy of all emotions flow: reverence for humanity by humanity! This deserves our efforts! This should be our goal!"

Peter Weiss's *Die Ermittlung* (*The Hearing*), which I saw in December 1965, brought the just-ended Auschwitz trial to the stage. It was unique because the piece was performed simultaneously on seventeen West German and two East German stages (Berliner Emsemble and Volkstheater Rostock) on the same day, and gripped the daily politics—the discussion about "coming to terms with the past," as it was called at that time. In a Cologne production the accused scattered themselves around in the audience and thereby implied—the murderers are among us.

In the fall of 1966 I also took my first trip to Auschwitz. It became clear to me for the first time—as I looked out on the mountains of shoes, glasses, suitcases, and prosthetics piled up in the memorial site—what German thoroughness was capable of doing, when paired with the National Socialistic drive to exterminate.

CONVICTIONS AND POSITIONS: THEODOR ADORNO'S STARTING-POINT FOR AN EDUCATION AFTER AUSCHWITZ

There is no adequate German translation for the English expression "Holocaust education." Here, like so many other places in the German language that are becoming "Anglicized," it makes sense to ask how the expression made its way into the German language to begin with. It was in January 1979—primarily through the American television series by the same name—that the term "Holocaust" became broadly known in Germany and became identified with the

extermination of European Jews. The expression—which originates from Jewish religious history and has been translated by Martin Luther, among others, as *Brandopfer*, in the sense of an immense destruction—has a tendency to obscure the mass murder of millions of Jews, just as does the Hebrew word *Shoah* (which literally means "catastrophe"). At the end of the 1980s, in a publication entitled *Erziehung nach Auschwitz* (Rathenow and Weber, 1988), my friend and colleague Norbert H. Weber and I explained that we saw the murder of European Jews as incomparable. Indeed, we were and are in basic agreement with historian Eberhard Jaeckel (1989) who asserted that the Holocaust "was unique because a state had never before decided and announced, with the authority of its responsible leader, that it would kill an entire group of people without exception, including the old, women, children and infants, and then set this decision into motion with all possible state means of power" (p. 118).

In Germany, there has not typically been a particular way to characterize approaches to dealing with the Holocaust in schools, as there was for environmental education or sex education. The Holocaust is, however, a compulsory part of history education in all federal states. The term "memorial site education" has been established as the label for educational efforts in memorial sites for victims of National Socialism. Norbert H. Weber and I decided, however, in the above-named publication about educational efforts on the Holocaust, to use the expression, "Education after Auschwitz." The term had become well known from Theodor W. Adorno's 1966 radio address by the same name. We chose this term because it captured the moral basis of much of political education instruction and offered simultaneously some starting points for instructional development on the topics of "the Holocaust" and "National Socialism" in regard to how they could be integrated from our perspectives. In almost all of the university seminars I taught in the beginning of the 1980s, which in certain cases included a one-week excursion to Cracow, Auschwitz, and Posen, I taught students about Adorno's theses. These theses have practically become part of the standard repertoire in my seminars, and that is due in large part because his insights have guided me in my own confrontation with National Socialism.

Theodor Adorno was a co-founder of the Frankfurt School, along with Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, and, later, Jürgen Habermas, among others. The Frankfurt School's representatives tried—with thoroughly different starting points—to connect Marxist and psychoanalytic theories in their development of the "critical theory of society," which since the 1960s has continued to have a significant influence on societal-political discussions in the FRG. Adorno, who had returned recently from exile in America, led his radio address "Education after Auschwitz," with the following words: "The demand that Auschwitz not happen again is the very first part of education. It is so far out front of everything else that I don't even believe it must or should be justified" (Adorno, 1967). Twenty years after the end of National Socialism, he asserted, an education after Auschwitz has to develop the "power of reflection, of self-definition, of a refusal to participate."

Auschwitz—the image of the murder of millions of Jews—can never be allowed to be displaced. We can never withdraw from the "confrontation with the horror." Adorno makes it clear that Auschwitz could happen again, if we don't allow the horror to "draw near," and he, who only talks about it, pushes it away from himself, as if he was the guilty one, not the one who did it. I have experienced this "pushing away" in the course of my own political socialization, with my parents, with teachers during my own time at school, in countless conversations with contemporaries. The problem among members of the Second Generation—my generation—is that guilt is often pushed onto the parents' generation, if at all. But for members of my generation and the coming generations, it is less an issue of direct guilt than it is about accepting the uncomfortable and unbearable inheritance from the German past. As Germans, we can't just be proud of Goethe, Schiller, and Beethoven. We also have Eichmann, Hoess, and Himmler. Responsibility is something different than guilt. In this sense, the past cannot be "overcome," which was the idea in the 1960s and 1970s, if this word also suggests that at some point the crimes of the National Socialists can also be laid to rest, as has been and remains the goal of some people.

An education whose objective is to pursue Adorno's goal that "Auschwitz never happen again" must replace "reminding ourselves of fascism" with "remembering fascism." In this respect, we must also focus on the fact that fascism was in no way the work of a few psychopaths. Rather, it lured the broad circle of the German population with content whose foundations were laid years before in the German people and which spoke to a large part of the German population: promises of a "*volkish*" unity; of purity through the "eradication" of the "impure"; the removal of all of the complexity and contradictions of life. These tendencies were politically totalitarian, but in no way stopped existing after the Third Reich had collapsed to the ground. (See Rathenow and Weber, 1988, pp. 13ff.) Education after Auschwitz, therefore, has to attempt clearly to identify how and in which ways strains of totalitarianism can be uncovered in the contemporary setting—at the societal as well as at the individual level. We see examples in the striving for the perfect human in the areas of gene technology and biomedicine. As a further example, we could name the self-and other-construction of ethnic groups that have no inner differences, but which lead to military confrontations with the goal of creating ethnically cleansed regions.

This is what I am striving toward as a teacher: to have students develop the capacity and the ability to recognize tendencies toward totalitarianism, intolerance of difference, contradiction, and complexity. The goal of my university work is to work through the topic of an "education after Auschwitz" with future teachers, to provide them with a "tool-kit" for political instruction, in order to enable them to convey their own experiences with the topic in their work with K-12 students. In doing so, I try to make it clear that an education after Auschwitz is not something that is limited to Germany, but rather touches on universal problems of political education and morals. It goes beyond pure observation of recent history to include implicitly the demand to regard critically contemporary

societal processes and political decisions. With regard to school-based instruction, such a pedagogy has to make clear that the Holocaust is not the center or the sum of German Jewish relationships. Even more, it has to work toward the development of societal morals that will no longer look away, but will rather cry out when minorities in society are discriminated against or when their right to exist is attacked. This does not just affect instruction in history or social studies but is rather the educational goal of the school more broadly. I would describe this goal in terms of "civil courage," a goal that is not named very often in the curriculum. It is one of the most important things we can impart to young people in school or university.

REAPPRAISING THE PAST

"We Didn't Know Anything About It!"

With respect to the question of how my own convictions and positions toward an "Education after Auschwitz" developed, my personal experiences with the culture of "memory" play a large role.

Upon my arrival home after my first visit to the Sachenhausen concentration camp memorial site in the late 1950s, I asked my parents the question: "How could you have lived just a few kilometers away from Sachsenhausen and not have known anything about what was taking place there?" I only received an answer by chance just a few years ago. My mother was talking about her work in the Berlin main telegraph office and mentioned a friend with whom she had worked there who had recently passed away. She mentioned as a sort of side note that she had sometimes wondered why telegrams with death notices were being sent constantly from Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen—telegrams that always listed the same exact cause of death. She had only made the connection now, in her late seventies. In connection with this, I think about the civic education that my mother received until about age 16, before she entered her *Pflichtjahr*. Of course there was no instructional goal to impart critical judgment skills or the ability to think critically about what was apparently everyday life. I want to believe my mother when she says that it was only after the war that she came to understand the full background of the death telegrams that she sent from Sachsenhausen. But I suspect that—as an 18 year old—she suppressed the uncomfortable feelings that she must have had in order to permit her own daily problems, including the preparation of her wedding, to take center stage. She was able to quickly and successfully suppress the darker sides of daily life that she experienced in her professional life. Her one-sided political education had left her blind to those kinds of perceptions.

"We didn't know anything about it!"—this was one of the standard phrases that one always heard in the postwar period. But what does it actually mean to say "we didn't know anything about it?" If "knowing" means that one can only believe to be true—and incorporate into one's being what one considers one's

own knowledge—that which one has seen with one's own eyes, then doubtless there were relatively few German men (mainly) who were witnesses to the murders of German and European Jews. But there were tens of thousands who watched the deportations from cities and communities, who were bystanders. They functioned directly as cogs in the larger machine—employees of official offices, school principals, employees of the tax administration, officials from the federal train service, those who took advantage of the (cheap) forced sale of companies, property, houses, or furniture. There were new renters for suddenly empty and completely furnished apartments, and there were countless firms that employed forced labor and made tremendous profits doing so. There are thousands of examples.

There were, in other words, people who must have perceived fragments about what was happening at the time—as there were reports from participants or witnesses to massacres. The former apparently were unable to see themselves as parts of a puzzle in a larger political whole, however. The challenge is always renewed for historical-political education, therefore, to find out why it was not possible for people in this kind of situation to put together the pieces of the puzzle. This complex question requires as much impartiality and value-free observation as possible, which in the face of the morally charged atmosphere can be incredibly difficult.

"Why didn't I recognize certain conditions?" "Shouldn't I have inquired?" and "How would I have reacted myself?" These are questions that can often be answered easily with the distance created by the passage of time, but which were difficult to ask in the historical context.

"It wasn't me, it was Adolf Hitler."

I belong to a generation that was either born during the time of the National Socialists or in post–World War II Germany. We challenged our parents, teachers, and professors at the end of the 1960s to examine critically their own roles in the Third Reich. Talk of "collective guilt," which was frequently voiced, didn't really touch the individual. When one talked about a huge responsibility or guilt, it was one that could only be carried by the entire society, not the individual. In this respect, talk of collective guilt was also a means of collective avoidance.

"It wasn't me, it was Adolf Hitler" is the name of a play by Hermann van Harten that addresses this "dilemma" of the Germans in the postwar era. One felt like a victim of the war. At least this is essentially how my mother's stories went about the sacrifices that she had to make with us, her two children, in the two years of the war and in the first few years after the war. These were evidenced in inadequate nutrition, foraging trips, and restrictions on energy use, which stood in the forefront of memory. And, in fact, it was considerable, what she and most of the women of her generation, as so-called *Truemmerfrauen* (women who cleared away rubble after the war) and single mothers had to deal

with in the postwar period in order to rebuild the postwar society. Homes and apartments were destroyed and looted, many husbands were dead, crippled, or still in prison, which meant that these women had to rebuild the internal and external structures of their lives on their own. The question of whether one was involved somehow in this part of history was seldom a topic.

"If Hitler hadn't gassed the Jews . . ." was a phrase I heard often as a child and teenager. Maybe it didn't mean just the personification and separation of one's own guilt, but also described—in an alternative form—the problem of who was responsible or co-responsible. Parts of the society of adult Germans first began to ask these questions twenty years later, in the course of the Auschwitz trials (1963–1965). In August 1947, journalists of the (East) Berlin paper *Berliner Zeitung* had the opportunity to talk with several of the 240 members of the 9th Spandauer Police Reserve Battalion, who were standing before a Soviet war court in Oranienburg. They were accused of having killed more than 97,000 civilians between July and December 1941 in the Soviet Union. Those being interrogated kept responding that they had only acted "on orders":

> For us German journalists, the most shocking thing was the conviction of the unfortunately incontrovertible fact that the gentlemen from the Nazi Regime didn't have to select special recruits who already had criminal tendencies to carry out their bloody "work." Germans were drafted into the police reserves without a choice—bookkeepers, waiters, police officers, bakers, coach drivers, lawyers, and so on. In the moment they put on the uniform and stood before an officer, they lost any trace of feeling for morals, humanity, and their own responsibility. They served as obedient machines for every unspeakable crime. "An order is an order." The mass murderers with whom we spoke were in no way unusually criminal types. They were normal middle-class citizens, no better and no worse than hundreds of thousands just like them. They probably would never in their lives have considered killing even a single person, if someone had not given them a uniform and thereby made them into a will-less automaton. It is a terrible accusation against the disastrous German past that brought out such "unpolitical" slaves and "yes-sayers" in our own people in much greater numbers than in any other people. (*Berliner Zeitung* Nr. 184, August 10, 1947)

I chose this long quote from 1947 because it so precisely matches a statement that my generation made in accusation against our parents about twenty years later, at the end of the 1960s, in a long and torturous trial. This was also a statement that Christopher Browning brought to the attention of a large audience in his work about "ordinary men" (see Browning 1992). In 1947, East Berlin readers of this journalist's report presumably only took this as thickly laid on, malicious communist propaganda. One didn't take these facts entirely seriously in the context of the Soviet-sponsored re-education in the "Soviet-occupied

zone." This explains the common practice during my schooling as an upper-school student (1955–1962), that history education ended with World War I or the Weimar Republic, and the time of National Socialism was left out. But at the end of 1959, countless instances of swastika grafitti were noted, along with publically voiced antisemitic comments from upper-school students in West Berlin. In early January 1960, the Berlin Chief Education Officer Carl-Heinz Evers warned West Berlin teachers that they needed to adhere to the clear requirements of the history curriculum, which required that National Socialism be addressed. It is characteristic of the situation in this time, however, that he permitted the history teachers to be dispensated from this part of history instruction if they felt awkward or biased because of their own involvement in this period. (See *Der Tagesspiegel*, January 9, 1960.)

The Past That Will Not Go Away

My perception is that the willingness to confront the National Socialist past changed qualitatively in the 1990s. This was encouraged by the reunification of Germany, a critical reflection of antifascism as the state doctrine in the GDR, a changed culture of memory, which increasingly had to exist without witnesses from that time period, as well as from a generation of politicians who were no longer socialized after National Socialism.

