Naval Chaplains School
NETC - Bldg 114
Newport, RI 02841-5014
16 March 1987

Max Green, Associate Director
White House Office of Public Liaison
Old Executive Office Bldg -- Room 197
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Max,

With any luck, the Holocaust workbook should arrive in your office by mail within a very short time. For now, I've enclosed copies of the two sections the Chaplain Resource Board printed; the remainder of the workbook is made up of works purchased from other organizations.

As you will see, this is an extremely important resource package. In a world where the sailors are often especially targeted by cults who say that the Holocaust is a hoax, I think it is crucial that we follow the President's lead (and the nation's lead) within the military environment, taking a stand which says the Holocaust did occur, we must remember, and we must somehow struggle to draw the right lessons from it.

If, as we have discussed before, the President could somehow add some words of praise to this project of the Navy's -- with a word or two directed to the Army and Air Force, that they follow the Navy's lead in making the military part of a truly national effort to remember -- I think we may have taken a small step forward toward tikkun ha-olam.

On a personal note, I want to share the fact with you that I will be in Washington the end of April, to deliver the invocation at the Holocaust service in the Capitol Rotunda, 11:00 AM, Tuesday, 28 April. Can I take you up on your offer of breakfast, either that morning or the morning before? Monday, 27 April, would be better for me -- but I know your schedule may not be so flexible, so I'll leave the choice to you.

And I'll throw humility to the wind, and show some chutzpah, by asking something not for the Navy, but for my family. Is there any way you could pass the word to the President that the Rabbi giving the invocation is the one whose words from Beirut he read at the Jerry Falwell convention in 1984? If you pass that note, perhaps I would be lucky enough to shake his hand, in the presence of my family!

In any event, I hope our breakfast can be scheduled!

Sincerely,

Rabbi Arnold E. Resnicoff

2557
401-841-

Max - this is background info / press info our / oral public affairs office is using for our base newspaper - a

U.S.NAVY CHAPLAINS CREATE NEW HOLOCAUST STUDY WORKBOOK

"Horror and Hope: Americans Remember the Holocaust" is a workbook and resource packet prepared by the Navy's Chaplain Resource Board for the more than eleven hundred Rabbis, Priests, and Ministers who serve as Navy chaplains. These study materials, which include articles by theologians, readings for classes on ethics and morality, and prayers for ceremonies linked to the annual national "Days of Remembrance for Holocaust Victims," will support programs on ships and stations around the globe.

National efforts to remember the Holocaust are not new. In 1980, the United States Holocaust Memorial Council (USHMC) was established by law. Its responsibilities include support of an annual, national commemoration, and encouragement of local observances throughout the United States.

Although many states followed the lead of the nation's capital in establishing Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremonies, military observances were often limited to the few scattered commands served by full-time Jewish chaplains.

In 1984, following a visit to the chaplains of the U.S. Sixth Fleet, then USHMC Director Rabbi Seymour Siegel suggested that the military "come onboard." Given the fact that the President was commander-in-chief, he reasoned, it made sense for the armed forces to develop programs similar to those within the civilian sector, thereby creating a truly national effort. After a visit to the Sixth Fleet flagship, where he met with Navy Chaplain Arnold Resnicoff, a former student of his, he decided to raise the issue with the Department of Defense.

Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger responded to the idea with a memorandum to the heads of all branches of the military. Especially mindful of the fact that it was our nation's military forces that first witnessed evidence of the Holocaust, he directed military commands to begin considering ways to remember the event -- so that we might never forget our commitment to the values for which we stand.

NAVY CHAPLAIN CORPS PROJECT

In December 1986, Navy Chief of Chaplains (Rear Admiral) John R. McNamara spoke at the annual meeting of the USHMC. Sharing the Navy's Holocaust project with those assembled, he made the point that it was especially appropriate for the military to take a stand. It was, he said, the responsibility of being a witness. As a witness to the Holocaust, the armed forces must now accept the challenge to bear witness to its occurrence.

It is this idea that ~~the~~ Chaplain McNamara stresses in his opening letter in "Horror and Hope": "Already some spread the lie that the Holocaust did not occur at all, that it is a hoax of

some sort, that no death camps or ovens or crematoria existed, that no special effort was made to erase the Jewish presence from the earth...

"Our nation and our military personnel were among those who liberated the death camps. We know the truth. And now our country has reaffirmed its commitment to remember the Holocaust; to ensure that it will not be forgotten; to vow that it will not happen again."

In his speech, Chaplain McNamara, a Roman Catholic Priest, noted another reason for the military to remember the Holocaust. The young men and women in uniform, he said, make sacrifices and take risks in a very special way, to support the dreams of our nation. It is sometimes necessary to remember the nightmares, to remind ourselves how precious are those dreams.

One of the chaplains who has worked to see the dream of this Holocaust packet come true is Rabbi Arnold E. Resnicoff, currently stationed as an instructor at the Naval Chaplains School and the Naval War College, both in Newport, Rhode Island. Chaplain Resnicoff's experiences with the Navy have literally taken him around the world -- from Beirut at the time of the terrorist truck-bomb attack, which took 241 American lives; to Reykjavik in 1986, where he was sent to lead Yom Kippur services during the Reagan-Gorbachov pre-summit talks. And yet, wherever he has served, he has worked to keep the idea of this project alive.

When Chaplain McNamara approved the concept of a Holocaust workbook, Rabbi Resnicoff was named Project Editor. From Newport, he worked with the staff of the Chaplain Resource Board to collect and sift through the hundreds of books and articles to be considered for this packet.

The problem, according to Chaplain Resnicoff, was not that material was unavailable to chaplains interested in creating services or classes. On the contrary, the problem was that the material was overwhelming. Chaplains did not know where to start, when they wanted to put together programs or plan ceremonies.

"What makes this resource packet unique," according to Rabbi Resnicoff, "is the fact that one three-ring binder now provides materials for every conceivable program. A chaplain can use this packet to compose a short prayer, or an entire service; to write one sermon or lecture, or to put together an entire course.

CONTENTS OF THE WORKBOOK

The finished workbook takes the form of a four-inch thick white binder, embossed with red letters. "Holocaust" is framed by a design of barbed wire and flame. The title -- "Horror and Hope: Americans Remember the Holocaust" -- reminds the reader that all Americans share the challenge to confront yesterday's terrors so that we might rebuild tomorrow's dreams.

Within the binder, five tabs separate materials created by the Chaplain Resource Board or collected from many organizations. Each of five sections is introduced by one word: (I) Introduction, (II) Programming, (III) Education, (IV) Theology, and (V) Resources.

The Introduction section deals with definitions: what the Holocaust was, and what it was not. It was not, the introduction emphasizes, the terrors of war in some abstract sense, or the deaths of all those who fell victim to World War II. It was "a separate war...aimed not merely at killing Jews, but also at dehumanizing them in life, and degrading and denying their memory, in death."

Using the report of the 1979 Presidential Commission which led to the establisment of the USHMC, it defines the Holocaust as, "The systematic, bureaucratic extermination of six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators as a central act of state during the Second World War; as night descended, millions of other peoples were swept into this net of death...."

Also included in Section I are special notes about the concept of resistance. According to this section, Nazi propaganda spread the myth that Jews did not resist -- as another "proof that Jews lacked worth." Noting the many instances of heroism on the part of the Jews, however, this section notes that such events are only a small part of the story:

"But physical resistance -- Jewish partisans, ghetto heroes-- was only one small part. For there was resistance of another kind: a resistance of the mind, and of the heart; a resistance of the spirit, which kept humanity alive."

In the section labeled, "Programming," chaplains are provided with a complete book of services, Liturgies on the Holocaust. Produced by the Anne Frank Institute of Philadelphia, this volume contains prayers for Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant services, as well as material for interfaith or civic observances.

The Education section includes more than 200 pages of readings from selectons ranging from Elie Wiesel's Night to Simon and Gurfunkel's "Sounds of Silence." Published by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith under the title, "The Holocaust and Genocide: A Search for Conscience," this anthology of readings includes excerpts from World War II documents which help the student learn about the time. But through other readings -- and questions in support of the readings -- it raises universal issues of prejudice, hatred, discrimination, and the horrors of religion misused, and faith run wild.

Eight articles by Jewish and Christian scholars make up the "Theology" section, a collection of writings provided for chaplain study. With these materials, chaplains may struggle with the Holocaust as a challenge to faith.

Finally, the "Resource" section of the packet includes two catalogs of Holocaust materials, and a USHMC directory of Holocaust agencies. The information in this category will enable chaplains to find specific resources to support their programs, or to locate organizations which might provide speakers or additional help.

MILITARY-CIVILIAN COOPERATION

The complete workbook, currently being distributed to the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard commands served by Navy chaplains, is the product of more than five years of work.

When the idea for such a packet was first discussed, civilian scholars were quick to agree that the idea was sound. Responding to the special link of the military as liberators to the memory of the Holocaust, scholar Yaffa Eliach of Brooklyn's Holocaust Research Institute noted that it was, in fact, the military that first used the term, "Holocaust" to describe the Nazi horror. The word was used in an Army report sent to General Eisenhower, to describe the terror our soldiers confronted as the camps were first liberated.

As Navy chaplains began work on the packet, many civilian organizations lent their support. Rabbi David Lapp, Director of the JWB Jewish Chaplains Council (the JWB is the organization which supports the work of all Jewish Chaplains in the military) helped with materials. Dr. Dennis Klein of the International Center for Holocaust Studies (ADL), and Marcia Littell, Director of the Anne Frank Institute of Philadelphia, immediately agreed to add their energies to the project.

The USHMC stressed the idea that any effort to remember the Holocaust would enable us to remember other horrors as well: other dreams of genocide; other attempts to deny value, dignity -- even humanity -- to those we consider "other." Throughout the resource packet, this idea is affirmed: we remember the Holocaust as a specific event, but we draw lessons from it that must be applied in universal ways. We remember the Nazi "War Against the Jews," so that we never forget any people who has faced persecution.

STEP BY STEP

With the distribution of this workbook, and the involvement of military men and women in Holocaust programs, the country takes a giant step toward the President's goal of nationwide Days of Remembrance.

Army and Air Force chaplains have already begun to study the Navy materials. Chaplain Resnicoff hopes that all branches of the armed forces will ultimately become involved in Holocaust programs of study and observance. In the meantime, Navy chaplains need to adapt the materials they have been provided to the needs of the specific commands they serve.

"Horror and Hope:Americans Remember the Holocaust" focuses on the events of the Holocaust, but deals with issues of values in many ways. Much of the material in the workbook will support command efforts to strengthen individual concepts of personal excellence. Many readings will help us as representatives of our nation reaffirm our commitment to national dreams.

For many sailors, World War II is ancient history, and the lessons of the Holocaust are all too easy to forget. But the nation and the Navy have taken stands against forgetting. As the Navy's packet emphasizes, "the time for remembering is now."

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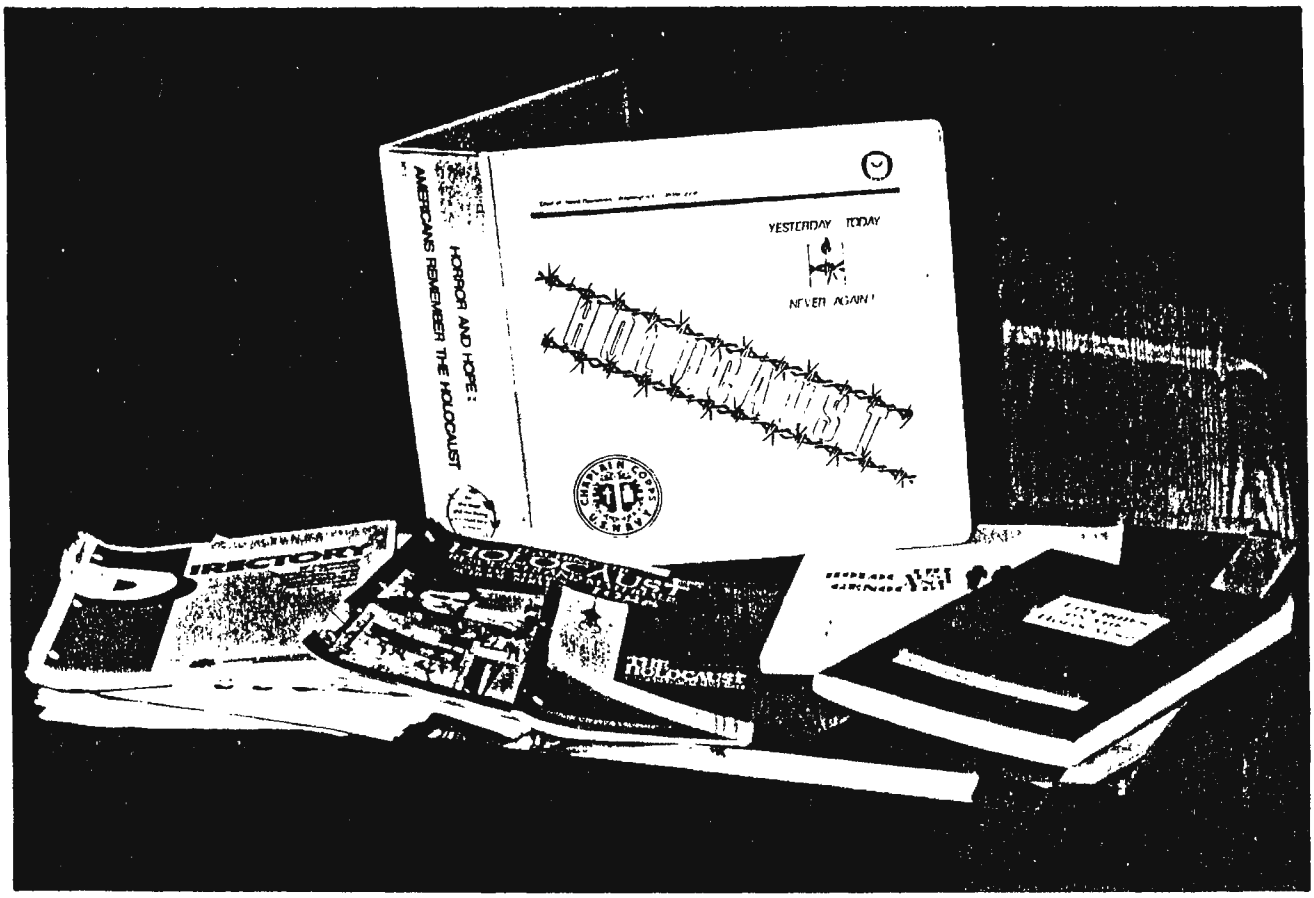
HORROR AND HOPE:
AMERICANS REMEMBER THE HOLOCAUST
YESTERDAY TODAY
NEVER AGAIN!
HOLOCAUST

HORROR AND HOPE:
AMERICANS REMEMBER THE HOLOCAUST

A CHAPLAIN RESOURCE BOARD WORKBOOK
DECEMBER 1986

(SECTION I)

HORROR AND HOPE:

AMERICANS REMEMBER THE HOLOCAUST

Section One

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(Signature, Reviewing Official)

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO
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26 Dec 1986

Dear Chaplain:

As the Jewish People slowly made their way through the wilderness toward the Promised Land, Aaron, first of the High Priests, witnessed the sudden and tragic deaths of two of his sons. Moses, his brother, tried to make theological sense of the event, but Aaron could find no words. "Aaron," according to the simple, yet eloquent testimony of Scripture, "was silent." (Leviticus 10:3)

Forty years have passed since the slaughter and horror that we refer to as "The Holocaust." Like Aaron, many of the witnesses, the survivors, the relatives, found silence to be the only proper response. Silence may have been the only possible response -- for there were no words which could be found to describe such indescribable events.

With the passage of time, words must be found -- events must be confronted -- and struggles to draw lessons for our future must begin. Already some spread the lie that the Holocaust did not occur at all, that it is a hoax of some sort, that no death camps or ovens or crematoria existed, that no special effort was made to erase the Jewish presence from this earth. Justice Robert H. Jackson, the U.S. Representative and Chief Counsel for European War-crimes Trials, anticipated such an eventuality. On 6 June 1946, he wrote to President Truman, "Unless we write the record of this movement with clarity and precision, we cannot blame the future if in days of peace it finds incredible the accusatory generalities uttered during the war. We must establish incredible events by credible evidence." Our nation, and our military personnel, were among those who liberated the death camps. We know the truth. And now our country has reaffirmed its commitment to remember the Holocaust, to ensure that it will not be forgotten; to vow that it will not happen again.

The CRB workbook, "Horror and Hope: Americans Remember the Holocaust," was put together over the course of a number of years with the help of many agencies, including the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, Washington, DC -- the organization established by Congress to support and encourage efforts by our nation to remember the Holocaust.

Section Four of this workbook consists of a number of articles by Christian and Jewish scholars, which seek to come to grips theologically with the Holocaust. As you read these pages, remember that some of the articles were forged, in the words of

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one author, "in the light of the burning bodies of children consumed in the ovens of Auschwitz and Dachau." The stark judgements concerning the complicity of some religious faith groups in these events were born in the painful search for meaning in the midst of overwhelming evil.

It is my hope that this workbook will be helpful in many ways; as an aid to our own professional development as we wrestle with the questions such an event poses to men and women of faith, and as a resource for religious education classes for morals, ethics, and matters of conscience. I also hope that this workbook can assist us in planning and facilitating observances of Yom HaShoa/Holocaust Day -- a modern holy day for Jewish personnel. It should also be a useful aid in the preparation of appropriate prayers and ceremonies for the Days of Remembrance for Holocaust Victims -- a special time of remembrance for Americans of all faiths proclaimed annually by the President.

The time for silence has passed. May this workbook aid us all as we struggle together to speak.

John R. McNamara

JOHN R. MCNAMARA
Rear Admiral, CHC, USN
Chief of Chaplains

"The things I saw beggar description ... The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty, and bestiality were so overpowering as to leave me a bit sick.

In one room, where there were piled up twenty or thirty naked men killed by starvation, George Patton would not even enter. He said he would get sick if he did so.

I made the visit deliberately, in order to be in a position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to 'propaganda.'"

General Dwight D. Eisenhower
Supreme Commander
Allied Forces Europe
Letter to Chief of Staff
George Marshall
April 12, 1945

II.

UNITED STATES POLICY

AS A WITNESS

WE SHALL BEAR WITNESS

In 1980, the United States Holocaust Memorial Council was established by law. Its responsibilities include support of an annual, national commemoration of the Holocaust, and encouragement of similar observances of the Days of Remembrance throughout the United States.

Since the establishment of the Council, ceremonies have been instituted throughout our nation, on state and local government and community levels.

In 1984, mindful of the fact that it was our nation's military forces which first witnessed evidence of the Holocaust, the Secretary of Defense directed the Secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force, as well as the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to encourage military ceremonies, as well.

As local annual prayer breakfasts now link our ships and stations to the national prayer breakfast in Washington, D.C., so will local command observances of the Days of Remembrance create ties with federal and state ceremonies, symbolizing and strengthening our national commitment to remember -- and bear witness to -- the Holocaust.

Following the wishes of the Commander-in-Chief, and the direction of the Secretary of Defense, this Resource Packet and Workbook will support the efforts of sea service commands as they create appropriate programs and ceremonies of remembrance.

III.

RESOURCE WORKBOOK OVERVIEW

"HORROR AND HOPE: Americans Remember the Holocaust" has been divided into five sections:

Section I : Introduction
Section II: Programming
Section III : Education
Section IV : Theology
Section V : Resources

In each of these sections, some materials have been provided --but there is room in the workbook to allow chaplains to individualize and personalize this resource packet over the passage of time. In this workbook, records of local ceremonies and observances can be saved; new articles can be added; and personal reflections can be recorded.

A brief introduction to each section follows.

SECTION I : INTRODUCTION

"Introduction to the Holocaust: Policy and Background"

This section -- the booklet you are now reading -- includes introductory remarks on the Holocaust, on the National Days of Remembrance, and on the CRB Workbook itself.

Issues raised in the introduction are dealt with in depth in Section III (education) and IV (theology).

SECTION II : PROGRAMMING

"For Ceremonies and Observances"

The material in this section was prepared by the Anne Frank Institute (Philadelphia, PA).