In the years surrounding the change to a new century there are various trends in the FRG: on the one hand, we are continuing to see antisemitic and racist attacks, from the damaging of Jewish cemeteries and synagogues all the way to murders of foreigners and asylum-seekers, discrimination against non-Germans in everyday politics, or comments like those of Martin Walser, who was awarded the peace prize from the German book press and said that he doesn't want to be "hit with the moral club of Auschwitz." On the other hand, a broad public discourse should not be overlooked, which has been supported by confrontations about the Holocaust Monument in Berlin, the exhibit about the crimes of the Wehrmacht, the forced laborers' reparations, and the publication of Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. The 300,000 visitors to the empty Jewish Museum in Berlin in the months before its opening, along with the countless number of people who followed the aforementioned public debates, the letters to the editor, and the reactions on talk shows are signs of an interest in the past that is still there and that continues to emerge anew. The past will not and cannot go away.

How do I deal with this past? I am not free to not want this uncomfortable history of my fatherland. I can't change anything about it, can't lie about it—it is a part of me. I am free, however, to assert my own position toward this history, and I do this in the sense that our former federal president Richard von Weizsaecker expressed in his thought-provoking speech on May 8, 1985, the fortieth anniversary of the liberation from National Socialism. He said, "The

young are not responsible for what happened then, but they are responsible for what is made out of history."

REFLECTION AND PERSPECTIVE

Auschwitz—More Than a Place in Poland

I was in Auschwitz for the first time in 1966. I took part in a so-called memorial site trip that had been organized by the Evangelical Youth, the youth organization of the Protestant Church in Berlin. The Protestant Church and the *Falken*, the youth organization of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, were the only youth organizations that attempted to build a connection with the Eastern bloc after the construction of the Berlin Wall in the early 1960s. They not only wanted to support a political dialogue between East and West, but also to confront young people with the deeds of their fathers and grandfathers. For people traveling to one of the Eastern Bloc states, this often meant confronting the recent past during visits to memorial sites in Poland, especially Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Majdanek. For many others, especially older people, this meant asking questions that were, for society in the FRG, uncomfortable, burdening, embarrassing, and politically inopportune. By this time I was a teacher.

My first visit to Auschwitz—I was in my early twenties—was of a special nature. Perhaps I was influenced by the idea to delve into this excursion as "objectively" as possible. In any case, I took along a professional journalist's tape recorder, a camera, and an 8-millimeter camera. I wanted to miss nothing that was shared on the tour about the background of the camp, its history, and so forth.

Nineteen years later, in 1985, I was in Auschwitz again, but for the first time with a group of university students. We were in the area of Birkenau in the spring of that year, when we suddenly noticed the remains of ashes near a small pond next to our path. There were remnants of bone sticking out of the ashes. One of the students had discovered them in between the sparsely growing blades of grass, because he wanted to pick up something from the ground. In the photographs that were taken at this moment, I have seldom seen so many despair-filled and reflective faces. Somehow I recognized myself in those photos, because each of my visits to Auschwitz left similar traces behind. This visit to Auschwitz left something behind in the heads and hearts of both the students and ourselves (the seminar leaders—myself and my colleague, Norbert Weber). It was the topic of discussion and conversation for many nights for the entire group. "The encounter with Auschwitz placed everything that I had seen in my life up until then, in shadows," explained one student on the evening after the visit to the memorial site. Certainly his impressions spoke for the entire group. But again and again our conversations turned to the question, "What does Auschwitz have to do with us?" (Rathenow and Weber, 1986, p. 15).

Methods of Holocaust Education

As a teacher in a Berlin Realschule (grades 7–10) from 1965–1971, I essentially followed the required Berlin curriculum for history, which was generally quite exemplary. The curriculum required twenty hours in the 9th or 10th grades of instructional time on National Socialism, including the Holocaust. Thirty years later, my task is to guide teachers-in-training (whose major subject is politics) through the didactic of this instructional subject and to mentor them during their first pedagogical experiences in schools during their "instructional internship." Most German universities leave the focus of the content up to the professor. As a result of the biographical experience I have discussed above, my priority was the question of what an education after Auschwitz—in Adorno's sense—should look like, carried over into the context of today's actual conditions and within the area of historical-political education.

One method that I have employed in several seminars at the university with students training to be teachers—and not just in Holocaust Education—is implicit in the account I have discussed above. This is the fusion of contemporary events and cultural currents (*Zeitgeist*) with personal experiences and perspectives. I developed this method from the conviction that every individual who is involved in the transmission of historical-political education should have already spent some time "working through" his or her own history. (See Schulz-Hageleit, 1996, pp. 21ff.) This kind of biographical work is important for future teachers, because at school, they will be constitutive participants in the (political) biographies of young people. If these future teachers are able to comprehend how their own political thought and engagement developed, they will be better able to recognize how their students have developed. The goal of biographically based work is seen clearly in the example of seminars in which the Holocaust plays a role. In such seminars, our goal is to gain affective, understandable access to the biographies of the parents' and grandparents' generation. In order to accomplish this, however, it's helpful to create some level of emotional access to one's own personal developmental history.

According to my observations, as one takes steps toward discovering one's own biography, this leads to a greater level of curiosity and interest about others' biographies. To bring the past back to life can, at least initially, be achieved by going more deeply into old memories, with the help of diaries, calendars, old school notebooks, among others, without having an assigned thematic direction or focus. At the beginning of such seminars, I have students do an exercise to help them recall the time of their first school years, which is often difficult to remember. The students first take a look at the childhood handwriting displayed in some of the "memory pieces." They then write their name and address from that time in the handwriting of a second- or third-grader. After this exercise—these first steps in looking at one's own past—the students turn with more open eyes to the history of their parents and grandparents, by looking at photographs, letters, or other objects that are bound with memory. As some light is shed on

their past, the seminar participants then take another step by creating an individual "life frieze" (*Lebensfries*). Each frieze is divided into four colored lines. The first line is a timeline, which notes the age of the person accordingly, by listing the year along a line that marks the time. The line underneath this marks events that are important personally to the individual, including events that are emotional in nature. Beneath this line is a third line, denoted again by a different color, which traces political events. The fourth and last line denotes cultural currents (*Zeitgeist*). By creating a picture of a person's biography in this manner, we are able to visualize the individual's life on the level of personal development, political events, and social-cultural currents. This makes historical reflection possible in each societal-political context. This form of representation also makes completely clear that the components of these lines are conditional and dependent upon each other and are influenced by one another.

A further exercise has to be conducted in tandem with this one: a classical family tree, which includes a little box for special theme-related notes about each family member. This family tree expands the life frieze. The little boxes allow students to make notes that make connections between each person and particular historical events, which participants agree on as a group. It is at this point that historical events that relate to the Holocaust become evident on the family tree. The scope of such expansions of the family tree is of course dependent on the (intimate) conversational atmosphere in the group. It is important to have communication forms that are as symmetrical as possible and to keep up the trust the group members build among each other as time passes.

Occasionally, in the last third of a seminar series, I share with my students the thoughts of the Jewish author Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), whose works became victim to the Nazi book burnings on May 10, 1933:

> The current day is
> a result of the one yesterday.
> What this day wanted
> we have to discover yesterday
> if we want to know
> what today wants.

I have found that students, as a general rule, are not accustomed to dealing with their personal history. The current era is strongly driven by the here and now. In the sense of the Heine's quote, however, the concentrated work on here and now and the creation of the future can only result from responsible reflection on the past. This work on the past is dependent on the willingness to uncover it, to recognize it, to welcome it, to give meaning to it, and to interpret it, in order to move the present and the future toward goals that I have established myself.

In April 2000, the English/German CD-ROM "Learning from History" (Brinkmann et al., 2000) was published, in order to provide examples about how

National Socialism can be dealt with in classrooms and with students as well as provide examples of projects in German schools and extracurricular settings that deal with the topic of National Socialism and the Holocaust. This project had multiple leadership, including the late noted Holocaust historian Sybil Milton based in Washington, D.C., Annette Brinkmann from the Fund for Cultural Education, Regina Wyrwoll from the Goethe Institute, and Annegret Ehmann, the former director of the educational division of the memorial site House of the Wannsee Conference in Berlin, along with myself. Alongside projects with clear historical ties, such as the development of regional histories or the development of biographies of individual oppressors and murderers, or the work in memorial sites, the CD-ROM also deals with broader projects. For example, there are projects that deal with the discrimination of Sinti and Roma. In order to create the broadest possible access to the content of the CD-ROM, a systematic and dual-language website was created (HYPERLINK http:// www.holocaust-education.de). On this website, individuals can learn more about various projects. The site also lists wideranging information about recently published books, TV and radio programs, and seminars or workshops.

DESIDERATA

Holocaust Education progressed into the 1990s with an education about Auschwitz—and involved the sense of a sharpening of the consciousness in regard to a difficult national inheritance. In many primary schools in German cities a high percentage of the children are of non-German ethnic heritage—who as a result of their own background have no particular relationship to the specific German past, to National Socialism, or the Holocaust. This raises the question of how "Education after Auschwitz" should be changed. Answers to this question in contemporary pedagogical discussions in Germany are just beginning to be developed. A multiethnic coming together of school classes presents new challenges—as the events of September 11 (the terrorist acts against the United States where commerical airliners were hijacked and crashed purposely into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon) have shown us. It is necessary to develop a pedagogical effort whose aim is to work against education that promotes exclusion, racism, and hate.

The injustices in the division of wealth among national states and the related lack of adequate nourishment, education, health care, and more for an enormous part of the world population have led to a radicalization of ideologies. What contribution can historical-political education make in this area? It can raise issues that makes the monochrome explanations and solutions of some worldviews more relative and places them within the context of competing worldviews and not as the "path to the truth." Constructed homogeneity within religious, political, or ethnic groups must be softened by a differentiated view and the acknowledgment of difference. Political education should help young people to find their own identity without excluding others. It will thereby help

young people to realize and appreciate that instead of fearing and, possibly, desiring the eradication of difference they can celebrate it.

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12

Looking Back in Anger: Antiracist Education and the Holocaust

Geoffrey Short

EARLY YEARS

Strange though it may seem, I cannot remember a time when I was unaware of the Holocaust. I was born a couple of years after the war, and as I grew up in a family that identified actively with the Jewish community, I guess it was inevitable that the Holocaust would, to a greater or lesser extent, impinge upon and shape my sense of self from an early age. There was no sudden or dramatic encounter with it as experienced by some writers and scholars; on the contrary, it always seems to have been a part of me, like some kind of congenital condition. I was the older of two children in a "traditional" Jewish family. We belonged to a small Orthodox synagogue near London and lived in accordance with the less onerous customs and practices of Judaism. We only ate kosher meat; there were mezuzahs on the doors, and candles were lit on Friday night, a time when the family stayed home, but if the truth be told, I suspect that my parents observed these and other rituals more out of respect for their parents than out of religious conviction. I regularly attended Sabbath morning services at the synagogue and went to *cheder* (religion school) twice each week, but while I am convinced that during these (pre–Bar Mitzvah) years I knew "something" about the Holocaust, I don't recall anyone ever talking directly about it in the synagogue or at *cheder* or, for that matter, at home.

There were, however, a couple of indirect allusions that have stuck in my mind. During the Suez crisis, for example, when I was 9 years old, I remember my grandfather describing the Egyptian leader, somewhat hyperbolically, as "another Hitler." At around the same age I was also made aware of my father's hostile attitude toward Germany by his steadfast refusal to purchase anything made in that country, but these oblique references were as close as we got to discussing the catastrophe that had all but decimated European Jewry. The family was not in denial; we eschewed the topic simply because it had no relevance

to our lives at the time. We had no close relatives killed by the Nazis, as my great-grandparents, on both sides, had migrated to Britain from Eastern Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The fact that there were no survivors in our community, or, at least, none of whom I was aware, may also help to explain why the Holocaust never cropped up in conversation. We certainly never reflected on it as a result of any antisemitic incident.

However, in order to understand fully the family's muted response to the Holocaust, I think it is necessary to take into account the general lack of interest in the event in the country-at-large during the 1950s. According to the historian David Cesarani (1996), "The entry of the Holocaust into public space occurred in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s, once it had become established as a subject in scholarship and culture" (p. 621).

Throughout my teenage years I became increasingly religious and was active in a religious youth movement. We often invited guest speakers to address us—but never, as far as I recall, on any aspect of the Holocaust. In early adolescence, roughly between the ages of 13 and 15, I had no particular interest in the Holocaust; yet two "encounters with Nazism" that I did have during these years were to leave their mark. The first was a wave of synagogue daubings and cemetery desecrations that I believe started in Cologne in 1960 and quickly spread to the rest of Western Europe. Our own synagogue was targeted, and I remember the steps taken by the community, both locally and nationally, to tighten security. The second was a meeting of the British National Socialist Party held in Trafalgar Square in July 1962 under a banner proclaiming "Free Britain from Jewish Control." This came as quite a shock, Nazis on my own doorstop, but still, the issue for me wasn't the Holocaust—that was history—it was antisemitisim and racism in contemporary Britain. Racism was actually the greater concern, for by the early 1960s, large numbers of immigrants from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent had settled in the country and the extreme Right was becoming increasingly active and menacing. Racist stickers and posters littered the area where I lived, on the southern outskirts of London, and on a number of occasions I went out at night armed with a pot of white paint to obliterate the offensive messages.

In the early 1960s I also had my first literary exposure to the fate of European Jewry when I read Leon Uris's bestseller *Exodus* (1958), but it was the book's Zionist message rather than its Holocaust imagery that had the greater impact on me. Similarly, the press and television reports of the capture of Adolf Eichmann in 1960 heightened my awareness of the tragedy that had befallen the Jews of Europe, but it was the fact that Eichmann had been trapped by Israeli agents that really caught my attention. Israel, and particularly its military prowess, was a source of considerable pride, and I made my first visit to the country in 1965. I did not, however, go to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust research center and museum in Jerusalem. I'm not sure that I even knew of its existence at the time. I returned to Israel two years later, just after the Six-Day War. I worked

on a kibbutz for a month and traveled to Jerusalem but, as before, my itinerary did not include the famed Holocaust memorial.