The anthology contains sermons and liturgical selections. Some prayers are appropriate for specific worship settings: Jewish, Catholic or Protestant. Others have been composed for civic and interfaith ceremonies.

Some material in this section will help chaplains in search of simple prayers on the 1-MC or a note in the Plan of the Day. Other readings will aid in the preparation of complete civic or interfaith services or ceremonies, sponsored by the command.

SECTION III : EDUCATION

"Readings and Questions for Religious Education"

"Holocaust and Genocide: A Search for Conscience" is a collection of more than two hundred pages of readings and discussion questions, developed under the auspices of the State of New Jersey Department of Education and published by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith.

These readings -- drawn from sources ranging from eyewitness accounts of survivors to modern, popular songs -- will provide chaplains with a wealth of materials for classes and programs throughout the year.

The readings in this section are broken down into six units:

I - The Nature of Human Behavior
II - Views of Prejudice and Genocide
III - The Rise of Nazism in Germany to 1933
IV - From Persecution to Mass Murder
V - Resistance and Intervention
VI - Conscience and Moral Responsibility

It should be noted that a Curriculum Guide is available for this anthology, filled with recommendations for using the readings in full or mini-courses tied to Holocaust study programs. See the ADL catalog of Holocaust materials included in this workbook for more information.

SECTION IV : THEOLOGY

"Jewish and Christian Responses
for
Individual Chaplain Study"

For some, the Holocaust is merely one more example of evil in the world, or of the potential for evil within us all. For them, no new questions arise from Holocaust studies -- although age-old questions do persist. Along with ancients as old as the Biblical prophets themselves, we ask why the innocent continue to suffer, and why evil is allowed to exist in such terrible forms, with such tragic and horrifying consequences.

But there are others who see in the Holocaust not merely old questions, but new challenges, as well: questions about our role as individuals and our responsibilities as faith groups; questions about the value -- and the impact -- of the very teachings of our faith.

The articles in this section represent the reflections of both Jewish and Christian writers. Some attempt to record a broad range of responses to the Holocaust as an historical event and a theological challenge; others focus on a single aspect of the problem: Why was God silent? How can an individual respond to evil -- whether or not he or she understands it?

The following articles, all reprinted with permission, are included in this section:

"The Holocaust as a Problem in Moral Choice,"
by Robert McAfee Brown

"The Holocaust: Christian and Jewish Responses,"
by Alice I Eckardt

"Understanding Contemporary Judaism: The Holocaust and the State of Israel," by Blu Greenberg

"Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Modernity After the Holocaust," by Irving ("Yitz") Greenberg

"Writing and the Holocaust," by Irving Howe

"The Threefold Covenant: Jewish Belief After the Holocaust," by Daniel Landes

"Lessons of the Holocaust: Towards an Ethical Society," by Dr. Franklin H. Littell

"Auschwitz and the Nurturing of Conscience,"
by Robert E. Willis

SECTION V : RESOURCES

"Books, Literature and Audio-Visual Productions"

While this CRB workbook will provide all chaplains with the beginning of a Holocaust library, the make-up of individual commands will determine additional needs.

Holocaust materials often include excellent selections on the wider issues of hatred, prejudice, and discrimination; on questions of good and evil, war and peace; and on the teaching of ethics and morals in today's world.

This section includes two excellent catalogs of Holocaust materials:

1) THE HOLOCAUST: Catalog of Publications and Audiovisual Materials --

Published by the International Center for Holocaust Studies, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, New York, New York

2) TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST: Resource and Materials --

Published by the Social Studies Schoool Service, Culver City, California

Additionally, a unique and invaluable resource for Holocaust programming and studies has been included:

DIRECTORY OF HOLOCAUST RESOURCE CENTERS, INSTITUTIONS, AND ORGANIZATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA (1985)

Compiled by the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, this listing of resource centers will enable the chaplain to contact local organizations which often provide speakers or consultants; or to locate Holocaust memorials which may be appropriate sites for individual or class visits -- or opportunities for local chaplain training.

IV.

INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLOCAUST

"The systematic, bureaucratic extermination of six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators as a central act of state during the Second World War; as night descended, millions of other peoples were swept into this net of death..."

From the Presidential Commission Report, 1979

A. THE HOLOCAUST: DEFINING THE TERM

During World War II, death and destruction touched this world.

War was not new. Suffering, cruelty, even bestiality, were a part of humanity's past. New technology made killing more efficient, of course -- but the horrors of war were all too familiar.

And yet, when the smoke had cleared, it slowly dawned on the world that something new had occurred, after all: something linked to the war, but apart from it. Something for which a new word had to be created: Holocaust.

* * *

In the midst of the Nazi war for power and conquest, the Holocaust represented a separate war. It resembled genocide, but its aims went even beyond that of destroying a people. This attempted genocide --this "war against the Jews" -- aimed not merely at killing Jews, but also of dehumanizing them in life, and degrading and denying their memory, in death. The plan was not only to kill individuals, but also to destroy their values and memories, their hopes and dreams. Not only a people was to be destroyed; so was a world.

Some call the Holocaust "unique" -- but there is danger in removing this event from history, and from life. It was, in fact, "unprecedented" in certain ways. Its plans for murder were cold-blooded, the product not of stupid men, but of educated, cultured minds. Its brutality was not spontaneous: doctors and scientists conferred to plan hideous experiments, and then to watch and take note as patients moved toward madness and death. Its genocide was not to rid the land of foreign peoples, but to rid the world of alien life -- and "competing" dreams. To be a Jew meant being marked for round-up and for death. There was no surrender. There was no place to hide.

And, worst of all, there was a newness in the hearts of those who watched: for Hitler did succeed in confusing right and wrong. Many half-believed -- or were convinced -- that the victims were at fault.

The truth is that the evils of the Holocaust are evils too familiar --but evils run amuck. In each of us there is a Nazi strain: a potential for condemning those with whom we disagree; a tendency to make of faith support for playing God.

* * *

And so, machinery of death was brought to bear, part of the "final solution" to rid the world of Jews. Once in place, camps could aid "the other war," as well, and the list of victims began to grow.

"Sub-Aryans" -- millions of non-Jews -- were murdered in the camps. But Jews were set apart: not a lesser strain of human, but less than human altogether. To Nazis they were vermin -- their death became an act of cleansing: an act of righteousness -- an act of faith gone wild.

Killing Jews took precedence over even war against the allied troops: trains, materiel, personnel -- all needed at the front -- would not be diverted from their deadly tasks in the war against the Jews.

* * *

When World War II had ended, Jewish life in Europe had been destroyed. The Jewish world -- and word -- had been the target. But the world itself had been the victim.

Jewish souls were taken, but world conscience, civilization, morality -- and world dreams -- had suffered mortal wounds. They would never be the same again.

B. THE PARTICULAR AND THE UNIVERSAL

"THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE HOLOCAUST LIES IN ITS UNIQUENESS: THE EVENT IS ESSENTIALLY JEWISH, YET ITS INTERPRETATION IS UNIVERSAL."

From the Report to the President
President's Commission on the Holocaust
September 27, 1979

Not all victims were Jews.

But all Jews were victims.

Elie Wiesel

The Holocaust is a particular event: the near annihilation of the Jews at Nazi hands from 1933-1945.

It cannot be remembered as a symbol of all war, or all evil. It is not synonymous with the terrors of World War II, or the deaths - military and civilian - brought about by the ravages of that war.

And yet, we study the specific horrors of the Holocaust because in its events lie universal lessons. From the particular, we seek the universal. An analogy can be drawn from the way we remember another Jewish story: the Exodus from Egypt.

* * *

When Jewish slaves left Egypt, the dreams of others were forever changed. Never again would any slave accept his lot. Now all would know how to dream.

From Exodus came values that shaped the Jewish faith; but lessons emerged for all the world, as well.

We remember the Exodus as one time-bound event -- but we see its meaning for all peoples, and all times. We remember these slaves, and we hate the thought of bondage. We remember their Exodus, and we cherish freedom's call.

* * *

Jewish teaching has it that all must see themselves "as if <u>they</u> had left Egypt" -- as if <u>they</u> had tasted slavery.

In our time, we must see ourselves "as if <u>we</u> had left Auschwitz - as if <u>we</u> had tasted inhumanity," and been denied the right to see humanity within ourselves.

* * *

The Holocaust was one event: the "final solution" for the problem of the Jews; a genocide which almost came to pass. But remembering the Holocaust does not eclipse our memories of other peoples, and other terrors.

On the contrary, we must remember the Holocaust so that we might hate the very thought of genocide; the notion that it is in our hands to decide who might live and who might die; the view that some are less than us, that some are human, some are not.

We remember the Holocaust so that other evils will never be forgotten, and will not occur again.

* * *

I believe in the sun

even when it is not shining

I believe in love

when feeling it not

I believe in God

even when He is silent

Scratched on a cellar wall,

Cologne, Germany,

where Jews hid from Nazis

It was a part of Nazi propaganda that Jews did not resist: one more "proof" that Jews lacked worth.

Of course, there was resistance. Given overwhelming odds -- whole nations had surrendered to the Nazi war machine -- the question was never why Jews did not resist more -- but how despite the odds, so much resistance did occur.

But physical resistance -- Jewish partisans, ghetto heroes -- was only one small part. For there was resistance of another kind: a resistance of the mind, and of the heart; a resistance of the spirit, which kept humanity alive.

For Jews in Nazi lands, it became an act of faith to commit one's self to life; it took tremendous courage to hope and care -- to feel, to dream, and even, still, to love.

In the bowels of the death camps, Jews sought wisdom from their faith. Prayers continued; holy days observed -- and, incredibly, celebrated still, as conscious and courageous acts of will. Men and women chose to stay with aged parents, or tiny children rather that escape by leaving them behind. Within the crematoria, parents gave comfort to their children until the end: pictures tell the story of infants being cradled in their parents' failing arms.

Jacob Neusner writes of survivors, long ago: Jews who saw the Temple laid to ruins; who saw the wrath of Rome, as a final Jewish war for freedom came to naught. He writes that their response was to seek new cause for hope. Their response, he writes, now speaks to us survivors once again. For Jews, he writes, despair is still a sin.

* * *

For us, today, remembering the Holocaust becomes an act of faith. But, remembering with hope becomes an act of courage -- an act of resistance for today.

There are those who would deny the Holocaust occurred. We must resist this lie.

There are those who would deny the challenge of the past to easy faith today. We must resist by struggling with our teachings and our acts.

The Holocaust must be remembered -- but remembering takes courage. From resistance in the past let us take hope and face this challenge: to struggle with the horror of the Holocaust, and still find strength to hope.

V.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

* Share this material with your commanding officer. Brief him or her on policy in support of the National Days of Remembrance.

* Watch for announcements of the days set aside for ceremonies in Washington, DC (One hint: the time for the observances normally falls during the March - April timeframe, a week or so following the end of the Jewish festival of Passover).

* Stay in touch with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council. Watch for new materials available from their office.

* Ask local civic, community, and governmental organizations involved in Holocaust ceremonies to include your office on their mailing lists. Contact local synagogues or clergy boards, to keep apprised of plans for local ceremonies.

* Publicize local events within the command -- and "put out the word" that Americans of all faiths now join together to observe these annual days.

* Plan a ceremony for the command. Section III of the workbook contains many basic prayers and readings appropriate for such observances. Ceremonies can be elaborate, including audio-visual presentations, musical selections, or candlelighting ceremonies -- lighting six candles in memory of six million. Or they can be simple: coming together for a reading and a prayer.

A simple ceremony might include:

Opening Prayer
Historical Perspective or Introduction
Prayers and Readings
    (optional musical selection)
Remarks
    (optional candlelighting)
Closing Prayer

* Instead of (or in addition to) special command ceremonies include special prayers or remarks during regularly scheduled worship services -- or as 1 MC evening prayer at sea.

* Write an article in the plan of the Day or ship/station paper.

* Arrange a special audio-visual presentation at the Chapel, in the Base Theatre, or over CCTV, onboard ship.

* Make a religious offering fund (ROF) contribution in memory of the dead. Contributions can be made to institutions working for peace. Trees can be planted in Israel -- where there is a forest planted in memory of the Holocaust, which one day will have six million trees. Contributions can also be made directly to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, which is raising funds to support a National Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

* Conduct a special educational program, featuring a speaker or a film -- as part of Chaplain or command training, religious education classes, or community special events programming. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council "Directory" (included in section V) lists many agencies which will make speakers available for local programs.

* Encourage children to write essays, as part of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council annual competition. (Once you are on the Council mailing list, you should receive announcements of the annual essay contest).

* Support observances of 'Yom HaShoa" (Holocaust Memorial Day) for Jewish personnel within the command. For Jewish personnel, Yom HaShoa is a uniquely Jewish time of study and reflection, as well. Ceremonies tied to the National Days of Remembrance allow Americans to consider our national actions and dreams in light of the lessons of the Holocaust as an historical event.

* Use readings from this Holocaust workbook in ongoing moral and ethical instruction. There are topics appropriate for religious education programs at all levels. Consider holding special interfaith lectures, mini-courses, or seminars, as well.

VI.

SPECIAL THANKS

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United States Holocaust Memorial Commission
2000 L. St., NW, Suite 588
Washington, DC 20036-4907

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New York, NY 10017

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We thank them all for helping us remember.

for
the dead
and the living
we must bear
witness

Elie Wiesel

United States Holocaust Memorial Council

HORROR AND HOPE:

AMERICANS REMEMBER THE HOLOCAUST

A CHAPLAIN RESOURCE BOARD WORKBOOK

DECEMBER 1986

(SECTION IV)

The Holocaust As A Problem In Moral Choice

Robert McAfee Brown

I approach this problem with a mixture of eagerness and healthy dread. Eagerness because the occasion is an important one and I am deeply honored to have been asked to share in it; dread because the assignment outstrips my ability to deal with it, or indeed the ability of any theologian, however well-versed or eminent, to unravel the mystery of this most monstrous of all events in the annals of human evil; but healthy dread, as well, since an audience that has successively been exposed to Elie Wiesel, Lucy Dawidowicz and Dorothy Rabinowitz will already have gained enough insight to be generous toward the failings of anyone cast in the difficult position of following them.

How Can One Dare to Speak?

How does one approach even the outer precincts of "The Holocaust as a Problem in Moral Choice"? How, particularly, does a Christian find an explanation when he remembers that Christians were among the chief participants, almost invariably on the wrong side? I have tried to expose myself to some of the literature and some of the persons for whom the Holocaust has been the normative event of our time and have tried to enter into that experience in ways that on any human level I would have preferred to avoid. Yet, of course, both as a non-Jew and as a non-inhabitant of the camps, I cannot really "enter into" that experience at all. I can therefore hardly claim the right to speak about it. To some it may even seem a blasphemy that I dare to try.

This is a dilemma that has faced even those most personally involved in the Holocaust: how can one speak about the unspeakable? After having written half a dozen novels on the Holocaust, Elie Wiesel wrote a book called The Oath, in which he examined the notion that it might have been better to remain silent in the face of such evil than attempt to speak at all. The issue was a genuine one for him; if, after writing half a dozen novels, nothing seemed to have changed in human perceptions about the Holocaust, perhaps silence might have been the more powerful witness. The Oath chronicles his realization that if, by the telling of the story of countless deaths, one life can be saved, the story must be told, no matter how painful. If a single life can be saved, one must speak, even if in so doing one breaks (as did the narrator in The Oath) a sacred oath made half a century before.

That conclusion indicates why we must dare to speak of events our words will seem to trivialize if not distort. We must do so not only so that the dead are not forgotten; not only as a reminder that we, too, might have been able to play

the role of SS guards and feel no inner laceration of the spirit; we must also do so as a way of seeking to ensure that such events can never happpen again. For we must face the painful reality that there is that in our nature that could allow it to happen again, that could even will its repetition. And if retelling the story can alert us to such possibilities, and increase our resolve that they must be avoided, the retelling, however painful, must take place.

A Variety of Responses

I have discovered that there are many kinds of responses to the Holocaust among both Jews and Christians. For Richard Rubenstein, the reality of Auschwitz has destroyed the reality of God. For him, no other conclusion is possible. God, if God existed after Auschwitz, could only be a moral monster. For Emil Fackenheim, on the other hand, to engage in such a denial of God in the face of Auschwitz would be, as he says in God's Presence in History, to grant Hitler a posthumous victory: setting out in his lifetime to destroy the Jews, Hitler would finally have succeeded beyond his lifetime in destroying Judaism. For Elie Wiesel, to whom I shall shortly turn, the greatest problem posed by the Holocaust seems to be the silence of God. One may not have expected much from man; one surely could have expected more from God. Why did God not speak or act? Why did God seemingly remain indifferent? How can one do other than contend with a God so apparently callous?

There are also varieties of Christian responses to the Holocaust. These have been longer in coming and are only now beginning to receive significant articulation. Some Christians are not even willing to confront the issue; it is absent from their deliberation in ways that are harder and harder to understand. Others are so devastated by their discovery of Christian complicity in the event that they are immobilized by guilt. Still others react defensively, seeking to exonerate themselves and their Christian heritage from any responsibility, usually by blaming it on others or letting a few brave Christians go bail for the massive numbers of indifferent and complicit. A few go so far as to assert that there has been an in-built anti-Semitism in historical Christianity that must be purged and replaced by a radical theological reconstruction.

Two Overall Problems

In all these reponses, and others that could be noted if space permitted, there are at least two widely-shared problems. The first of these is the problem of responsibility. Who is to be held accountable? How widely must the net of accountability be spread? It includes Hitler. It includes Eichmann. Does it include the guards in the camps, the "good Germans" who only "followed orders"? Does it include those who knew what was going on and chose to remain silent? Does it include those who feared what was going on and took special pains not to find out? Does it include the Allied high command who, when told what was going on in Auschwitz, still would not give the order to bomb the railroad tracks leading to the death camp? Does it include the churches and the leaders of the churches who were silent even when many facts were known? This question of responsibility is a particularly burning one for non-Jews, though Wiesel and others have demonstrated that in this period there were even some Jews who preferred not to get involved -- a fact I cite as a tribute to Jewish honesty rather than as a means of assuaging Christian consciences.

The second problem is one that all of us share -- Jews and Christians alike -- even though we approach it in different ways. This is the crisis of belief that the Holocaust forces on us. For who, whether Jew or Christian, can believe in a God in whose world such things take place? The perennial mystery of evil, the source of our great vulnerability as believers, reaches unique expression in the Holocaust. No theodicy can encompass this event so that its wounds are closed or its scars healed. It forever precludes easy faith in God or in humanity. Both are placed under judgement, and a verdict of acquittal may not be lightly rendered, if at all, to either party. (To this theme of the crisis of belief I will return toward the end of the present essay.)

The Discipline of Listening

How, then, are we to approach the Holocaust as "a problem of moral choice"? My first task as a Christian must be to listen, and to ask, "Who has the authority to command my ear?" Not the one who says it did not happen. Not the one who says it happened long ago, and we now have more pressing problems. Not the one who says it was only a temporary deviation from an otherwise reliable human norm. Not the one who simply theorizes. No, the one to whom I must first listen is the one who was there, the survivor, the one who knows it happened because he bears forever the scars, both physical and psychic, of the ordeal. In my case, listening to one particular survivor has been particularly important. He has been perhaps the most important single theological influence on me in the last four or five years, even though he makes no claim to be a theologian and prefers to call himself a teller of tales. He is Elie Wiesel. He has been wrestling with the moral dilemma of the Holocaust for a third of a century -- he was deported to Auschwitz in 1944. He writes as a Jew and he insists that the more he speaks of his own particularity, out of his Jewishness, the more he speaks universally to non-Jews as well. I can testify to that. He speaks to me.

His words are written out of fire and blood, the fire of the crematoria and the blood of the victims. So they destroy. Just as fire and blood are symbols of destruction, words nurtured by them produce destruction. They destroy illusions, complacency, indifference. But in both the Jewish and Christian traditions, fire and blood have creative possibilities as well. For fire can purge and blood can cleanse; they are symbols of new beginnings as well. So also with Wiesel's words. When their surgery has been accomplished -- even while it is being accomplished -- they become instruments of healing, reaching out over deep chasms of pain, not to anesthetize or to hide but to transform. Elie Wiesel's pilgrimage through his own "valley of the shadow of death" and beyond, through his series of wrestlings with the question of what we do in the face of the greatest moral obscenity of history -- constitutes for me both a searing and a healing experience. As one who has first been called upon to listen, I propose to share some reflections on that listening, as I have had to walk, imaginatively, the path that for Wiesel was not imagination but ugly reality.