At university, in the late 1960s, I participated actively in the larger Jewish society but neither I, nor any of my Jewish contemporaries, was especially interested in the Holocaust. As with the previous twenty years of my life, it was just not an issue. I knew about it; we all did, but none of us had any burning desire to deepen our knowledge. I had a friend in the town whose mother had actually been gassed and had somehow managed to crawl out of a pile of corpses (or so I was told), but even that failed to stir me to explore further. It was just one more gruesome Holocaust story to add to the many I had accumulated in the course of growing up. For students who were involved politically and interested in the Jewish world, the all-consuming issue was the campaign for Soviet Jewry. It took up much of my leisure time, and I remember traveling to London to take part in demonstrations. I also organized a debate involving a well-known Jewish member of the British Communist Party on the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate (but I do not now recollect who he debated against or, indeed, who won).

Upon graduation I decided to become a teacher and subsequently spent six years in a working-class primary school in east London. In the evenings I studied part-time for a psychology degree, as my ambition now was to become an educational psychologist. It was, in fact, while studying for a master's degree in educational psychology that I took my first step, albeit an indirect one, along the path toward Holocaust Education.

FROM ANTIRACISM TO THE HOLOCAUST

The turning point came toward the end of the first year of my course of study (1977 to 1979) when I attended a lecture on racial awareness in young children. I found it riveting, partly, I suspect, because I had previously associated the cognitive and affective dimensions of racism with adolescence rather than with early childhood. I was eager to know more and started to read widely in the area of psychology and "race." Gordon Allport's seminal text *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954) made a deep impression for a number of reasons, not the least of which was its comprehensive and insightful analysis of antisemitism, something I had been interested in for a long time. Despite having been written nearly half a century ago, it is a book that still commands respect and one that I consult frequently. I was also very struck by David Milner's widely acclaimed work *Children and Race* (1975). I believe this was the first book of its kind to be published in Britain, and I read it at about the same time as the government was voicing concern over the underachievement of Afro-Caribbean children in our schools. With my longstanding interest in racism, the publicity surrounding Milner's book and "race" becoming an educational priority, it was not surprising that I should choose to write my dissertation in the second year of the course on "race" and schooling. The empirical core of the thesis formed the basis of

an article that was published in an academic journal in 1981—the first of many I was to produce on the educational problems of Afro-Caribbean and South Asian students. This topic was debated hotly in Britain throughout the 1980s, a decade that saw the publication of two government reports on the subject (in 1981 and 1985), so-called race riots in a number of cities, a protracted and acrimonious debate between proponents of multicultural and antiracist education and a backlash against both from right-wing politicians and polemicists.

After qualifying as an educational psychologist I decided, for various reasons, not to practice and to devote myself instead to the training of teachers. Initially, I taught the psychology of education but because of my interest in racism, and the fact that most researchers in the field seemed to be sociologists, I found myself drawn more to sociology than to psychology. However, I did not abandon the latter altogether, and in 1982 registered for a part-time Ph.D. program at the University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne where I focused on the development of children's understanding of structural inequality.

In Britain in the 1980s there was no shortage of academics actively involved with the question of "race." Some were from the ethnic minorities, others were white. Quite a few were Jewish, but most were not. All of them, however, were interested in the same thing, namely, the problems faced by the Afro-Caribbean and South Asian communities. The tacit assumption was that they were the only minority groups actually, or potentially, at risk from racism and, for a number of years, I was happy to collude with this myth. However, toward the end of the decade it gradually dawned on me that the Jewish dimension of antiracist education was absent completely. I do not know why it took so long for me to notice. Perhaps it was just a case of having to immerse myself in a rapidly expanding body of literature which, by its nature, was a lengthy process. It is also likely to have had something to do with the underlying reality of race relations in the country at the time, for the problems confronting the visible minorities were obviously so much more pressing than those confronting Jews. Overt antisemitism in Britain in the 1980s was negligible, no matter how it was measured, whereas one would read daily about the harassment, discrimination, and occasionally even the murder of members of other minority groups. My tardy response to the neglect of antisemitism might also have been due to the prevailing intellectual climate; perhaps I was just swept along with the *zeitgeist*. Everyone in university departments of education, who was interested in racism, seemed to define the word as synonymous with the difficulties faced by blacks and South Asians and new members of staff, keen to get involved in researching "race," automatically accepted the definition. But once I did become aware of the omission of antisemitism from the antiracist agenda I became very angry. How could it be that within living memory, indeed, just a couple of years before I was born, millions of Jews were suffering a fate immeasurably worse than anything that was currently happening to blacks and South Asians in Britain and yet antiracists were content to say nothing about the form of prejudice

responsible for the former. Antisemitism was not even discussed historically by antiracists concerned with education.

When I think now about the books that I have read that most influenced my views on the Holocaust I think not about survivor accounts, or about academic works in history or theology, but rather about books on antiracist education. I read virtually every one that was published in Britain in the 1980s and early 1990s yet never encountered any reference to antisemitism that was other than an *obiter dictum*. I certainly never encountered any reference to the Holocaust. The neglect was perverse, offensive, and troubling, and the resentment I felt was to alter the course of my career.

I came up with two possibilities to account for the antiracist attitude toward Jews. The first was in terms of antisemitism. I knew that all forms of ethnic prejudice, including enmity toward Jews, were associated traditionally with the Right, but I was also aware that antisemitism was not exactly unknown among luminaries in the Socialist pantheon. However, I dismissed such an explanation as implausible when attempting to account for the widespread nature of the neglect. For the central finding from studies of the prejudiced personality by Adorno et al. (1950) and others is that antisemitic individuals are unlikely to be drawn in large numbers to a movement that campaigns actively on behalf of any ethnic minority. Moreover, talk of antisemitism was hardly convincing when applied to Jewish antiracists. A more plausible explanation was the way in which racism was defined by antiracist educators as prejudice plus power. This definition necessarily excluded Anglo-Jewry from the antiracist embrace for the community has for decades enjoyed a socioeconomic profile clearly skewed toward the more affluent end of the continuum. While I could appreciate the necessary implications of the prejudice plus power refrain, I nonetheless found it unacceptable as a definition of racism, for if the Holocaust teaches us anything, it is that racists are not at all concerned with the economic status of their victims. If the antiracist movement was genuinely committed to tackling racial injustice (actual or potential), I did not see how it could deny legitimately the threat posed to Jews. I think I was particularly incensed because antiracists seemed almost willfully blind to the evidence that was before them. I stated a little earlier that in the 1980s there was virtually no antisemitism in Britain. That is quite true if we are concerned only with antisemitic activity. If, however, we are concerned with antisemitic ideology, the situation was very different, for even a cursory glance at contemporary neo-Nazi literature would leave the reader with no doubt that the extreme Right singles out Jews as the real source of evil—the malign influence responsible, among other things, for the "racial pollution" of Britain.

I was becoming very frustrated with my Ph.D. program. It was progressing well, but my heart was no longer in it. I still considered the issues I was looking at to be important, but they were not as important to me as the need to reconstruct antiracist theory to enable it to deal with antisemitism. As soon as I had completed the Ph.D. I started to research children's attitudes toward Jews and

their understanding of Judaism. I did so on the assumption that any school-based intervention aimed at diminishing prejudice will be unlikely to succeed unless it makes contact with children's existing knowledge. The findings from the research discomfited me, not because they revealed evidence of antisemitism so much as an extensive ignorance of both Jews and Judaism upon which antisemitism feeds. The discovery served only to fuel the antipathy I felt toward antiracist theory because of its restricted focus on the problems of visible minorities. I now had evidence of the need to challenge children's perceptions of Jews and Judaism and, as a consequence, began to publish papers urging antiracists to broaden their remit and, specifically, to incorporate a Jewish dimension.

THE HOLOCAUST AND THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Although the research I have just referred to was relevant to the more inclusive form of antiracism I was advocating, it also had major implications for Holocaust educators. It is not self-evident that students will recoil in horror as a result of encountering the full extent of the Nazi persecution of the Jews. How they react will depend, in large part, on how they conceptualize Jews and if they conceptualize them as in some sense "bad people," their response to learning of their fate may be less one of revulsion than of joy at the perceived triumph of good over evil. Likewise, any misunderstanding that students have of Judaism could lead them to see Jews as "strange" and this, too, may affect their reaction to the Holocaust and make it that much harder for them to empathize with the Jewish victims. In view of these dangers, I consider it essential that teachers spend some time *prior* to starting work on the Holocaust, identifying and deconstructing the misconceptions that some of their students are likely to harbor either about Jews or about Judaism.

The value of my work to teachers of the Holocaust was increased significantly in 1990 when the government agreed to include the Holocaust in the National Curriculum. However, I had mixed feelings about the decision. On the one hand I was delighted because the need to combat racism—of all kinds—remained my central priority, and I saw the Holocaust as the ideal vehicle for promoting antiracist aims. Not only is it a subject that exemplifies concepts critical to an understanding of racism such as stereotyping, scapegoating, bystander behavior, and conformity, it also demonstrates, as powerfully as anything can, where racism may lead if left unchecked. It affords students an opportunity to appreciate the cultural antecedents of racism as well as the role of catalytic events in pandemic racial violence. In addition, it allows students to celebrate the activities of rescuers, many of whom were ordinary members of the public whose very ordinariness enabled them to function as effective role models. All of these "virtues" should feature in some way in any program of Holocaust Education worthy of the name.

From a pedagogic point of view, the most valuable aspect of the Holocaust

as a means of learning about racism is that there is nothing artificial about it. By this I mean that World War II is recognized widely as one of the watershed events of the twentieth century, and all but the lunatic fringe recognize the Holocaust as a major event that occurred during the war. Thus, in their lessons on modern history, students will naturally learn about the attempted annihilation of European Jewry and will not feel that they are in any sense being manipulated. In contrast, a serious drawback to conventional antiracist education is that it does not obviously "belong" anywhere in the curriculum. It may therefore be viewed as an imposition, a form of political correctness and, for this reason come to be resented and rejected.

Despite these advantages, I was ambivalent about making the Holocaust a mandatory feature of the history curriculum because it can so easily be taught in ways that will impact adversely on antiracist education. Indeed, one of the main reasons for my involvement with the Holocaust was a fear that if mishandled, it could negate the benefits that might otherwise accrue from an antiracist initiative. Subsequently I carried out research in English secondary schools into how the Holocaust was taught and had some of my fears confirmed. For example, I came across many teachers who devoted no more than a couple of hours to the topic and a few who contrived to spend even less than that. What message does such minimal coverage send out regarding the importance of the Holocaust and of racism in general? I also found teachers who, through their own ignorance of Jewish history, or dislike of Jews, may have sabotaged any possibility of fostering sympathy for Hitler's principal victims. The worst case I came across involved the head of a history department who freely admitted that he might have been tempted to join the SS and participate "in what was going on." How easy for such staff, wittingly or otherwise, to convey a measure of sympathy for the oppressors and, in the process, give racism a veneer of legitimacy. Other aspects of Holocaust education that concern me include the possibility that as a result of their learning, students will come to see Jewish history purely in terms of persecution. Leaving aside the historical distortion involved, we can ask again about the message that is transmitted. Is there not a danger that some students will assume that Jews (and, perhaps, other minorities) are, at least to some extent, the authors of their own misfortune? To avoid such a danger, teachers of the Holocaust must alert students, no matter how briefly, to the positive side of Jewish history.

ANTIRACIST INDIFFERENCE TO THE HOLOCAUST

The German philosopher Georg Hegel maintained that "peoples and governments have never learned anything from history." It would appear that a number of recent writers on the Holocaust, such as the American historian Peter Novick (1999), have followed his lead, for they have all pronounced contemptuously on "the so-called lessons of the Holocaust." I believe passionately that they are mistaken; that the Holocaust does have lessons to teach us and that the most

important is the need to take racism seriously. Consequently, the main thrust of my own work, and my major contribution to Holocaust Education, has been to argue the case for antiracists to involve themselves in educating about the Holocaust. I have based my arguments on research that has exposed a range of weaknesses in the way the Holocaust is currently taught in schools. However, I cannot claim to have pioneered research in this field. In Britain, that honor rightly belongs to Carrie Supple, a high school teacher in the northeast of England who, in the early 1990s, conducted a small-scale survey among fellow history teachers in the region. Her major concern was with the pedagogic problems they faced, particularly those relating to resources. She was interested in good history teaching rather than in using history to teach about racism and although she subsequently turned her attention to citizenship, she never attempted to forge links between Holocaust Education and the antiracist movement. The latter has been my concern, and my chief regret is that I seem to have been unsuccessful in this endeavor. Indeed, I have become frustrated increasingly at the reluctance of antiracists to acknowledge the Holocaust in their work. When, in the 1980s, I used to publish articles on racism I would always receive—from Britain and around the world—a number of requests for offprints, and I would sometimes enter into correspondence about the research or about the arguments I was advancing. However, since starting to write first about antisemitism and more recently about the Holocaust, the interest has almost dried up completely. I do not have any problem in getting journal editors to recognize the importance of what I produce. On the contrary, referees' reports are often very flattering, but there is never any feedback or engagement of any kind from fellow academics. Most disconcerting of all is the absence of any comment, favorable or otherwise, from antiracist educators. In 1994 I published an article dealing with some pedagogic and ethical aspects of Holocaust Education. I discussed, for example, whether there should be freedom of speech in the classroom and whether teachers have the right to present students with painful material. I also considered the danger of teaching the Holocaust in ways that might promote antisemitism. For the first time in my publishing career, an article I had written drew a blank from the academic community; there was no interest whatsoever from that quarter. However, I was approached by the editor of *The Times Educational Supplement* to prepare a piece for the newspaper based on the article. I complied duly and certainly expected a response from readers who were drawn from all sections of the educational community. (About ten years previously I had been interviewed by the paper following an article I had written on teacher stereotyping of Afro-Caribbean and South Asian children. The interview produced so much correspondence—mainly from other academics—that after three weeks the editor had to put an end to it.) The Holocaust piece was less contentious. I knew that it would not elicit as much interest as before, but I certainly anticipated some. In the end, there was absolutely nothing. I had appended my institutional address to the article and thus expected that a few letters would be sent to me at the university, if only from far-right cranks who knew they stood no chance of airing their bigotry in a respectable outlet. Incidentally, I not only

expected offensive mail; I also thought there was a real possibility that I would receive letter bombs as well. But I need not have worried; for once again there was no communication of any kind: not even the neo-Nazis could be bothered to stir themselves! My thoughts turned to Oscar Wilde who observed in *The Picture of Dorian Grey* that the only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about. I knew exactly what he meant; being ignored hurt.