Wiesel's Responses to Monstrous Moral Evil

How does one respond, then, in the face of monstrous moral evil? We can distinguish at least five stages in Wiesel's pilgrimage. The first response is the response not of a choice inwardly made but of a decision outwardly imposed. In the face of monstrous evil it may be that we are simply cast in the role of victims. This role is described in Wiesel's first book, Night, the auto-

biographical account of a boy of fifteen, loaded with friends and family onto cattle cars, experiencing the tortures of thirst and hunger and madness, the splitting up of families at the entrance to the camps, and the subsequent dehumanization to which all the "survivors" were subjected. Wiesel had been a pious Hasidic Jew, and on the very first night his Hasidic faith was destroyed. After being parted from his mother and sister forever, he walked into the camp with his father and discovered a large ditch from which giant flames were leaping. Wiesel writes, "They were burning something. A lorry drew up and delivered its load -- little children. Babies!"(Night,p. 42) He knows that this is a nightmare, that it is not to be believed, that the terrible dream will come to an end. And it is indeed a nightmare, but it is in fact true, and Elie Wiesel will never wake up to find that its truth has been negated. And so, on that night, his childhood faith was destroyed: "Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever." (Night, p. 44) When morning came, he writes, "A dark flame had entered into my soul and devoured it." And the evening and the morning were the first day. Only the first day.

The rest of the journal italicizes the powerless and helpless role of a victim, the unwilling recipient of actions over which he has no control, in this case given unbearable poignancy because they are being etched in the life of a fifteen-year-old boy.

When the war ends, and he is finally released, Wiesel spends the first weeks of his liberation in the hospital at the point of death because, as he writes with crushing honesty, when the prisoners were released, all they could think about was food -- and so got stomach poisoning.

One day I was able to get up, after gathering all my strength. I wanted to see myself in the mirror hanging on the opposite wall. I had not seen myself since the ghetto. From the depths of the mirror, a corpse gazed back at me.

One may unwillingly be cast in the role of victim. If there are any choices, it would seem preferable to be the executioner rather than the victim, and the role is explored in Wiesel's second book, a powerful short novel, Dawn. The narrator, Elisha, has "survived" the concentration camps at the end of the war, and while living, in Paris is urged by Gad, a leader of Palestinian guerrilla forces, to go to Palestine to work for the establishment of the state of Israel.

Gad pleads all night long with Elisha. No longer, he argues, can Jews simply be the passive victims of historical fate. They must seize their fate in their own hands. He argues convincingly that the only thing to do is to go to Palestine with the guerrilla forces and engage in whatever terrorist activities are necessary to drive out the British and ensure the establishment of a Jewish state. And as dawn is rising in Paris, described as "a pale, prematurely weary light, the color of stagnant water," Gad looks out and says, "Here is the dawn. In our land it is very different. Here the dawn is gray; in Palestine it is red like fire."(Dawn, p. 13.) Elisha accepts.

They go to Palestine. Elisha is trained, participates in a raid and then, still very young, is chosen to shoot a hostage, John Dawson, who has been seized in reprisal for the seizure of one of the Palestinian leaders. The execution is to take place at dawn. Here is a reversal of roles; as Elisha goes down into the cell under the ground to do the deed, he can almost feel the Nazi swastika on his arm, as though he were now part of the SS troops he had abhorred. He would

like to be able to hate John Dawson, because that might give moral meaning to the act, but he cannot whip up a frenzy. When the time comes that he must calculatingly pull the trigger, the shot goes through John Dawson's skull and Elisha comments, "That's it, It's done. I've killed, I've killed . . ." And then he says not " I've killed John Dawson," but rather, "I've killed Elisha." (Dawn, p. 126.) Although the victim has become an executioner, the execution turns out to be a self-execution. Murder is a form of suicide.

When Elisha goes upstairs to the Palestinian dawn, the dawn is not the dawn that God had promised, a dawn "red like fire." Instead, "The night left behind it a grayish light the color of stagnant water." It is still the dawn of Paris, not the dawn of the new country and the new hope.

So if it will not solve anything to accept the role of victim, neither will it solve anything to switch roles and become an executioner.

In a third book, which in the original French was called Le Jour (Day) but in English is called The Accident, we have another young survivor of the Holocaust, this time named Eliezer, Wiesel's own name, who is still trapped in a past he cannot escape. The "accident" is his being run over by a taxi, although he sees in retrospect that it was an accident only in the most euphemistic sense, since he realized that he had willed not to step out of the taxi's way, and had welcomed the possibility of death as a possible escape from the past. He has seen himself only as a "messenger from the dead," among the living. He feels that he brings only death to those whom he confronts. He cannot find a way to escape from the past and affirm the present. He cannot bring himself to engage in a genuine act of love or sharing or commitment.

He has an artist friend, Guyula, who desperately tries to persuade him that this must be done -- that he must choose the living rather than the dead, and ruthlessly, if necessary, stamp out the past. As Eliezer is recuperating in the hospital after the accident, Guyula paints his portrait. When the portrait is shown to Eliezer, it is clear that Guyula has ferreted out Eliezer's secret, his will to die. He pleads with Eliezer to love Kathleen and to let her love him; and then, to dramatize the need for a real break with the past, he lights a match to the portrait and burns it.

But it doesn't quite work. For when Guyula goes out, he leaves the ashes. The past is still there. The past is only destructive. There seems no way to stamp it out and begin again, free of its destructive grip.

Each of these first three books, then, leads into a cul-de-sac. It is only in the fourth book, The Town Beyond the Wall, that a new set of possibilities emerges. In this work, perhaps the most fruitful of all of Wiesel's writings, there are three further probings of the question. One of the options, madness, is creatively ambiguous; another, the option of spectator, must be utterly rejected; while the third, the option of participant, provides the beginnings of an extraordinary breakthrough.

On the flyleaf of The Town Beyond the Wall is a statement by one of Dostoevski's characters, "I have a plan -- to go mad." And madness is explored as another way to deal with monstrous moral evil. Mad people are found in all of Wiesel's novels, often as the purveyors of the only true wisdom to be found within the works themselves. On close examination there seem to be two kinds of madness

under discussion. (For this distinction, and many other insights within the present essay, I am indebted to a number of articles by Byron L. Sherwin) There is what could be called "clinical madness," which describes those who simply give up, throw in the towel, and insulate themselves from the rest of the world, refusing to relate at all, living finally in total isolation. That, of course, is another cul-de-sac, a way without promise or hope.

But there is another kind of madness portrayed by Wiesel, what some have called "moral madness." This is the madness of those who said, in effect, "If this world of the Holocaust is to be described as a world of sanity, give me madness any day." When Wiesel himself went to the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem after the war, he was staggered with the ease with which it was possible to certify to the court that Eichmann was "sane." Wiesel wrote, in his One Generation After:

> It occurred to me that if he were sane, I should choose madness. It was he or I. For me, there could be no common ground with him. We could not inhabit the same universe to be governed by the same laws. (p6)

By the same logic, who in the world of the 1930's and the 1940's was sane and who was mad? Were those who were burning babies the ones who were sane, or were those who, for whatever reason, refused to sanction or be part of such actions, the ones who were truly sane?

Mosche, the "madman," was so described because he told people that Jews were being cremated, when everybody knew that such things don't happen in the twentieth century. Wiesel suggests, in other words, that the attitude which the world calls madness may in fact be the true sanity, seeing things as they really are, refusing to accept the values and patterns and standards that were regnant in Europe at that time. Such persons may have had a higher degree of sanity than those around them who called them mad.

So the response of madness, while ambiguous, is an ongoing response that needs increasing attention as a possible moral stance in the face of monstrous evil. For we too, in our era, have burned babies in the name of the American way of life - the napalm of the U.S. Air Force in southeast Asia is simply a more sophisticated weapon than the gasoline of the funeral pyres of Auschwitz.

Another role, one which Michael, the protagonist of The Town Beyond the Wall, rejects unambiguously, is the role of spectator. After the war, Michael returns to his home town of Szerencsevaros not quite sure why he does but knowing that he must make his peace with the past in that place from which he had been deported by the Nazis a few years earlier. (Here is a significant advance beyond The Accident. Instead of trying to destroy the past, as Guyula had urged, Michael must find what salvation he can by confronting the past and meeting it head-on.) Not until he revisits the town square, the scene of the earlier deportation, does the reason for his need to return become clear. Suddenly it clicks. He remembers that there was a face in one of the windows, an impassive face that watched the deportation with no sense of engagement, no sense of involvement. The face of a spectator. And Michael reflects:

> This, this was the thing I had wanted to understand ever since the war. Nothing else. How a human being can remain indifferent. The executioners I understood; also the vic-

> tims, though with more difficulty. For the others, all the others, those who were neither for nor against, those who sprawled in passive patience, those who told themselves, "The storm will blow over and everything will be normal again," those who thought themselves above the battle, those who were permanently and merely spectators - all those were closed to me, incomprehensible. (p. 159)

The spectator still lives in Szerencsevaros. Michael talks to him and can discover no sense of passion or concern even after the event. And he makes an awesome discovery about himself. He discovers that he cannot hate the spectator, for, as he says, "Hatred implies humanity." All he can feel is contempt, a contempt which implies not humanity but something less than humanity, something decadent. It is noteworthy that the spectator realizes this and seeks desperately to be hated, because hatred will at least be an acknowledgment of his humanity and personhood. But Michael refuses to give him even that satisfaction.

For Wiesel, remaining a spectator is the most morally reprehensible response of all. The one who simply opts out, the one who will take no part, the one who will be neither for nor against, is not only inhuman, but is in reality <u>against</u>, for the spectator by his lack of involvement casts his vote for those who are doing the dirty work.

Where beyond these roles can one go? Wiesel develops a creative alternative in the latter part of <u>The Town Beyond the Wall</u>. It is a role that cannot be described by a single word like "victim," "executioner," "madman" or "spectator." But it is a role that can at least be pointed to by such words as "reciprocity," "identification," "sharing," perhaps even "love." Let us call it the role of <u>participant</u>, of one who decides, even in the face of terrible risk, to make an act of identification with another, to side with the victim.

This role is powerfully illustrated in two relationships in <u>The Town Beyond the Wall</u>. The first is the relationship between Michael and Pedro, a man with whom Michael begins to be able to relate as they build up a sense of mutual trust for one another - a quality that Michael, as a survivor of the death camps, had never since been able to feel toward another person. Pedro and Michael begin to discover that they can share, and that in sharing, their own identities become bound up with one another. As they are parting, Pedro says to Michael of their previous conversation, "I won't forget last night. From now on, you can say, 'I am Pedro,' and I, 'I am Michael.'" (<u>The Town Beyond the Wall</u>, p. 131) Pedro can henceforth be identified only in relation to Michael, and Michael only in relation to Pedro. It is this sense of reciprocity, of participation, that frees Michael to be able to look at and engage in the human venture once again. He is soon called upon to test its reality.

Michael carries his precious truth with him into the prison cell in which he shortly finds himself incarcerated with a prisoner who has gone mad, totally cut off from the world, incapable of initiating any response whatsoever. Michael realizes that relationship must be established, or in a short time both of them will be mad. In an imaginary conversation, Pedro says to him, "Re-create the universe. Restore that boy's sanity. Cure him. He'll save you." (<u>The Town Beyond the Wall</u>, p. 182) This is the creative possibility that Pedro has offered to Michael in a compressed juxtaposition of five words: "Cure him.

He'll save you." The mad prisoner needs Michael. Michael needs the mad prisoner. They must find one another, enter into relationship with one another. And so Michael sets out to break through the recesses of madness to discover a point at which relationship can begin. For, as he says, "One of us will win and if it isn't me we're both lost!" (The Town Beyond the Wall, p.185) By various devices Michael begins to elicit little flickers of response from the other, enough so that he can say to the one who is as yet uncomprehending:

> One day the ice will break...You'll tell me your name and you'll ask me, 'Who are you?' and I'll answer, 'I'm Pedro.' And that will be proof that man survives, that he passes himself along. Later, in another prison, someone will ask your name and you'll say, 'I'm Michael.' And then you will know the taste of the most genuine of victories.

And as the book ends, Wiesel writes of the prison counterpart to Michael, "The other bore the biblical name of Eliezer, which means God has granted my prayer." (The Town Beyond the Wall, p.198) It is highly significant that Wiesel gives to "the other" his own name - a clear participation in the lot of the victim or potential victim, that a meaning can begin to be found that draws one out of the shell of isolation and depersonalized existence represented by the roles of victim, executioner and spectator.

At the end of this book night is receding and dawn is breaking, not the false dawn that greeted Elisha after he shot John Dawson, but the true dawn, full of fresh promise for a new day.

A way to summarize the extraordinary progression that has taken place in these books is to compare their endings. At the conclusion of Night, Wiesel looks into a mirror and sees himself as a corpse. At the end of Dawn Elisha looks out a window and likewise sees only a reflection of himself. He knows what this means, for he has been told by an old man ("mad," naturally) that if he looked in a window and saw a face, he could know that it was night - not dawn, not day, but night. At the end of The Accident Eliezer is looking only at a portrait of himself.

In all of those situations, the protagonist is still locked into himself, seeing only himself. But at the end of The Town Beyond the Wall he is looking into the face of another, and in that reciprocity, in that sharing, it is clear that creativity and healing have truly begun. Let us further note, as a transition to what follows, that at the end of the next book, The Gates of the Forest, the protagonist is in Williamsburg as a part of a group that has formed a minyan for a service. He has found his way back to the midst of the Hasidic community. As the book ends, Gavriel is saying kaddish for his dead friend, giving expression to a relationship that extends beyond himself, beyond even another human being, to the God to whom the prayer is being offered.

Is There Still A Role For God?

I have tried to suggest that within the arena of the re-creation of human relationship and trust, Wiesel sees the possibility of rebuilding a life that has been destroyed by the Holocaust, and that in such sharing the reality of God begins once again to intrude.

But we must not jump to easy formulas or answers. It still remains difficult to talk about the Holocaust, difficult to talk about God, and even more difficult to talk about these together, without seeming to blaspheme. How can this ever be done?

Let us recall that for Wiesel it is the questions that count, not the answers. He is rightly suspicious of those who offer answers. He recalls a question to one of the participants in the Eichmann trial,in which the participant was asked if he could now discern a meaning in Auschwitz. The reply came, "I hope I never do. To understand Auschwitz would be even worse than not to understand it." Such a response is important. If we have a view of God into which Auschwitz somehow "fits," if we can conceive of a universe congruent with Auschwitz, then such a God must be a moral monster and such a universe a nightmare beyond the imagination.

Nevertheless, for Wiesel and for many others the issue will not go away. He must contest with God, concerning the moral outrage that somehow seems to be within the divine plan. How can one affirm a God whose "divine plan" could include such barbarity? For Wiesel, the true "contemporary" is not the modern skeptic, but the ancient Job, the one who dared to ask questions of God, even though Wiesel feels that Job gave in a little too quickly at the end.

There is another way to approach the relation of God to the Holocaust. We must note that when Wiesel is writing about the relationship between person and person, he is also writing about the relationship between persons and God. Each relationship sheds light upon the other. The Hasidic tale with which he concludes The Town Beyond the Wall shows how this double dimension suffuses his writing:

> Legend tells us that one day man spoke to God in this wise:
> "Let us change about. You be man, and I will be God. For only one second."
> God smiled gently and asked him, "Aren't you afraid?"
> "No. Are you?"
> "Yes, I am," God said.
> Nevertheless, he granted the man's desire. He became a man, and the man took his place and immediately availed himself of his omnipotence: he refused to revert to his previous state. So neither God nor man was ever again what he seemed to be. Years passed, centuries, perhaps eternities. And suddenly the drama quickened. The past for one, the present for the other, were too heavy to be borne.
> As the liberation of the one was bound to the liberation of the other, they renewed the ancient dialogue whose echoes come to us in the night, charged with hatred, with remorse, and most of all, with infinite yearning. (The Town Beyond the Wall, p.190)

What happens (in Buber's phrase) "between man and man," also happens between man and God. And the qualities of the one relationship are likewise true of the other. In both relationships there is hatred. In both relationships there is remorse. In both relationships, also, there is infinite yearning. Menachem, the believing Jew who was for a while in Michael's prison cell in

Szerencsevaros, is surely echoing Wiesel's own yearning question when he asks, "Why does God insist that we come to him by the hardest road?" (The Town Beyond the Wall, p. 146) Wiesel, who lived through Auschwitz, once had an exchange with Richard Rubenstein (who did not, but for whom Auschwitz meant the death of God and the consequent difficulty of living in a world where belief in God is no longer possible). Wiesel said:

> I will tell you, Dick, that you don't understand those in the camps when you say that it is more difficult to live today in a world without God. NO! If you want difficulties, choose to live with God...The real tragedy, the real drama, is the drama of the believer. (Littell and Locke, eds., The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust, p. 274)

So if it is true that when Wiesel is writing about man he is writing about God, and when he is writing about God he is writing about man, we may retract the human pilgrimage we took a few moments ago, and make the fascinating discovery that the roles Wiesel attributes to human beings in responding to monstrous evil are similar to the roles human beings have frequently attributed to God.

It is clear, for example, that many today believe with Rubenstein that in the face of the reality of the Holocaust, God has become a victim. A Survey of the Holocaust and post-Holocaust world leads them to proclaim that "God is dead." The phrase, to be sure, was initiated long before the Holocaust, but the Holocaust has put the final seal upon the verdict; a God worthy of the name has not survived. God is victim.

There are others who, whether they intended it or not, come perilously close to describing God as executioner, God as the one who is finally the author of evil. This is a difficult conclusion for orthodox Christian theology to avoid, at least to the degree that postulates belief in an omnipotent God has a difficult time evading the conclusion that an all-powerful God is ultimately responsible for evil. Such a God seems either to have willed, or decreed, or at the very least, "permitted it."

There are some who would say that God is mad, a diabolical creator, or at least (in the other notion of madness we examined) a God who, like some of those who are humanly denominated as mad, has a totally different set of priorities and criteria for action. Wiesel, indeed, has written a play called Zalman, or The Madness of God, in which he sets forth the notion of a response to a God who makes demands so different from those of the world that those who respond will find themselves in grave difficulty with the world. Perhaps God and the world are simply incommensurate. That could be a consolation. It could also be a new source of despair.

The notion of God as spectator has frequently characterized human thinking about God; whatever else we affirm about God, we find that God seems to be aloof and removed from where we are. Either God can do nothing about evil in the world, or refuses to do anything about it. In either case, God becomes a spectator to evil. This, I think, is what Wiesel is wrestling with when he talks about the silence of God in the face of cries for meaning. And just as the human role of spectator seems the most morally culpable, so also would the divine role of spectator seem to be the most damaging charge we could lay against God - that the God who knew what was going on did nothing.

There remains the possibility of describing God as participant in the struggle with evil. This seems to be a possibility toward which Wiesel's thought has been moving. In the account of the reciprocity between Michael and Pedro, and between Michael and the silent prisoner, in Town Beyond the Wall, we sense that in that give and take, that sharing, that risk-in-love, whatever has been meant by the word "God" is broodingly and hauntingly present. The theme is further pursued by Wiesel, not only in The Gates of the Forest and A Beggar in Jerusalem, but also in a yet later writing, Ani Maamin, which employs an even more direct use of Messianic imagery as a way of stating a demand that God share, at least, in the plight of creation. While we cannot pursue the themes of this remarkable poem in detail, we must note certain things that Wiesel emphasizes.

Ani Maamin is the libretto for a cantata Wiesel wrote that was set to music by Darius Milhaud shortly before his death. The words come from Maimonides' statement of faith, "Ani maamin beviat ha-mashiah" - "I believe in the coming of the Messiah." How, Wiesel asks, can a Jew still sing that song? Was it not lost in the camps? How is it that those who have hoped for a Messiah, who have hoped for a divine vindication in history, can continue to believe, when such belief has received no vindication? Could one still hope for a vindication? What does it take to bring the Messiah, if God really cares?