Some time after my piece appeared in the *Times Educational Supplement*, a national newspaper presented a lengthy critique of my views on its weekly educational page. Predictably, there was no response from the academic community, but I was invited to appear on a radio phone-in program. The interview generated considerable interest among the listeners, but again, none at all from academics. And so it has continued. I still have no problem in getting articles accepted for publication in major academic journals. I have had no problem in finding a publisher for a forthcoming book on Holocaust education that examines its history and contemporary forms in England and Ontario; nor do I have any difficulty in getting major international organizations to take my work seriously on the Holocaust. I have been commissioned on a couple of occasions to produce publications on Holocaust pedagogy for the Council of Europe, and I have been invited to present papers at their conferences. I have also been approached by the prime minister of Sweden to speak at a political conference on Holocaust education in Stockholm but I cannot, seemingly, make any headway in encouraging fellow antiracists to take an interest in what I do. The problem appears unrelated to the fact that, for the most part, I research in Britain and publish in British journals. In May 1998 I spent five weeks in Toronto exploring the attitudes and practices of history teachers in relation to the Holocaust. They were very willing to co-operate (as their British counterparts had been), and an article based on the research appeared in the June 1999 issue of *Canadian and International Education*. But in the now years that have elapsed since publication I have not heard a word from anyone who has read the article.

It is ironic that antiracist educators are ignoring my work when the subject seems more popular than ever among academics in other disciplines. I notice that one British university has just appointed its second professor in Holocaust history and my own university, having run a course in the same field for some years, recently has offered a parallel course in the English department. Moreover, barely a day seems to go by without some reference to the subject in the media. Two more Holocaust museums are to open in Britain (in Manchester and in London), and Prime Minister Tony Blair gave his support for the establishment of an annual Holocaust memorial day, the latter of which began in 2000.

YAD VASHEM, THERESEINSTADT, AND THE ROLE OF SURVIVOR TESTIMONY

Although disenchantment with the antiracist movement may have been the catalyst that sparked my interest in Holocaust Education, other factors have influenced my thinking about how the subject should be taught. Of particular

importance in this regard have been the visits I have paid to memorial sites. The first was in the winter of 1994 when I eventually made it to Yad Vashem. At the time I was on paid leave from the University of Hertfordshire, and I had decided to go to Jerusalem for six weeks to research the integration of Ethiopian children into the Israeli school system. It was my first visit to Israel in twenty-seven years, and there were many things I wanted to see. Yad Vashem was high on the list, and shortly after completing my research I sought out the national Holocaust Memorial. I was there for around a half day spending much of the time in the historical exhibition. As I threaded my way from one display to the next I read dutifully about topics that I already knew quite a lot about such as the developing anti-Jewish policy in Germany between 1933 and 1939, life and death in the ghettos, the mass murders of 1941 to 1945, and Jewish resistance. I clearly remember the eerie feeling I had reading about the Warsaw Ghetto while standing on the cobble stones that had been taken to the museum from the ghetto; but overall, I was largely unmoved by it all. I was equally unmoved when I passed into the memorial hall and observed the eternal flame flickering alongside the names of the concentration camps and extermination centers engraved in English and Hebrew on the marble floor. I felt uncomfortable at my own lack of emotion and was troubled by my inability to explain it. I could not believe it was simply the product of familiarity. The feeling was exacerbated a few years later when, in the spring of 1999, Academics Against Racism and Antisemitism in Europe held its annual conference in Prague. The program included a visit to Thereseinstadt, about thirty-five miles from Prague and proved to be the most memorable part of the conference. As our coach passed through the former ghetto I was reminded of Martin Gilbert's reference to it in his book *Holocaust Journey* (1997) as "so normal a town," and I understood how he and his students had managed to drive straight past it. We did not make the same mistake. Our misfortune was to have a guide who was far more interested in the history of the old prison across the river than the former garrison town that had accommodated tens of thousands of Jews in terribly overcrowded and unhygenic conditions. However, we did get to spend some time in the town. We toured the museum, which had been a boys' home during the war and had lunch in the park, which I imagine was more or less in the center of the ghetto. But hard as I tried to visualize what had gone on there nearly sixty years earlier, I found it impossible. Likewise, when we entered the crematorium it left me cold. One member of our group wanted to light a memorial candle and someone else wanted to recite Kaddish (the prayer for the dead), but I felt little emotion. Again, I wondered what was the matter with me, although I noted that no one in the group seemed especially upset by the experience. I think I discovered the reason for my own "coolness" a month or so after returning home when I attended the Jewish film festival in London. I saw *The Last Days*, a documentary dealing with the Holocaust in Hungary after the German invasion in March 1944. It tells the story of five survivors including Tom Lantos who subsequently became a U.S. congressman. I found all of the reminiscences extremely moving,

not because of any new insight I gleaned about the Holocaust but because they were all so personal. I could see and hear the victims in a way that I had been unable to do either at Yad Vashem or at Thereseinstadt.

These experiences have certainly affected my attitude toward Holocaust pedagogy in that they have convinced me of the value of having survivors in the classroom for as long as possible and using the Spielberg Archive, or something similar, when there are no longer survivors able to speak. But another recent experience has given me a more nuanced perspective on the role of first-hand accounts in teaching about the Holocaust. At a conference in Moscow in October 1998 organized by the Russian Holocaust Foundation and the Council of Europe I had my first ever conversation with a survivor. My interlocutor was a man of "Aryan" appearance, a former professor now in his midseventies and clearly proud of his war record, for throughout the three days of the conference he was never seen without his medals. Until his retirement he had taught English at Moscow State University. At the end of one of the afternoon sessions he buttonholed me to say that he welcomed the book I had co-authored on Holocaust Education for the Council of Europe (Short, Supple, and Klinger, 1998), but was disappointed that more space had not been devoted to the role of Jewish resistance. Now living about fifty miles south of Moscow, the professor had been born in Bialystok, a predominantly Jewish town in Poland midway between Warsaw and Vilna. He had vivid memories of life in the ghetto, the Judenrat, the privations, and the barbarity of the Germans. He mentioned, in particular, the day they set fire to the synagogue having first driven hundreds of Jews inside. At the time he was working for the Germans in a munitions factory just outside the ghetto. He joined the resistance, along with many other young Jews, and did what he could to smuggle weapons into the ghetto. I was not surprised to hear that there was little or no help from the Polish Underground—for I was well aware of the depths of Polish antisemitism—but I was amazed to learn that one source of assistance had been German soldiers. Together with a friend, he escaped into the forests during the battle that ensued once the Germans had decided to liquidate the ghetto. After making contact with a Jewish partisan group the two friends eventually managed to link up with the Red Army.

When I reflect now on our all-too-brief conversation, I am not only more convinced than ever of the value of survivor testimony as an educational resource but also of the need to present survivors with very different stories to tell. Students should certainly learn about the victim experience, but they should also be inspired by those who had the opportunity, the courage, and the determination to confront the evil in their midst.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

I have pointed out that including the Holocaust in the school curriculum is not in itself a cause for celebration as the subject can so easily be taught badly. This is not to imply that incompetent teaching will necessarily damage pupils;

it may just fail to realize the subject's antiracist potential. I believe that future research needs to focus closely on what actually goes on in classrooms, and I make this recommendation as a result of a study I carried out a couple of years ago that looked at what a group of 14 and 15 year olds learned about citizenship as a result of studying the Holocaust as history the previous year. The findings disturbed me somewhat for, among other things, I noted ignorance (albeit among a minority of students) of such basic facts as the number of Jewish victims and the range of victim groups. I found that approximately a quarter of the students did not know why the Holocaust had happened and a substantial number interpreted it as the work of a lone individual. Some students were unfamiliar with the concepts of stereotyping and scapegoating and even when these terms were explained to them, they did not know how they applied to events in Nazi Germany. These and other failings suggest that educators and researchers need now to concentrate their efforts on Holocaust pedagogy, ensuring that the subject as history, and as a means of promoting citizenship, is taught effectively.

As a result of my own research and that of one or two others (Supple, 1992; Brown and Davies, 1998), we now have some idea as to how history teachers in secondary schools in England approach the Holocaust and the problems that they face. We are consequently able to make informed recommendations to improve practice in this area of the curriculum. There is, however, no research (of which I am aware) into how the subject is tackled in other areas of the curriculum, notably in religious education and in English literature. The need for such research is not just to improve practice in these areas as well, but also to ensure that the time spent on the Holocaust is used to best advantage; for I have no doubt that one of the main constraints on teachers of the Holocaust at the school level is the limited amount of time available. I am investigating currently the role of the religious educator in teaching the Holocaust and have been dismayed to find that there is often no co-ordination at all with colleagues in other departments. The consequence is that there is considerable overlap between their various syllabi that not only wastes valuable time but also risks alienating pupils. However, a failure to liaise can also result in too little complementarity. In other research (conducted in Britain and Canada), I found that the history staff rarely devoted much time, and often none at all, to dealing with the crucial issue of the history of antisemitism and particularly with the role of the church in fomenting it and sustaining it over the centuries. This would seem an obvious gap for the religious educator to fill, but the majority of those to whom I have spoken do nothing on this topic. Their failure may well reflect a lack of communication with colleagues but equally it might reflect an inadequate understanding of the Holocaust itself, for the latter cannot be understood properly if divorced from its historical context. This suggests a further direction for future research, namely the need to look closely at how teachers are prepared to deal with the Holocaust. We need to give more attention to training the trainers, especially as some of them currently in post may never themselves have taught the subject.

ENDNOTE

Looking back on my involvement in Holocaust Education I may have given the impression that at no stage did I harbor any doubts about what I was doing. The argument was straightforward and unassailable. The Holocaust has lessons for us all and (assuming it is taught well) is an unqualified learning opportunity. The truth is rather different for, all along, I have been troubled by an article I read in *The Jewish Chronicle* many years ago. It was authored by Lionel Kochan (1989), a well-known Jewish historian in Britain who was opposed to teaching about the attempted annihilation of European Jewry and especially opposed to teaching it to Jewish children. In respect of the latter he asked: "[What] encouragement or hope can be derived from learning that six million Jews were murdered? Nothing could be better calculated to blight a young Jew's perception of his Judaism or to make him doubt his allegiance" (p. 25).

It is a view I have heard many times since and one that has an intuitive plausibility. I do not know of any research that explores Jewish students' responses to learning about the Holocaust, but from a personal point of view I regard such research as a priority. Studying the Nazi era for so many years has strengthened considerably my own sense of Jewish identity—so much so that I am now committed to Emil Fackenheim's 614th commandment: "Jews are forbidden to hand Hitler posthumous victories. They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish" (1970, p. 84).

In light of these words I would find intolerable any situation that resulted in young Jews losing, or even doubting, their ethnic identity. While I hope that Kochan's concerns are exaggerated, I fear that for some students at least, he may be right. I am not sure how I would respond if he was proved right but, either way, I need to know.

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13

The Heft of Useful Things: The Hard Work of Holocaust Theatre

Robert Skloot

> "And what else is the theater but a successor to magic—an attempt to communicate, through the language of ritual, with the hidden forces that run the world?"
>
> —Vaclav Havel, from speech, Prague, Oct. 4, 1996 (1998)

> "Humanity seems doomed to do more evil than good. The greatest ideal on earth is human love."
>
> —Wehrmacht Capt. Wilm Hosenfeld, 26 June 1942 diary entry (Szpilman, 1999)

FINE ART, MORAL PROPAGANDISM, AND REAL LIFE: AN INTRODUCTION, OF SORTS

A volume collecting the thoughts of Holocaust educators may seem to target a very specialized audience. After all, other workers in the academic fields also have stories of personal struggles and professional victories to discuss, and we see little of books about the pedagogical perspectives of high plasma physicists or classical philologists. In taking up the task of producing this essay, I have acquiesced, with some hesitation, to the possibility that people outside the profession may derive meaning, perhaps even pleasure, in the reflections of the group of colleagues with whom I am pleased to be associated. It would be sad if this book were greeted by the assumption that Holocaust educators, having produced excessive amounts of work about their field, have now turned to write about themselves in ways that can be seen as equally excessive and, disquietingly, self-absorbed. I want that not to be the case.

Working in the arts, I have ample opportunity to engage with people whose need to display themselves in public overwhelms more self-effacing urges. And I recall also my times of frustration unto despair when Holocaust authors and educators have behaved themselves in public places in ways that were disgrace-

ful in their opportunism and cruelty. (An acerbic observation about certain intellectuals: They begin by burning people and end up burning books.) The study of the Holocaust provides many lessons, one of which is that the study does not guarantee the ennoblement of those involved in it. This news is old, though the disappointments associated with it are not. For personal reasons, I value modesty as a quality in others and wonder often how the contrary urge can be reconciled with Holocaust studies where the need for humility in the face of nearly indescribable loss would seem to me required at a minimum. Nonetheless, I shall advance (modestly, I hope) a number of theatrical images that have meant much to me in my belief they have the possibility of being meaningful to others. One part of this essay is to explain them well (the other is to write about my personal involvement in Holocaust Education), contextualize their existence, and explore them for useful meaning according to the following sentiment expressed a century ago by the English playwright George Bernard Shaw (1960) in his "Apology" to *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (originally published in 1902):

> I am convinced that fine art is the subtlest, the most seductive, the most effective instrument of moral propagandism in the world, excepting only the example of moral conduct; I would waive even this exception in favor of the art of the stage, because it works by exhibiting examples of personal conduct made intelligible and moving to crowds of unobservant and unreflecting people to whom real life means nothing. (P. 33)

Today, Shaw has largely fallen off the screen of most cultural observers, theatre observers included, and his curmudgeonly, superior tone is partly responsible for that. But from the voluminous body of his work (he lived from 1856–1950) one consistent belief can be extracted that will serve to guide these musings, one that I am reluctant to relinquish: that the arts can, and should, contribute to the public discourse on serious subjects, the Holocaust among them. To which I add, artists are the first among equals in the company of Holocaust investigators. That is the premise upon which my own work is based and has been based since the 1970s. Many years ago, the historian Yehuda Bauer wrote about the Holocaust that "in order to advance to a better understanding of the event," the Holocaust "cannot be relegated to our historical research alone" (1978, p. 49). His recommendation is worthy, though there is an aftertaste of an historical primacy, nonetheless.