With such questions in mind, Wiesel retells the old Midrashic tale of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob going down from heaven to earth to find out what was going on, and reporting back to the divine throne. In Wiesel's version of the story, the terrestrial visitation occurs during the time of the Holocaust. The patriarchs report back to God. But no matter how loudly they talk, no matter how painfully they describe the horror, there is nothing but silence from the divine throne. Nothing but silence.

So the Messianic question for Wiesel becomes the question: The world is so evil, why does the Messiah not come? What does it take to bring him? Are not six million dead enough? And even if he came after six million deaths, would that not already be too late? That is the Jewish form of the question. But let us note that there is a Christian form of the question which is just the reverse. If the Jewish form of the question is, "the world is so evil, why does the Messiah not come?" the Christian form of the question is surely: The Messiah has come, why is the world so evil? In a presumably redeemed world, redemption is not so evident. Perhaps a time is coming when, at this point of their greatest division, namely their conflicting interpretations of the Messianic claim, Jews and Christians can begin to acknowledge that they are, among all the religions of the world, at least dealing with the same problem. Both acknowledge that a spectator God would indeed be a moral obscenity; that somehow, to talk of love must mean to talk about participation and sharing.

And the extraordinary thing that happens at the end of Wiesel's drama is this: when the patriarchs have exhausted their patience and elect to return to the children of the earth with a report of divine indifference, each tells the story of a Jew who continued to believe - who continued to believe in spite of everything, against all odds, with no conceivable reason to do so. And this, so the narrator informs us, breaks through the divine impassivity., The cumulative impact of the three stories reduces God to tears, tears of love. And as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob turn to go to earth, we are told:

> They leave heaven and do not, cannot, see that they are no longer alone: God accompanies them, weeping, smiling, whispering: Nitzhuni banai, my children have defeated me, they deserve my gratitude. (Ani Maamin, p. 105)

This is no deus ex machina victory that ties everything together. Wiesel immediately writes, "The Word of God continues to be heard. So does the silence of his dead children." (Ani Maamin, p.105, underlining added) But it is a powerful evocation of the theme of participant as a role we can be audacious enough to ascribe to God as well.

How, Finally, Do We "Respond"?

We have looked at some of Wiesel's responses to monstrous evil: some may have no choice but to be victims; others, seeing evil's immensity, may capitulate and become evil's enablers, opting for the role of executioners; some may choose suicide or madness as attempts to cope with the problem; others may elect the ultimate cop-out of being spectators, or even the worse cop-out of pretending that the evil didn't really happen. Finally, some may insist that however feeble the effort may seem, it is crucial to side with those who are victims or potential victims and to do so in actions of participation, identification, and sharing, believing that only thus can there be created a counterforce whose very power, whose very unexpected power, may lie in its seeming fragility. Those who do so may or may not acknowledge that whatever terms they use, they will be wrestling with God, posing questions and remaining unsatisfied with answers, particularly answers that seem to satisfy and relieve them of further responsibility.

Woven into all those responses is a further response, mentioned early in these pages and so patent that we may almost have overlooked it. For we can also respond to monstrous evil by chronicling it, reporting it, reminding all listeners that whatever else they forget they may not forget that evil, lest they make its repetition possible.

Can one, however, chronicle a unique event - an event incommensurate with all other events - in such a way that it speaks to those in other situations? Some would argue that the very uniqueness of the Holocaust renders inappropriate any attempt to relate it to other events, lest it seem to be scaled down to just another instance of moral perversity.

I disagree. I want to test the reason for my disagreement, so that if I am wrong I can be further instructed. Start with the patent truth that we can never "justify" the Holocaust or, indeed, any instance of evil. We must always remain outraged, and resist the drift toward complacency that time and distance so easily induce. But continue with a recognition that we not only have an opportunity, but an obligation, to make use of the Holocaust for some kind of creative end. We point to good and positive events of the past as events that cast light on the rest of experience: Moses before Pharaoh saying: "Let my people go!" The Exodus and the giving of the Law, the prophet of the Exile singing, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God." Perhaps we need to point also to evil and dark events of the past. If we passionately exhort people to emulate great events, perhaps we must also passionately exhort people to repudiate dark events, to put them so far off that they can never be repeated.

It may be that the fires of Auschwitz are powerful enough to illumine otherwise dark corners of our moral landscape, making us aware of present acts of human demonry we would not otherwise see. Those fires have served a sensitizing purpose for Jews in relation to subsequent Jewish persecution in Russia, in relation to threats against the survival of Israel, in relation to anti-Semitic remarks that have recently emanated from the Pentagon. I think they can serve that purpose for the rest of us as well.

I have recently returned from a visit to Chile, Argentina and other Latin American countries. On the surface all seems well - just as on the surface all seemed well in Germany in 1933. But in the light of the fires of Auschwitz it was clear to me that all was not well in Chile and Argentina - just as all was not well in Germany in 1933. Arrests, "disappearances," confiscation, torture, all the marks of diabolical cunning, are present just below the surface, but not below the surface to those who can see. I think we are finally challenged by the Holocaust to the daring and frightening notion that an obscenity can be used as a way of forestalling other obscenities. If we can so affirm, then there is hope that the Holocaust, unredeemably evil in itself, could be a grotesque beacon, in the light of which we could gird ourselves against its repetition toward any people, in any time, in any place. And I believe that unless we can use it as such a beacon, the Nazis have finally won.

Wiesel and other Jews look to Israel as they make this point, but they look elsewhere as well - to Vietnam, to Chile, to the Sohel, to Bangladesh, to any place where people are suffering. I do not believe there exists a people who wants to say, "Only our pain is important." I believe there exists a people who not only wants to say, but does say, "Because of the magnitude of the pain we have suffered, we know that there is no pain anywhere that can be ignored. We know that pain is everywhere and must be combatted."

There is great wisdom in some advice offered by Azriel in The Oath: "So you hope to defeat evil? Fine. Begin by helping your fellow man. Triumph over death? Excellent. Begin by saving your brother." (The Oath, p. 14) For, as the narrator later says to us all, "Every truth that shuts you in, that does not lead to others, is inhuman." (The Oath, p. 73)

Can one, then, out of ashes and bitterness, affirm more than ashes and bitterness? Wiesel himself is proof that one can. He has earned the right to be heard. In the passage with which I conclude (From Littell and Locke, op. cit., pp. 276-77), Wiesel speaks to Jews, but as always, in such a way as to include the rest of us as well:

> When Rabbi Ishmael, one of the ten martyrs of the faith in Roman times, was led to his death, a heavenly voice was heard, saying "Ishmael, Ishmael, should you shed one tear I shall return the universe to its primary chaos." And the Midrash says that Rabbi Ishmael was a gentleman and did not cry. And I couldn't understand that for quite a while. Why didn't he cry? The hell with it! If this is the price to pay, who needs it? Who wants this kind of world? Who wants to live in it? Yet there are many reasons why he didn't cry. One, he was a martyr. Two, he obeyed. Three, the last and most poetic ultimate reason why he didn't cry was because he wanted to teach us a lesson in Judaism...Even while dying, he

wanted to teach us a lesson: Yes, I could destroy the world and the world deserves to be destroyed. But to be a Jew is to have all the reasons in the world to destroy and not to destroy! To be a Jew is to have all the reasons in the world to hate the Germans and not to hate them! To be a Jew is to have all the reasons in the world to mistrust the church and not to hate it! To be a Jew is to have all the reasons in the world not to have faith in language, in singing, in prayers, and in God, but to go on telling the tale, to go on carrying on the dialogue, and to have my own silent prayers and quarrels with God. Amen.

The Holocaust:

Christian And Jewish Responses

Alice E. Eckardt

The Holocaust is, by itself, such an enormity in the questions it raises that this survey of Christian and Jewish responses cannot possibly do complete justice to any of the views represented. However, we may benefit more from considering this wider range of views if we were to concentrate on a narrower spectrum.

Perhaps the first factual observation that must be made is that there is simply no comparison between the responses and reactions of the Christian and Jewish communities to the reality of Hitler's Final Solution. Whatever aspect of response one looks at - historical, theological, psychological, existential - it is overwhelmingly that of Jews, individual and collectively. If we say that this is to be expected and is quite normal, we are only giving away the very problem: that nothing normal should prevail after the most fearful abnormality in human history. It further assumes that the Holocaust is primarily a Jewish problem - whereas in fact it is, in far deeper respects, a Christian problem.

Christianity has failed to grasp the crucial nature of the questions raised by the Holocaust for its own theology and future, just as it generally has refused to admit any responsibility for the death camps.[1]

Those Christians who have grappled with the reality and implications of the Holocaust see a church in vast apostasy, involved not only in the murder of Jews but also of God through his people, still linked to a supersessionist theology that bears the genocidal germ, in danger of repeating its complicity in criminal actions, and without credibility because of its failure to understand that everything has been changed by Auschwitz.[2]

If the Jewish community as a whole has only recently begun to try to come to terms with the implications of the Holocaust, it has not been because of a lack of awareness, but because of an all-too-devastating appraisal of the catastrophe. It has been stunned by the accomplishment of the unthinkable, and has been fearful of looking more closely at the face of evil. Yet despite having suffered its greatest tragedy, and being uniquely aware of its still terrible vulnerability, the Jewish people have experienced resurrection in history - through the rebirth of the State of Israel and a new vitality in its various Diaspora communities (including the long presumed "lost" Jews of Russia). Judaism's tradition involves questioning and challenging God. Its history encompasses long periods of God's apparent absence as well as numerous

revelations of his divine presence. Its understanding of God's silence allows for his presence-in-suffering with the guiltless, even while the people cry out in non-understanding and despair. Because of all this, perhaps Judaism is better equipped to survive the Holocaust than a Christianity that continues to insist that the world's redemption has already occcured, while accomodating itself to the vilest forms of culture religions; a Christianity that by and large maintains a triumphalism which strives if not for racial genocide for Jews, then for religious genocide through conversion; and a Christianity that interprets human affairs as having little significance other than "spiritual" in the parenthesis between the resurrection and parousia, while having sold its soul to the sword of Constantine.