Shaw's premise was related to another, equally vital one. Because he was also a believer in the utility of art, he advanced theatre's mission as one of "propagandism." Plays that seized a particular historical moment for their subject and commentary, he believed, were superior to others that might last in the public's mind far longer, but which contributed only generically to exploring themes central to human life. It is noteworthy that it took his play *Mrs. Warren's Profession* many decades to receive its performance license from the English authorities, proving that the easiest way to make a useful play useless is to deny

it a public hearing. I will return to this issue later in this essay, and at the end refer to two continuing social and pedagogical challenges that Holocaust educators cannot avoid: the problem of violence and the need for hope.

My work in the theatre presupposes that something "useful" can be done. But it is not a belief I hold with complete confidence or to the exclusion of theatre's other possibilities, in part because I know that theatre history contains almost no examples of plays that actually altered for the better the behavior of governments or institutions. Plays can have other purposes than producing immediate change, and two purposes in particular strike me as useful: (1) in the creation of what the English playwright Tom Stoppard (1974) calls "a moral matrix," and (2) in the creation of images that permit audiences to extend their perceptions of others, forcing a confrontation with the "Other" that can enhance our empathetic responses to victims of atrocity and extend our understanding of the dimensions and possibilities (both good and ill) of human behavior.

Stoppard's idea (now thirty years old) refers to the unavailing belief that the theatre can change, quickly, the facts on the ground. This is impossible to do. But playwrights can pursue their craft for the purpose of accumulating a treasury of words and images that serve as a bank of accessible humane thinking and a treasury of humane action. In English, French, Hebrew, Russian, German, and other languages, Holocaust dramatists have produced, and continue to produce, a record of human behavior and possibility equally significant to the historical, sociological, or legal volumes that explore, in their way, the *Shoah* and its implications. Accepting this conclusion, not merely allowing for it as Bauer seemed to do, makes privileging the historical texts over artistic ones—whether theatrical, cinematic, choreographical, or musical—more difficult.

Remarking about the work of philosophers and, especially, fiction writers, the British novelist and critic David Lodge notes: "One might suggest that the ability novelists have to create characters, characters often very different from themselves, and to give a plausible account of their consciousness, helps us develop powers of sympathy and empathy in real life" (2002, p. 6). This is the second, crucial objective of the theatre of the Holocaust, a goal that is shared with drama from other times, both earlier and later than the Hitler years. For this reason, we believe it proper to take children or classes to see *The Diary of Anne Frank* (in one of its many versions), or, less often, Charlotte Delbo's *Who Will Carry the Word?* (1982), C.P. Taylor's *Good* (1983), Harold and Edith Lieberman's *Throne of Straw* (1982), or George Tabori's *The Cannibals* (1982), the latter distinguished and important texts that, for a variety of reasons, rarely receive the productions they deserve, or any productions at all.

JUST WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

> We must give up the comforting and distancing notion that the perpetrators of the Holocaust were fundamentally a different kind of people because they were products of a radically different culture. Any attempt to under-

> stand perpetrators of the Holocaust requires an investigation of human nature.
>
> —Christopher Browning (1996)

> In centuries to come, when our complexes at Auschwitz are empty ruins, monument to a past civilization, tourist attractions, they'll ask, like we do of the Inca temples, what kind of men built and maintained these extraordinary structures. They'll find it hard to believe they weren't heroic visionaries, mighty rulers, but ordinary people, people who liked people, people like them, you, me, us.
>
> —Cranach in Peter Barnes (1984), pp. 142–143

I was born in Brooklyn, New York, to parents whose limited social possibilities were overcome, happily, through the achievements of their three children. I am proud to be a child of the 1960s (when "overcome," as in "we shall . . ." was an important word). In that decade, I received my Ph.D. and began a career at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, the only permanent academic job I ever had, though one I expected to lose several times for doing the obnoxious things in the university that children of the 1960s did to children of the 1940s and 1950s. Our family lost no one to the Holocaust, and I cannot recall the subject ever coming up in my childhood save for the oblique references to my grandmother's sponsorship in America of two Polish couples whose families were destroyed in the catastrophe. In their high school in Bialystock, they had as a teacher—the late Polish Jewish historian Szymon Datner—whose play concludes this essay; it was to him I conveyed several gifts on their behalf when I visited his apartment in Warsaw in 1978.

In my class called "The Theatre of the Holocaust," I ask students to declare the reasons why they are there. Some have had family attachments (though less and less in recent years as more survivors or rescuers die), some seek a useful course for their major in the humanities or to build upon previous schooling, some say that it will deepen their Judaism (as far as I can tell, about 50 percent of the students are Jewish), some say they have Jewish boy or girl friends and will understand them better because of the course, and many say that they just have been interested in the subject since they were young. I fall into the latter category.

More specifically, I wonder all the time about myself and about the world I live in. We are surrounded everywhere by terrible violence and the cheap excuses about why we participate in it. Few of us are untouched by the commercial exploitation of every aspect of daily life, and with the diminution of the human figure comes the easy slide into hurtfulness, what we do to ourselves and to each other. I am so pained by images of violence, that I want to propose an alternative in the theatre, not redemptive necessarily, but not completely despairing or nihilistic either. The social spaces we inhabit are ever more circumscribed by forces that prevent or even deplore a humane future, without even

realizing the harm that they do. Theatre can participate in providing images of good and ill (after all, the Nazis knew well the usefulness of pageants), just as we are available to perform acts of baseness or generosity.

Working more than thirty years in the university as a teacher and a stage director, I have sought to place the theatre at the service of my professional and personal concerns. (Don't we all do this when creating syllabi, assembling reading lists, and scheduling field trips?) I am attracted to plays that present subjects of social and political importance, including AIDS, abortion, gender inequality, and the attempt to adhere to a moral compass in a disordered world. (I am attracted also to plays with no redeeming social importance at all, i.e., to French and English farces that exist only to make people laugh.) Playwrights from Sophocles to Shakespeare to Beckett deal with fearsome subjects, and they have a necessary place in university curricula and on its stages. There, the Holocaust, in as much variety as possible, must be represented.

For complicated reasons, Americans run shy of truly serious drama, and when confronted with painful stories, including their own stories, of racism and violent hatreds for example, they prefer to replace life's hurt and uncertainty with sentimentality and history's catastrophe with hopefulness. Because there is no way to see the Holocaust as "happy," the arguments raised against the theatre of the Holocaust result in three options: (1) reject Holocaust plays entirely (Shaw's fate, above); (2) reject their message (one being that we are all capable of doing evil, through what I call "the Anne Frank strategy"); or (3) reject all plays that don't conform to normative (canonical) viewpoints expressed in traditional ways.

Because the theatre engages the emotions as well as the intellect, it is useful in exploring the difficult subjects the Holocaust raises. The performative possesses a power that the strict narrative does not, although the effectiveness of its communication can be both more disappointing (when represented ineptly) and more risky (because of the varieties of interpretation revealed). For me, this represents a great and continuing challenge, especially when working with an "old" play that demands, and supports, the insights new discoveries about the *Shoah* and its "actors" bring to the text at hand.

New plays, of course, present challenges as well. It is a platitude in the theatre to say that every production is the result of thousands of choices, from what gesture or voice will best express a line, to what color or shape of hat should be used, if any should be used at all. (Also, what should be in the program!) I have written elsewhere about the possibilities for the reinterpretation of the Anne Frank story (telling stories being one thing that history and theatre have in common), where Anne could be seen not as a victimized, pure icon of innocence (the standard version), but altered for a different effect by reconceiving how she looks and sounds and related to others in her attic hideout. (Think about a production with many Annes simultaneously on stage, or Anne played by a black actor, for example.)

Further, in the university, where current pedagogy reaffirms the enhanced

benefits of student participation in their own education, what better way to teach the Holocaust than by teaching through performance? The well-know attraction of the theatre to so many students of countless disciplinary preferences attests to its power to teach and satisfy those who work within it. (People of all professions approach me when they hear I work in the theatre and disclose, often in whispers, that their most unforgettable educational moment was portraying a daffodil in primary school—or Abe Lincoln, or Anne Frank. In fact, I played Montezuma in the second grade.)

In "The Theatre of the Holocaust" I teach, students encounter plays about the Holocaust and, on occasion, read aloud scenes from them, not with the goal of polished performances, but in order to suggest the possibilities of character and the mixed pleasures of inhabiting figures who are part of the great Jewish and world catastrophe of the twentieth century. Their understanding is tested through standard questions about the plays so that they can know better the theatre as a dynamic form, different from a poem or novel in its requirement that the text be staged. "What is the most important line?," "What is the most important image?," or "What is the most important action?" are questions that can be asked of any play, and students are alerted to the fact that while these questions can have many correct answers, their challenge and obligation is to argue clearly and forcefully for their choices. The assignment can make some students uneasy and even angry because of a reluctance to relinquish a lamentable feature of higher education today: the view that in the humanities and the arts subjective opinion trumps objective fact. But students from all majors feel more comfortable after they acquire the language of theatre that will allow them to be precise and expressive in their writing.

In the three seminars for middle and high school teachers that I have taught for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the problems are similar to those of college students. They do not usually work in the theatre, but they jump into the challenges nonetheless, liberated for a few weeks from workbooks and committees, and paid for their time in the bargain. In a lovely loop of coincidence, one of my best NEH seminarians is now my colleague at the University of Wisconsin, and together we taught an NEH Institute in the summer of 2003.

TERROR, COMPLICITY, ABSENCE: THREE PERSONAL STORIES

Several of the plays mentioned above provide useful examples for ways to "develop powers of sympathy and empathy." All of them together represent a fraction of the Holocaust dramas that seeks to raise themes to provoke audiences in meaningful and useful ways. Because they are plays I have directed, I wish to argue for their cogency and their emotional power as they explore ways to make sense out of catastrophe. The case of *Throne of Straw* (see below) holds a special place for representing the moment when undefined ideas and unfocused

assumptions about teaching came together in a pedagogical and performative event that shaped much of my thinking about the Holocaust to the present day. The production and my thinking about it was enhanced further by a visit to the places of extermination: Auschwitz, Majdanek, and Theresienstadt, in the spring of 1978. That trip reconfirmed my attachment to the Jewish people's history and its future according to the ethical values of the Jews themselves: justice, community, learning, altruism, and compassion among them. Plays that speak to these values and the struggle to adhere to them are ones that attract me. The theatre can be the best place to find and know about a time whose legacy both sustains and mocks our hope for a world free of fundamentalist hatred that produces exterminatory violence.

Terror

The Liebermans' play, *The Throne of Straw*, is set in the ghetto in Lodz, Poland, and focuses on the career of the chairman of its *Judenrat* Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski; it explores the conditions and results of the terrible choices demanded of Jewish leaders by their Nazi overseers in the ghettos established throughout occupied central and eastern Europe.

Working with playwright Hal Lieberman to put the text into its final stage form, we encountered a number of significant problems in "completing" the script, a common experience when staging plays for the first time. Of primary importance was how to create the setting for a story that encompassed four years and moved around in a number of different locations (several apartments and offices, a street, a railway siding, etc.). The play, which has a strongly realistic form, needed a way to be in many places and times, and to present a feeling of approaching destruction for characters that history tells us survived only a little longer than those who were taken away earlier. In fact, "history" supplied a crucial aspect to the way *Throne* was produced. Because the play was written thirty-five years after the events it described and set in a place far from the world the audience inhabited, it was important for theatregoers to know that *Throne*'s central story was based on historical events. Today, three generations later, in the twenty-first century, the events are both documented more completely and less known about than in 1978.

Above the stage were three screens displaying projections that were used to establish the context and developing action of the play. Information such as the following was continuously on view: "Prior to German occupation, Lodz was known as 'The Manchester of the East' as a tribute to its enormous textile industry"; "Rumkowski's motto was 'Rescue Through Work': 'Unzer passport iz di Arbeit' "; and "After the Lodz ghetto was liquidated in August, 1944, about 800 Jewish survivors were found." These projections insisted that the audience understand the play as based in history and not fabricated, though there are characters in the play who are "fictional." In addition, the program contained a

glossary of foreign-language words, additional historical information, and a note from the director.

The projections were part of the overall stage picture. Underneath them was created a precise and developing basic image that came together only in the production's final moments. The set consisted of four large "cubes" on casters (really 6' × 6' × 8') that were moved around the stage to define the space of the scene being acted. The four "boxes" were faced in burlap and wood and never touched each other until the last scene at the *Umschlagplatz*, the railway siding where the deportees were taken on their way to extermination. While the last of the Jewish characters talk about their fate, the cubes were rolled together to form a single unit and, when the side of one of them was dropped to become a ramp, it was clear that the setting "fit together" as a railway car and "fit with" the impending murder of the inhabitants. The screen above the "car" showed the train tracks leading to Auschwitz, and the audience "discovered" how the apparent dislocated "cubes" were, in fact, a scenic device that created the conveyance used to convey the characters to their deaths.

A moment I will always remember occurred during the technical rehearsal when the actors, for the first time, saw the "car" and understood its implications. They walked up the ramp into the box, turned, and looked directly at the audience. When finally Rumkowski is ordered to join his fellow Jews on their final journey, he stands with them and the ramp was lifted and slammed shut, a large iron bolt securing it in place. Unintended by me, the actors then experienced some minutes of terror as the final scene of the play took place with them confined to a tiny, crowded, and airless space. (The next thing done was to drill more holes in the top of the "car" to ensure more light and air for the actors while they awaited the end of the play.)

At its premiere, *Throne of Straw* was able to establish a reality for Holocaust history that reading about Lodz and its chairman could never convey. It was a "useful" production for that, insisting the audience confront the stories of human behavior when choice was either impossible, or (to use Lawrence Langer's term), the victims were confronted with "choiceless choices." And it had its detractors, who were disgusted with what they saw as images of passive or complicitous Jews (not all the characters are like that) and irritated by seeing so serious and depressing a play on a sweet summer night. But the production stood its ground and met the terror of the Holocaust head on in both expected and unexpected ways.

Complicity

Staging C.P. Taylor's *Good* presents some unusual challenges. Of primary importance is the brilliant staging device that mandates music to be used as the method of projecting the turmoil in the pre-Nazi years, as well as the psychological neurosis of the play's protagonist, John Halder. Taylor seeks to diagnose the malady that led Germany to commit catastrophic evil by focusing on the

life and career of an "average citizen," here a university professor of literature, who has come to "the Leader's" attention for his book on euthanasia. As the play progresses from the beginning years of Nazi ascendancy through the early 1940s, Halder gradually falls into the trap that will, in the last scene, reveal him to be in full possession of his destiny as a concentration camp commandant.

Halder's change in employment is accompanied by apprehension that his growing attraction to power will put his self-image of "goodness" into jeopardy. True, he has permitted the killing of his institutionalized mother, divorced his wife to marry his student, and otherwise behaved badly. But throughout the play, he resists the idea that he may be giving his assent (and later, his assistance) to murderous deeds. Halder's gauge for measuring his ethical posture is provided by his only friend, the Jewish psychiatrist Maurice, to whom he has turned for advice about what to do for his mental condition: hearing music in his head. Taylor's brilliant idea is to have the audience hear the music, ranging from Mendelssohn's "Violin Concerto" to schmaltzy waltzes and kitschy folk tunes, all played by a small orchestra at the side of the stage. When, in the next to last action of the play, the musicians leave and return to the stage dressed in the manner of the concentration camp troupe that played the prisoners out and back from their daily punishing labor, the audience is confronted with the end point of the fall of this "everyman." Dressed beautifully in his Nazi uniform, Halder acknowledges finally that "the band was real," that is, the music in his head was no aberration, but rather the true expression of his need to belong to and be overwhelmed by an expansive comradeship defined by several centuries of German musical culture.

Three particular moments during the preparation of *Good* provided lessons to its director. First, the casting of "beautiful people" to play Halder and his (new) wife Anne became a necessity. In order to retain sympathy for Halder's dilemma as long as possible (the production's greatest challenge), it became clear that the more good looking the actors, the more attraction we would feel for them and the more difficult it would be to reject them. This is the result of living in a "beauty culture," no less pernicious in Nazi Germany (see the posters for the athletes in the 1936 Olympics) than in our own domination by a cheap commercialism that sells a thousand ways to be pretty while variously condemning those who fail to pass the "beauty test." In other words, the director of *Good* must retain our interest in Halder for as long a possible so that we won't reject him out of hand; we need to stay connected to him all the while his complicity with evil creates a strong reason for us to say: "Well, he's a Nazi, and since there's no Nazi in me, who cares?" Theatre lives in the present tense, and Halder's future must be seen as "open"; to do this we must resist what Michael Andre Bernstein (1994) has called "foregone conclusions." (This challenge is made yet more difficult because the play is usually advertised as being the story of an unredeemable Nazi, but that is an aspect of theatre production that I won't discuss here.) Simply put, plain-looking people don't have as much moral stand-

ing as handsome people, and our production was fortunate to have two actors whose beautiful appearance was the equal of their considerable talent.

Second, although the final image specified in the text refers to Halder's confession of his complicity with evil while receiving musical support from the camp orchestra playing (badly, I believe) Schubert's "March Militaire," I felt it necessary to remind the audience of those who were destroyed by the Nazis' genocidal program. For that reason, the figure of Maurice, Halder's Jewish friend, was stationed on the margin of the final stage picture, his Star of David displayed prominently on his breast pocket. After Halder's last exit, followed by his musical accompaniment, Maurice returns to center stage for one last look (his and ours) after which he disappears into the *nacht und nebel* of a hatred made manifest through the scenic image of hell fire. We must retain the picture of what evil, and the complicity with it, accomplished.

Last, in an extraordinary *coup de theatre*, Taylor pointed the production to an extraordinary moment when the theme of complicity was realized perfectly. At the end of the first act, when Halder is being welcomed and toasted by all the Nazis he has met who desire his enlistment with their "irresistible" cause, the band begins to play the "Drinking Song" from Lehar's *The Student Prince*. Full of musical high spirits and lifting the beer steins of good fellowship, they sing in such a way as to make his resisting them impossible. Marvelously, the audience members who knew the song began to hum along, tapping their feet to the infectious melody of a sentimental culture gone mad with exterminatory violence. With the conclusion of the song (and with Halder "joining up" in the singing), the auditorium lights were turned on catching the "chorus" of theatregoers in the trap of complicity with evil. The moment was one of pure astonishment and embarrassment, and only the intermission could suspend for a few minutes the patrons' knowledge of how easy it is to "get caught up in the action" (a phrase of Stoppard's) of evil.

Absence

Staging a play asks the director to make many decisions, not the least of which is to match the interpretation of the text to the time and resources available to mount the production. Too little time, too small a budget, too few actors (or trained ones) will determine the final result in numerous ways. (These resources are seldom in surplus.) And in the university, the reasons for selecting a play often conflict with other reasons for choosing other plays (one tension being the "appropriateness" of the play to the "season," spoken of earlier).

Charlotte Delbo is a playwright of austerity. She emphasizes the point that the faces and costumes "do not count" in her Author's Note to *Who Will Carry the Word?* The play is about absence, not presence, a situation that recommends itself strongly to our postmodern times. Thus, how to convey the essential idea behind the staging of her play: to show that the diminishing number of characters describes the diminishing number of survivors of Nazi atrocity, so that the

twenty-two women who begin the play represent the size of the catastrophe and the two who conclude it the magnitude of it.

In the summer of 2002, a reading of the play with an hour's rehearsal and without benefit of lights or scenery sought to convey the essential idea; little more could be attempted. This was managed through the use of chairs which, filling the stage space at the start, were emptied of their inhabitants until only Denise and Francoise and the chairs remained. With the removal of the actors, the burden of witnessing those who are still visible and present became progressively heavier as fewer characters are available to "carry the word" (though their chairs are still in view). In a fully mounted production in a large space, this kind of staging might not be useful as a way to convey the emotional substance and thematic thrust of the text; as noted above, resources or lack of them both limit and create opportunities. But for the moment and the place, absence became presence in a way I believe Delbo would have understood and approved of.

As with the "return" of Maurice in the production of *Good*, attention must be paid to the victims of the Holocaust whose presence in the world was eliminated. At the least, these multitudes represent the loss to us of human experience it would be good for us to know. Delbo's theatre words express the voice of those missing in the world, of the song not sung, the shirt not mended, the bread never baked, and the caress never felt. One function of the theatre of the Holocaust is to enlarge our feeling of loss and, as Delbo's final dialog makes clear, to take up the tasks and tell of the lives of those who are no longer able to testify. The director, as well as the playwright, must know that carrying the word requires breaking through the denial and incomprehension of Holocaust experience; the second step is to create life anew from the vacancy that threatened and threatens to swallow all of us.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

> The only way to resist geese is to stay as ungooselike as possible.
> —Uncle's advice in Tabori (1982), p. 236

The work of theatre artists takes many forms, and when done with courage, skill, and humility, it provides alternative visions of the world that can nourish and challenge us. The best Holocaust plays (and there is no one best, no single text or film or poem that can sum up or encompass Holocaust history and meaning) do this. Importantly, the contributions of Holocaust artists affect what we know about other terrible moments in world history by creating specific images that reveal truths about other genocides and about human behavior. For me, there is no doubt that the field in which I work must open itself out to discussions of more recent examples of slaughter of populations, both innocent and guilty because "Never Again!" has become "Here We Go Again!" It is happening as I write.

Reciprocating for insights extracted from a study of the Holocaust, the "Theatre of Genocide" contains images that enhance our understanding of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. I feel compelled to wrestle with these themes continually, to try to make sense of their implications because I know that I don't know what I would do in times of terrible, merciless extremity. Not surprisingly, the three issues that guided my work mentioned earlier surface again to focus my bewilderment and sorrow at the apparently ineradicable nature of violence and hate that has come to characterize our lives and our times.

A few more words about my course. First taught in 1983, it attempts to convey an understanding of how the historical event is treated by artists, in particular playwrights and directors; attention is also paid to screenwriters and film directors. Through reading and attendance at film and theatre productions, students see that there is no single way to present the Holocaust story; rather, artists approach the task in ways that differ in style, intention, and preoccupation. Early screening of documentaries (or excerpts), for example *Night and Fog*, *Triumph of the Will*, and *Shoah*, provide documentary reflections on the historical event, which are then analyzed and contrasted to later "fictional" expressions: *The Shop on Main Street*, *Seven Beauties*, and *Schindler's List*. But the heart of the course is the reading of a dozen or more plays from different cultural traditions, artistic styles, national perspectives, and gender biases. The course is both harder and easier to teach than it used to be twenty years ago: Students arrive with greater exposure to the Holocaust, there are more, many more texts that make good teaching tools, and there are many more critical methodologies and historical studies to incorporate in the classroom.

In recent years, the class has given attention to issues of the Holocaust and the Internet and especially to Holocaust "denial" (Deborah Lipstadt's *Denying the Holocaust* is assigned). All students are required to present to the class a public speech of two minutes (one page of text: "more than a byte but less than a keynote"), responding to the deniers. They must imagine themselves as a school board member or parent, a church official or middle school teacher, and convince their imagined audience of the falsity of the claim that the Holocaust didn't happen. The speech is not graded. Unanimously, students appreciate greatly this assignment and speak enthusiastically about it in their evaluations. Finally, the syllabus includes this caveat: "I hope you will discover in this class many works that were unknown to you, and that you will open yourself up to them so that your understanding of and response to the Holocaust can be broadened artistically, culturally, intellectually and emotionally. 'Never Again!' is the feeblest of responses if it is not supported by many kinds of knowledge: historical, psychological, theological, political, etc."

And yet, I do worry about the cumulative effect of these dramas (and all Holocaust investigations) on me and on our students. Are we moving into a situation where our investigations provoke a kind of frustration and inconclusiveness so that our commitment to the task carries with it an inevitable, perhaps paralyzing gloom? I am not referring to the surprises that come with teaching

every year, for example, of the student who earnestly hands me an antichoice flyer that labels a photographed dead fetus as "today's holocaust," and where an ROTC student declares that she's ready to kill for her country by pushing the nuclear launch button if ordered to do that.

"The more sensitive, intelligent, and alert the students are," notes Scott Russell Sanders, "the more likely they are to feel discouraged about the human prospect. In extreme cases, their discouragement turns to despair" (1999, p. B4). Here are the words of one student summing up her class experience in the early 1990s:

> I guess my primary concern with this class is what do I do with all this emotion? Is it wrong for me to ache for the victims, the past, the survivors, or the future? . . . Maybe the reason I feel so emotionally tied to the plays and the films, even days after studying them, is because there is no sense of closure. This is upsetting and frustrating, but I do feel like I am continually thinking of ideas of this class and applying certain conclusions that I've made to my own life. This is the first time I have felt enlightened in my college career. It's difficult material, but I am taking steps forward.

The burden of Holocaust study on later generations becomes a heavy obstacle and extracts a psychological toll that can be measured and assessed but not alleviated, unless the catastrophe is set aside and removed from consideration by a decision of willed ignorance. (And you will see your hundredth production of *The Music Man* and *A Christmas Carol.*) In a real sense, the more we know about the Holocaust and its legacy, the worse for us are its details and implications, righteous rescuers notwithstanding.

Another student wrote:

> "It's hard being a scientist," confessed a young man majoring in agriculture in his class journal. "I feel so distant from man (not pc) sometimes. I can't relate to the things I have read. The things I have heard people do seem so . . . I don't want to be associated with this people. Sometimes I feel closer to the cows I clean up after than the guy sitting next to me as I type this. The Holocaust has affected me in so many aspects. It has caught me off guard in my room while searching for MTV on the tube. In book stores when I was looking for a magazine. I'm thinking "this is the end and I need some kind of closure like the way a great book ends." With one line that after reading it you know you are done. You know you have been granted something great. All I can say is that I'm not finished.

A few years ago, the critic Ilan Stavans advised a young correspondent ("Letter to a German Friend," 1989, p. 8) in a voice of doubting experience: "Maybe you'll disagree that human evil is inevitable. I truly hope so! Optimists are needed to combat our world's defects" (p. 8).

There is, to be sure, some evidence that art can bring healing and repair to the wounds of existence; Sobol's play *Ghetto* even dramatizes the restorative cultural activity in the Vilna ghetto before its liquidation in 1943. We are familiar also with how the recitation of Dante's "Canto of Ulysses" invigorated Primo Levi's flagging efforts at survival in Auschwitz, as well as with Wladislaw Szpilman's frozen-fingered performance of Chopin's "Nocturne in C Sharp" that helped save his life and bring comfort to the Nazi who was to be his savior, the Capt. Hosenfeld whose diary entry, cited at the beginning of this essay, was written two weeks before I was born. "When people challenge me," writes the novelist Aharon Appelfeld, "and ask what is the place of art in that sphere of death and horror, I reply: who can redeem the fears, the pains, the tortures, and the hidden beliefs from the darkness? What will bring them out of obscurity and give them a little warmth and respect, if not art?" (1994, pp. 22–23).

And so the problem: We cannot delude ourselves that art, even useful art, provides an answer to ending the blight of genocide. (Says the expiring Bimko to Bieberstein, the "Boffo Boys of Birkenau," inside the gas chamber at the conclusion of Barnes's astonishing play *Auschwitz*: "This act is dead on its feet" (1984, p. 145.) On the other hand, we cannot not believe it. (LeDuc in Arthur Miller's *Incident at Vichy* says: "It's just that you keep finding these little shreds of hope and it's a little difficult"[1965, p. 62].) What are we to do with this paradox?

After his lucid analysis of "the culture of despair," Sanders recommends in his splendid essay that "we should work hard at teaching the grounds for hope . . . to reveal the heft of things and how the parts of the world connect, to show pathways through the woods of bewilderment" (1999, p. B4). Michael Roth adds: "But as teachers, we must find ways for our students to open themselves to the emotional and cognitive power of history and literature, since critical thinking is sterile without the capacity for empathy and comprehension" (1996, p. 86). In fact, not making this connection may be disastrous. Nonetheless, it is up to each of us to decide the usefulness of this work and if and how it can be done. My own future plans include editing a volume of plays on the subject of genocide, one that would include a script compiled from the voices of perpetrators and victims of atrocity. It is called *The Light of Dead Stars: A Healing Play about Torture*; the title is taken from the first line of Andre Schwarz-Bart's great novel *The Last of the Just.*

The theatre is my "pathway through the woods." More than a dozen years ago, I included in the introduction to *The Darkness We Carry: The Drama of the Holocaust* a fragment of a play sent me to complete. It was written and sent to me by the late Polish Jewish historian Szymon Datner in that important year (to me), 1978, the teacher I referred to earlier in this essay. In quoting the fragment again here, as "a conclusion of sorts" to this essay, I confess to being no closer to finishing the task he recommended, and certain only that for all its apparent inadequacies, the fragment is full of the stuff of meaningful real life

that Shaw mentions, assuredly fine and useful art that would be even finer and more useful if I knew what to do with it.

TERROR, COMPLICITY, AND ABSENCE IN A PLAY YET TO BE FINISHED AND STAGED

(Introduction): Bialystock-Ghetto, winter (January) 1943, before an "action," feverish preparation to save life, dug outs, hidings and . . . buying drugs for the little ones, they must sleep when the gang will enter and seek victims for Treblinka, and they shall not wake up and cry and so betray the hiding. . . . Soon, as usually, on the market appeared falsified drugs without any value . . .

(ACT IV): Father: Have you the stuff?

Seller: Well . . .

F: Don't be afraid. I know you have it. But I must be sure. Is it real? Will it work?

S: It will. It's excellent.

F: I hope so. Pain?

S: No pain.

F: Will sleep?

S: Like a young angel.

F: I don't care about angels. It's for my beloved son, my only one . . .

It remains only to write the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th act and only to begin and finish the 4th one. Think it over for yourself or together with your students. Not every word of the above is true, but the story is true. I can add for the use of the playwriter: The boy then escaped, but a four year old sunny girl, Baziunia, did not. She awoke when the Germans entered the room and she began to cry. One professor of mathematics, a decent man, put his hand on her neck, certainly he wished not to kill her. I buried the little blond angel under the room where she was hiding. The mother of the little angel stretched through the window to me her tiny body. I remember her last words. Look, maybe she is still alive. But she wasn't. It was a moony mild winter night, but the soil was hard, it was difficult to dig a grave.

I wish you all the best.

P.S. Excuse me the story and my English.

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14

Personal, Educational, and Research Encounters

Nechama Tec

For more than twenty-five years, my research and publications have focused on the destruction of European Jews, also known as the Holocaust or *Shoah*. To broaden my understanding of that period, I have been examining the intricate relationships between self-preservation, compassion, altruism, rescue, resistance, and cooperation. Inevitably, under the German occupation, these expressions of human decency and goodness were rare and overshadowed easily by the enormity of the German crimes. Nevertheless, the mere presence of these positive features improved the quality of life and contributed occasionally to Jewish survival. As a Jewish child in occupied Poland, I benefited from the presence of these positive features when others protected me from becoming one more murdered child.

After the war, my personal and professional lives traveled along parallel but different roads. Eventually, the roads met. This essay explores the interconnections between my wartime experiences and my postwar professional involvements with research and teaching.

I was born in the ancient city of Lublin, in Poland, a city that in the late 1930s had an estimated population of 200,000. About 40,000 of them were Jewish. Mixed into my family life were religious Orthodox and assimilative currents. For example, although my mother chose to maintain a kosher home, both parents discouraged me from speaking Yiddish. Vaguely, they explained that my use of Yiddish would undermine my facility with the Polish language. Whenever I was around and my mother and father wanted to share secrets, they spoke Yiddish. Their success must have had limitations. At the end of the war, I discovered that I could speak Yiddish well, surprising not only my parents, but even myself. Tolerant about people's diversity, my father insisted that being Jewish, Christian, or of any other religion was a historical accident. He argued that people ought to be neither proud nor ashamed of what group into which they might have been born.

Until September 1939, my childhood was pleasantly uneventful. We were well off economically—my father was a co-owner of a candle factory and a chemical factory. We had servants, and I benefited from the attention of a governess. From a distance of so many years, I see myself as a pampered child whose mother never stopped worrying about her daughter's health and poor appetite. In the summer of 1939, here and there, I heard adults mention "the war." Not understanding what it meant, this mystery made me conclude that war would bring new excitements. Significantly, too, because the radio repeated again and again that Poland would be victorious, there was no need to be concerned about my murky notions of this future event.

In no time, the Nazi occupation shattered all such expectations. Especially for us Jews, the appearance of the German rulers translated into immediate and drastic changes. As a girl of 8, I watched the proud and arrogant demeanor of the soldiers and wondered why they seemed to look through me rather than at me. My initial, brief encounters with Germans left me with a memory of their excessively polished boots. Somehow, these boots spelled danger, a vague uneasy kind of danger, whose real nature, as yet, I could not grasp.

World War II history shows that, in each Nazi-occupied country, the mass murder of Jews was preceded by a carefully orchestrated sequence of violations of human rights. In the first phase, laws were introduced defining who was and who was not a Jew. This stage required the identification of all those who were Jewish. Next, came the expropriation of Jewish property and the denial to Jews of gainful employment. The beginning of the end for European Jewry was signaled by their forceful removal from their homes to specially designated areas, into Nazi erected, sealed-off ghettos, located in the most dilapidated parts of cities, out of the sight of Christian populations, or into special houses. This enforced isolation came with measures designed to deprive the Jews of their basic needs. Inadequate, overcrowded living quarters, starvation, and epidemics were the order of the day. This phase was followed by mass murder and deportations to Nazi-created concentration camps. In camps, immediate or slow humiliating murder awaited the overwhelming majority of the Jewish arrivals.

These stages of Jewish annihilation were a rigidly enforced part of the master plan in virtually all countries under German occupation. Significantly, mixed into all these stages were assaults upon the dignity of the prospective Jewish victims and sporadic, sudden murders. The Germans introduced their systematic anti-Jewish policies of annihilation to different countries at different times, with different degrees of ruthlessness. But, even though the Nazi regime aimed at murdering all Jews, the timing and application of these destructive measures varied with a particular country and with special segments of the targeted population. Thus, because Jewish children promised a future, they became marked specially. Unlike some healthy adults, children did not even have the occasional protection of slave labor. And whereas exact figures are elusive, available information shows that in countries under German occupation, the survival rate

of Jewish children was consistently lower than the survival rate of the general Jewish population (Tec, 1998, pp. 15–26).

Of all European countries, Poland had the highest concentration of Jews who were least assimilated into the local culture. In Poland, Nazi policies of Jewish annihilation were introduced early and with a high degree of ruthlessness. In Lublin, my family, as the rest of the Jews, was exposed to a range of oppressive measures. Faced with the constantly mounting hardships, my parents tried to prepare me for what, to them, looked like a dismal future. They wanted me to know what was happening and what I could expect. In particular, I remember hearing my father say over and over again that childhood was a luxury Jewish children could not afford. In short, I had to grow up fast. Much later the idea of a lost childhood would appear in discussions of wartime memoirs and figure prominently as book titles.

But no matter how sensitive and perceptive my parents tried to be, they could hardly imagine the unimaginable. The German assaults were unprecedented and always accompanied by assurances that, if we complied with the ever expanding orders, life would be peaceful and safe. In the absence of factual information, we saw hope where there was none. Only when it was over, in 1945, were we confronted by some reliable, historical facts and began to grasp the extent of the devastation. Indeed, in my hometown, Lublin, out of the estimated Jewish prewar population of 40,000, only an estimated 100 to 150 were spared. Among this handful of survivors, there were three intact families. My parents, my sister, and I were one of them.

How did this minority elude the enemy? Initially, most of them were forced into Nazi-created ghettos. Subsequently, when the ghetto was liquidated, a part of this minority survived by overcoming the horrors of the concentration camp experiences. Others avoided death by running into the forest to hide and/or to fight. The rest might have survived, as my family did, by living illegally in the forbidden Christian world, the so-called Aryan side. Upon entering the Christian world we took on false identities, pretending to be Christian Poles. Eventually, my parents had to become invisible. For more than two years, they did not venture out of a cramped apartment. My sister and I passed for Catholic Poles, partly because our looks did not betray our Jewishness, partly because we were protected by our fluency in the Polish language. Unlike our parents, we could more easily blend into the Polish culture. More important, however, we survived because, at different stages of the war some Christian Poles and Jews were ready to risk their lives and helped us. One Polish family of poor laborers, motivated by profit, had protected us for more than the final two years of the war. The four of us were forced to separate. We had tried to reunite, as we continued to switch from one place to another, in search of safety. Collectively and individually we had close calls. We eluded discovery mostly because a variety of people were ready to help, risking their lives in the process.

Passing for a Catholic in a Catholic environment, I was exposed constantly to crude antisemitism. Unaware of my Jewishness, in my presence, the Poles

would accuse the Jews of all possible, unthinkable evils. The stories they told contained mind-boggling horrors, supposedly brought on by Jews. I listened but could neither object nor disagree with these trumped-up charges featured so prominently in their daily conversations. I cried when I shared these expressions of antisemitism with my father. Invariably, to my questions of how and why were these lies perpetuated, my father had the same answers: "They make up and perpetuate these lies out of ignorance. You should feel sorry for them because they are so very ignorant. You should not hate them for it. If you hate, you yourself may become a hateful person!" I could not feel sorry for them. But, I succeeded in not hating them.

At the end of the war, in 1945, I resumed my Jewish identity, determined to put this past behind me. I wanted to forget, to forget the person I had so desperately tried to become, to forget that which had forced me to become someone else, and to forget even the Christians who had helped me stay alive. For years, I shied away from wartime memories. Most of my friends, even close friends, knew very little about my childhood. Nor was this relentless avoidance of the past limited to personal experiences. I stayed away from all readings, all viewing, all discussions of anything even connected remotely to the war. Whenever the subject did come up, I kept my silence. But I did not deny my past. People knew that I survived the war in Poland. Inevitably, some of them asked direct questions about it. My answers to these queries were curt and evasive, signaling to these inquirers that no information would be forthcoming. Invariably, the subject was dropped, and I was able to retreat into my self-imposed silence.

In 1945, back in Lublin, rather than look back, I tried to look toward the future. My parents wanted me to catch up with my schooling. Despite limited funds, they engaged excellent, private tutors, some of whom were university professors. Rigorous home instruction paid off. In five months I covered three years of classes. I passed special exams and enrolled as a second-year student into an excellent private high school. In less than a year, political developments forced us to flee Poland. We settled in Germany. Ironically it was the only country accessible to us. There I resumed my private study. Before my 16th birthday I passed special examinations and received an equivalent of a European High School diploma. A move to Israel, and marriage at 18 to my husband was followed by a move to the United States.

In 1952, I enrolled at Columbia University, to study sociology. Subsequently, I earned from Columbia a B.S., M.A., and a Ph.D. As a graduate student in the department of sociology, I was exposed to outstanding professors who taught me quantitative research methods and sociological theory. My M.A. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation both relied on survey data.

Although initially interested in research rather than teaching, as a graduate student I became a teaching assistant to some of my professors. Similarly, when asked to teach an introductory sociology course, I accepted gladly. In no time, I realized that teaching gave me the opportunity to learn more sociology than lengthy attendance of classes. Simply put: I learned quickly that, unless I knew

the material thoroughly, I could not explain it to my students. And so I immersed myself fully in the subjects I was to teach. Moreover, I also realized that the part in teaching that I appreciated the most were questions my students were raising and the discussions that followed.

In sociology, one of the basic concepts is interaction. Interaction assumes at least two partners who are engaged in a reciprocal relationship. When I teach, I am particularly sensitive to exchange of ideas. In fact, my students learn quickly how much value I attach to their questions. So eager am I to engage them in intellectual exchanges of ideas that, as soon as I see a hand move, in any direction, I expect this to be a prelude to a query, and I call on that student. Not only am I gratified personally and challenged by questions, but I am also convinced that students and teachers can each learn a great deal by listening carefully to the meanings and implications of questions. Dissecting ideas and weighing them promotes our curiosity and expands our horizons. By raising questions we accumulate knowledge, at the same time we clarify the possible and sometimes seemingly impossible connections that ideas may have upon our thinking, upon our findings, thereby further expanding learning.

For example, two of the courses I teach at the University of Connecticut, Stamford, are directly related to the Holocaust, and both are co-taught with a fine historian, Professor Joel Blatt.

The first, "The Nazi Totalitarian State and the Holocaust," uses a number of "classic" works, Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1985), Lucy S. Dawidowicz's *A Holocaust Reader* (1976), Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz* (1986), Gerald Fleming's *Hitler and the Final Solution* (1984), Walter Laqueur's *The Terrible Secret* (1980), as well as Ian Kershaw's magisterial biography of Adolf Hitler (*Hitler*, 1991), and my own works—*Dry Tears (1984), When Light Pierced the Darkness (1986), and Defiance: The Bielski Partisans* (1993a). In this course we deal with the origins and background of fascism, Adolf Hitler, antisemitism, the ghettos, and concentration camps, as well as questions of resistance and reactions to the Holocaust.

The other course, History 291/Sociology 269, "Personality and Power in the 20th Century," includes in its bibliography of required readings the work of pioneering sociologist Max Weber, Ian Kershaw's biography of Hitler, Keith Robert's *Churchill*, and my own *Defiance: The Bielski Partisans*. Using Weber's work as a frame of reference, we examine the lives of Josef Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Pope Pius XII, Tuvia Bielski (the leader of the partisans), and Winston Churchill.

First as a graduate student, and later as a professional sociologist, I combined teaching with research. I specialized in social organizations and deviant behavior. Each of my books is based on survey research. The same is true for articles I published that dealt with adolescent deviancy, illicit drug usage by teenagers, and family life. For almost thirty years, my wartime past was unconnected to my professional work.

Thirty years after the war, though, my memories began to stir. First gently

they called for my attention. Soon this need to face and deal with my wartime experiences became stronger and stronger. I did not understand this need, nor its power. But, I felt that I had to be somehow guided by my demands and had little choice in the matter. Eventually, when not answering queries about my past threatened to become a compulsion, I decided to revisit my past by writing my memoirs (*Dry Tears: The Story of a Lost Childhood*)—a story about a Jewish girl who was 8 when the war began and 14 when it was over.

While recapturing those far away times I discovered many forgotten things about myself, about my family, and about the many people who touched my life in a variety of ways. As I was recording this past, new questions kept recurring. I wanted to know what was it like for other Jews to pass? Who of the Jews had moved to the forbidden Christian world? Did they pass or hide? Who was protecting them, how and why? What made these Christian rescuers defy all dangers and risk their lives for Jews, who were looked upon traditionally as "Christ killers," and who, for many still unexplained reasons, were blamed for every conceivable ill? Who were these rescuers? I wanted to know if all those who saved Jews shared some special characteristics. I wanted to know what motivated such people to risk their lives for the persecuted and the haunted.

I felt compelled not only to know answers to these questions, but also was eager to share them with others. Similarly, I realized that my need to know and to share could not be satisfied by going over my personal experiences alone. My family and I had been rescued by Poles, and, for some of them, the main motivation was money; only with time did bonds of affection develop between us and some of those who helped us for profit. I knew that my ideas about Christian helpers were colored inevitably by my experiences. As a research sociologist, I also knew that one case history, my own, could give me only limited answers to the many issues I raised. For these answers I turned to the voluminous volumes of Holocaust literature. There I found interesting descriptions of Jews who tried to survive in the forbidden Christian world and Christians who risked their lives to rescue them.

However, the literature contained very few systematic explanations about rescue, rescuers, and the conditions associated with the life of these rescuers and the rescued. Here and there, I found efforts to generalize. However, the results of these efforts were often contradictory. For example, one explanation claimed that lower class individuals were more likely to help Jews because they, rather than higher class people, suffered from various deprivations and hence could identify more easily with the Jewish plight. In contrast, another interpretation claimed that higher class individuals were more likely to rescue Jews. This was explained by the fact that the higher classes were more educated, and, therefore, more aware about the political situation than the rest of the population. Such inconsistent efforts to generalize could be greatly multiplied. Convinced about the advantages to arriving at some general explanations, and unable to find such explanations, I embarked on my own research project. In fact, I made an early decision to pursue these sometimes contradictory assertions. Eventually, my

book *When Light Pierced the Darkness*, which grew out of this project and which includes a systematic examination of these consistent and inconsistent assertions, was published in 1986.

In preparation for this project, to attain greater validity of data, I intended to use several sources of data: (1) a range of relevant Holocaust publications, (2) archival evidence that included unpublished testimonies and additional historical documents, and (3) my own in-depth interviews with Christian rescuers and Jews who tried to survive in the forbidden Christian world. Thus, I decided to focus on the wartime experiences of two groups: Jews who lived on the Aryan side and Christians who offered aid to the persecuted Jews.

The literature about Christians who risked their lives to save Jews deals with those who had protected Jews without expecting any concrete rewards—"the altruistic rescuers." My findings seem to justify this emphasis. Those who protected Jews for money make up a minority among Christian protectors of Jews, less than 20 percent. Nevertheless, in my book *When Light Pierced the Darkness*, I devote an entire chapter (pp. 85–98) to this minority of Christians whose main motivation for aiding Jews was a desire for profit. I refer to them as "paid helpers." They differ from the altruistic rescuers not only in terms of motivation, but also in how they treated their Jewish charges. Another, special minority among the altruistic rescuers, to whom I also devote an entire chapter (pp. 99–112) in this book, are Christians who were open and avid antisemites. These different kinds of rescuers do not exhaust additional kinds of individuals who sheltered the oppressed. Indeed, subsequently a close look at empirical evidence suggested to me different kinds of rescuers, particularly Jewish rescuers of Jews.

Quite early, this project took me to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw where I examined some of the archival holdings. Concentrating then on the two groups, Jews who tried to survive on the Aryan side and Christian Poles who wanted to save them, I came upon the testimony of Oswald Rufeisen. Oswald was a Jewish youth who had passed for half-German and half-Polish. He was also a survivor who had rescued many Jews and Christians, a convert to Catholicism, a Carmelite monk, and a Catholic priest who claimed to be Jewish. After the war he lived in a monastery in Haifa, Israel. Rufeisen's fascinating story caused me some problems, because I did not know into which group he fit best. Was he a victim or a rescuer? For the book I was working on, *When Light Pierced the Darkness*, I treated him as a Jewish survivor. Even though I continued working on *When Light Pierced the Darkness*, Oswald's case intrigued me. I wanted to interview him, wrote him a letter, but received no answer. Another letter also met with silence. I refused to give up. Through some complicated maneuvering, through friends and friends of friends, one day I met this mystery man in Israel, in a Catholic church in Haifa. With some reluctance, Oswald agreed to be interviewed. This led to more than five years of study. Twice a year I went to Israel to interview and reinterview him and many of the people who knew him at different stages of his life. It was a laborious but

exciting process with many ups and some downs. Gradually a special friendship grew out of our meetings that lasted until the end of Oswald's life.

Toward the end of the project, I discovered that, beyond a fascinating biography of an important Holocaust hero, I have learned more from this project than I anticipated. Especially, when I began writing a book about this complex individual, I realized that other Jewish survivors whom I had studied earlier had, in different ways, helped their fellow Jews. Why was I not aware of their help? Was my inattention due to my feelings that being a victim and being a rescuer were two incompatible roles? Maybe. Perhaps, too, I thought that, as victims, Jews were totally absorbed in self-preservation and had no energy left to be concerned about others.

Whatever the reasons, my research and writing about this fascinating figure opened for me the door to the study of Jewish rescuers. Indeed, *Defiance: The Bielski Partisans* was the book that followed *In the Lion's Den* (1990). *Defiance* concentrates on the rescue of Jews by Jews, as it focuses on the history of a group of Jewish partisans who took on the dual role of rescuers and fighters.

To recall, all along my research has had a great deal of continuity, and indeed, *Defiance: The Bielski Partisans* led me to write *Resilience and Courage: Women, Men, and the Holocaust* (2003). Unexpected findings from *Defiance* alerted me to significant differences between men and women who lived illegally in the forests, some of them in family groups, some as active members of fighting partisan detachments. *Defiance* shows that in the junglelike environment of the Belorussian forests, physical strength, perseverance, fearlessness, and courage were valued highly. However, none of these features were associated with womanhood. In fact, most men in the forests were convinced that women were a burden and that their presence interfered with partisan survival. Therefore, most partisan units would not accept women, particularly not Jewish women. Only a very small minority of women, an estimated 2 or 3 percent, became a part of the Soviet partisan movement.

The fate of Jewish women in the forest suggested the possible significance of gender differences during the Holocaust. Thus, alerted to male/female differences in the forest, I decided to examine what kind of sex differences might have existed in a variety of Holocaust settings. My most current book, *Resilience and Courage*, is a systematic study of how women and men fared and coped in a variety of Holocaust settings—the initial stages of the war, the Nazi-created ghettos, the concentration camps, the Aryan side, the forest, and other underground settings.

One basic and guiding principle in my work is a reliance on questions. Herein, I have illustrated how the continuity of my research has been growing out of my earlier work. More specifically, I am interested in the inherent questions raised by my findings. Occasionally these emergent questions seem hard to answer. Soon such seemingly groping queries reveal a variety of future research projects. Highly interdependent, these emergent projects help expand the meanings and implications of the complex and intricate connections between self-

preservation, compassion, altruism, rescue, resistance, and cooperation in extremis.

My need for greater, more extensive understandings pushes me into the discovery of more issues for study. To reiterate, suggested new research comes from empirical evidence which, when examined closely, points to further unexplained issues. Another important source of these additional research queries comes from my teaching or lecturing to various audiences. All teaching demands clarity. Clarity leads to greater awareness. Awareness of the subject matter points to further clarification and may result in the development of new unexplained issues. Coming from the cooperative effort in an educational setting, these processes explore new avenues of stimulating sharing, at the same time, promoting future research. Stated differently, through teaching, questions are raised, which in some form can end up as explorations of further research.

Into my overall desire to gain fresh insights and more knowledge about life as it had existed during the Holocaust, and, more generally, in extremis, I have been aware of and benefited from the close interdependence between teaching, conducting research, and efforts to explain theoretically these connections. The key aims of this process are cooperative, mutually gratifying attempts to generate and answer questions.

Let me further illustrate this interconnection with additional, personal, and different experiences. Throughout this essay, I have been stating and restating my affinity to queries. My students know and the audiences I lecture to know and I know that I welcome curiosity regardless of where it comes from. Therefore, I was puzzled by my strange reactions when people wanted me to answer questions about Jewish resistance. Only after considerable soul searching, did I realize that whenever the subject of Jewish opposition to German oppression came up, I felt uneasy, uncomfortable, somehow irritated, and reluctant to answer these questions. A close look at the content of inquiries about Jewish resistance gave me some clues to my uncharacteristic response. Invariably, those who seek information about Jewish resistance during the Holocaust present their questions in the following versions: Why did the Jews go passively to their deaths? Why did they not stand up to the Germans? Why did they not fight?

Questions raised about lack of Jewish resistance contain certain unexamined assumptions. First, they assume that the Jews did nothing to oppose the Germans. Second, the very wish to know why the Jews went passively to their deaths alleges that conditions for fighting were there but Jews failed to take advantage of them. These queries are filled with assumptions and accusations. The reasoning behind them leads to certain inevitable conclusions. Namely, if opportunities to oppose the Germans were there but the Jews took no advantage of them, then the Jews themselves are partly responsible for what had happened to them. These arguments amount to blaming the victims—a commonly applied reaction, particularly to powerless victims of crimes. Blaming the victims, in

turn, relieves the perpetrators of some responsibility for committing these crimes.

But even a cursory glance at available evidence shows that these assumptions and their implications are false. First, favorable conditions for fighting the Germans, especially for the Jews, were virtually nonexistent. This is documented in one of my papers, "Jewish Resistance: Facts, Omissions, and Distortions" (Tec, 1997, pp. 1–36). Second, despite the absence of such conditions, there was a significant amount of Jewish resistance. For example, in Eastern Europe, underground organizations were set up in at least seven major ghettos—Bialystok, Cracow, Czestowa, Kovno, Minsk, Vilna, Warsaw—and forty-five minor ghettos. Jewish armed uprisings took place in five concentration camps and eighteen labor camps. Similarly, Jews participated in many different non-Jewish undergrounds.

To be sure, these kinds of questions and their implications can be settled only by a careful examination of available historical facts. I also believe that a systematic analysis of facts about Jewish resistance would tell more if examined within the context of non-Jewish resistance. I think that, indeed, only through a number of comparisons of non-Jewish resistance to Jewish resistance can some of the unsubstantiated arguments be clarified. Such comparisons whenever possible should involve similar kinds of resistance forms. Elsewhere, through several publications, I have tried to rely on such facts (Tec, 2001b, pp. 83–96).

Henri Michel, a prominent French historian of European resistance, tried to deal with this very issue. First, he identified the Jews as the most handicapped in their ability to engage in armed uprisings. Then he went on to compare Jewish responses to oppression with the reactions of three partially similar groups. First were the slave laborers who were forced into work in Germany. Second were the Soviet prisoners of war. Third were the non-Jewish concentration camp inmates. Each of these groups was exposed to coercive, brutal treatment that seems to approximate the situation of the Jews. Michel notes that, except for the Jews, none of the three groups engaged in armed resistance against the Germans (Tec, 2001b, pp. 83–96; Tec, 1997, pp. 1–36).

Looking back at the comparisons of Jewish and non-Jewish resistance groups from a variety of sources and within different settings, it appears that the Jews were more likely to engage in open armed resistance than any other group. On the other hand, it is also true that, by and large, armed resistance was infrequent. And yet, discussions about opposition to German oppression concentrate on fighting rather than on spiritual resistance or rescue as a form of resistance. By concentrating on resistance as an expression of spiritual strength, and by concentrating on rescue as a form of resistance, more insights might have been gained into what had actually happened. Do we dare to hope that in the future a more caring society will attribute more value, and show greater support, to spiritual resistance and rescue as forms of resistance rather than to killing the enemy?

These last queries, as most others, had originated in my preoccupation with

Holocaust teaching and Holocaust research. Regardless of the origins of inquiries, and regardless of who is responsible for their appearance, singly and collectively these questions ought to be taken seriously. Indeed, they ought to serve as guides for further collection and examination of Holocaust data.

Finally, under the German occupation, and for European Jews in particular, their very existence was reduced to the basic issues of life and death. In fact, the Holocaust represents a time in which traditional, decorative features of society had lost their relevance. Such stripping of conventions inevitably offers an uncluttered view of the fundamental human condition. And precisely because life during that period was reduced to its lowest denominator, a careful examination of this history creates special opportunities to better see and understand the broader meanings and implications of life in extremis.

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Chosen by the writers themselves, the books and articles listed below identify publications that each author places among his or her most significant contribution to Holocaust education. Books and articles appear together, and each person's writings are listed alphabetically.

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