For both communities nothing can be the same as before the Holocaust, though most of Christendom remains unaware of this. Though Jewish victims suffered the agonies and deaths, paradoxically the death-of-God theology has had little impact among Jewish circles. Moreover, Judaism is not faced with the same threat to its integrity with which the church is faced as perpetrator of, or complicitor in, the genocidal program. Franklin H. Littell is one of the most vocal and concerned Christian theologians on this aspect of the subject. The Holocaust "remains the major event in recent church history - signalizing as it does the rebellion of the baptized against the Lord of History. . . Christianity itself has been put to the question" - by the apostasy of millions of the baptized, by being witting or silent accomplices in the murder of most of the European Jews, by being more concerned for real estate and institutional privileges than for persons, and by failing to confess or profess. "Among large numbers of the misled laity - especially the youth and students - both the God-talk and the organized efforts of the churches have simply lost their credibility . . . Christianity is bleeding to death intellectually [whether we are aware of it or not], and we shall not return to the path of health until we have worked our way through the difficult thickets of the meaning of the Holocaust and the Church Struggle." After the death camps, who can speak most authentically for the theology of suffering? Certainly not the churches. In fact, "perhaps the question put to us by the Holocaust and [the State of] Israel is whether we [Christians] are still able to grasp the meaning of crucifixion and resurrection."[3]

A. Roy Eckardt writes in a similar vein: "the church that collaborated in the Nazi final solution dealt itself moral blows. From that Jewish crucifixion and Christian self-crucifixion there could and did come a Jewish resurrection - the State of Israel - but not a Christian resurrection. For the church has nowhere to go now."[4] Considering the church from without, Emil Fackenheim has "no doubt that if masses of Christians in Hitler's Europe had voluntarily put on the yellow star there would today be no doubt or confusion in the Christian churches, no talk of the death of God. I also have an uncanny feeling that Christians might find the renewal they presently seek if ... their souls were to enter into the despair and the hope-despite-despair of Auschwitz."[5]

Can a theology of a responsive and saving God survive the test of the Holocaust? Is the reality of evil, especially the reality of Auschwitz, consonant with traditional Jewish and Christian teachings? Can God be held accountable for evil? Is history a divine-human encounter moving toward a messianic climax, or is it a meaningless tragedy? Is the voice of God discernible amidst the horror of Auschwitz, consonant with traditional Jewish and Christian teachings? Can God be held accountable for evil? Is history a

divine-human encounter moving toward a messianic climax, or is it a meaningless tragedy? Is the voice of God discernible amidst the horror of Auschwitz?

Theological response among Jews has been undertaken especially by Emil Fackenheim, Eliezer Berkovits, Arthur Lelyveld, and Richard Rubenstein (not to mention a host of others). More existential or mythological responses have come particularly from Elie Wiesel and other survivors of the camps, such as Alexander Donat. Yet, as Nora Levin points out, there is still no body of thought that provides religious or philosophical answers to the terrible questions posed by the Passion of the Six Million - and perhaps there never will be. But this "incompleteness ... is of a piece with Jewish religious tradition" - a tradition that across the centuries has not only contended with God, but has even considered the idea that God can sometimes sin. Judaism generally has refrained from pursuing "the unknowable and the limitless, [and] does not insist on answers when there are none."[6]

This may be more difficult for many contemporary Jews than it was for their grandfathers, yet it remains a dominant strand in Jewish religious thought, in contrast to Christianity which has proclaimed that it has the final certainties, whether in the most complex theological systems, or simplistic piety, fundamentalism, or the current charismatic movement. Perhaps one of the results of Holocaust studies by Christians will be a greater awareness of the unknowable and the mysterious, and a lesser willingness to accept dogmatic or abstract answers to existential questions.

For almost all those - Christians and Jews - trying to wrestle with the problem of evil as exemplified by the death camps, there is a realization that few of the old concepts and arguments can be the same after Auschwitz. Among some there is a conviction that "the Holocaust is not a dilemma of God, but a dilemma of man. The Holocaust proved not that God was dead, but that man's humanity to man was dead. Man is given the freedom to choose" - and most of mankind chose unbridled evil, silence, or indifference.[7] Omnipotence and omniscience must yield to a new understanding. The meaning of life may have to be found in man's response, even to incalculable suffering, rather than in his fate.

In a recent study that is a response to a new awareness of antisemitism and its genocidal consequences, Father Gregory Baum sums up the traditional Christian view of divine providence as insisting that God is not responsible for evil. Yet, as Baum says, the church's view of God as Lord of history necessarily implied that somehow human sins and crimes are in keeping with God's permissive will. God was thought of as permitting evil in the present, for the sake of a greater good to be achieved in the future. Even Auschwitz, according to this theology, had a place in divine providence. Does not such a view make a monster out of God,[8] as Richard Rubenstein has concluded from the Jewish side?

Baum finds he must reject the traditional concepts of providence, omniscience, and omnipotence.

> God is not provident . . . in the sense that as ruler of the world he has a master plan for human history by which he provides help

> for the people in need, especially those who ask him for it, and by which he guides the lives of men, while acknowledging their freedom . . . [or] in which God has permitted evil and . . . calculated its damaging effects and compensated for them in the final outcome . . . [But] God is provident in the sense that in whatever trap man falls, a summons continues to address him and offer him new life that makes him more truly human.

This leads Baum to conclude that

> God is omniscient [only] in the sense that there exists no human situation, however difficult, however obscure, however frightening, in which God remains silent or . . . in which a summons to greater insight is not available . ... [Similarly], God is omnipotent [only] in the sense that there is . . . no situation however destructive, in which an inner strength is not offered to man, allowing him to assume greater possession of his humanity.

With this understanding, "we are able to affirm the radical opposition between God and evil." Evil is not permitted by him. Rather, "God is constantly at work among men, summoning them ... to discern the evil in human life, to wrestle against it, to be converted away from it, to correct their environment, to redirect history, to transform the human community. The death that destroys is never the will of God. On the contrary, God is the never-ending summons to life."[9]

The expression "This is God's will" must never be taken to mean that God wants or even permits terrible calamities or injustices to happen. But it can mean, on the part of a person of great faith, a continuing trust that God will summon forth new insights, and will create life out of death in new ways.

> Jewish men and women on the way to the extermination chambers may have said to themselves that this incomprehensible and groundless evil was in some mysterious way God's will -- in the sense that they continued to trust in God. But on the lips of an observer such a statement would be a dreadful blasphemy.

God's power over the world is not the miraculous action by which he makes things happen as he pleases, but the redemptive action by which he enables men to deal with their own problems and by which he calls people to "resist evil and find ways of conquering it."[10]

Rabbi Arhtur Lelyveld also agrees that the "problem of evil cannot be solved as it stands - something has to give . . . usually . . . some aspect of divine omnipotence." We must say that "evil is there -- gargantuan evil -- uncontrolled by [God]. We cannot pretend to know why -- we can only cling stubbornly to the conviction that there is meaning . . . in spite of everything. In the cosmic scope . . . there is that which is demanded of us." Jews must acknowledge that "the God of Judaism is the God who demands . . . 'Thou shalt be' . . .; 'Choose life' . . . The covenant obligation that is central in Judaism calls upon the Jew to be God's co-worker in perfecting the world -- not to be saved, but to participate in the redemption of mankind." Therefore, "I

must interpret my responsibility as it is defined by the covenant task -- to battle evil and to perfect the world . . . [As] I hear it, the greater the evil, the more insistent and the more intense, even to the point of anguish, is the demand."[11]

If the Final Solution was indeed the "greater evil," was it uniquely evil? Rabbi Lelyveld says no. Auschwitz was a "new phenomenon only in a quantitative and technological sense." The more efficient instruments for carrying out human destruction "give the problem of evil new dimensions, but [they do] not change its essential nature."[12]

What of God, then, in making a demand that Jews, and mankind in general, engage this ever-increasing efficiency of evil? Lelyveld points to the "sympathy at the heart of the universe" -- sympathy for the very men on whom these demands are made: "God 'wept' over Auschwitz." It is this sympathy that "enables man to enter into partnership' with God."[13]

Lelyveld, like Baum, is convinced that to say God "willed" the death of the six million is "a repelling, blasphemous idea." But he cannot withdraw from willingness to die in fulfillment of a distinctive role" -- whether it was the incredible courage to fight with "the certainty of the futility of resistance," or the courage to march to the freight cars that were to carry them to hell with the "Ani Ma-amin" on their lips.[14]

"We have said that Hitler's victims were offered no alternative. This is not wholly so. They had the alternative of dying as cravens, of cursing, of cursing God and their identity. All the evidence says that in overwhelming numbers they died with dignity."[15]

Lelyveld believes we can assert general providence: meaning and purpose in the whole, and a thrust of cosmic evolution toward greater love, harmony, and justice. However, he insists we reject special providence: the childish notion of God as a personal protector and coddler. Such a view is "asking the impossible of the universe. Life is contingency and risk . . ." In the "relationship of Covenant responsibility, when God is the guarantor of value and the source of demand, then the confrontation of evil elicits . . . the response 'What does God ask of me?'"[16]

Viktor Frankl, himself a survivor of the death camps, complements Baum's and Lelyveld's theological views by his own experiential and psychiatric conclusions which are, at the same time, very attuned to the above strand of Jewish tradition: We camp inmates had to stop asking about the meaning of life and instead think of ourselves "as those who were being questioned by life -- daily and hourly." The inmates' usual question was, "If we don't survive, what meaning will all this suffering have? Frankl responded by reversing the query. If all this suffering and dying have no meaning, then what meaning has life itself? After all, a life whose meaning stands or falls on such a happenstance as whether one survives ultimately would not be worth living at all. So Frankl concludes that "life's meaning includes even suffering and death." Potentially we can give meaning to our lives by suffering as well as by creating and loving; "by the way and manner in which we face our fate, in which we take our suffering upon ourselves." In the final analysis, man should "realize that it is not up to him to question -- it is he who is questioned, questioned by life; it is he

who has to answer, by answering for life. His role is to respond -- to be responsible."[17]

In Faith After the Holocaust, Eliezer Berkovits reminds us that the Hiding of the Face has two Biblical meanings: the first caused by man's guilt which brings merited suffering; the second, where man is guiltless and therefore the suffering is unmerited, and yet God remains hidden and apparently indifferent. This is the supreme challenge -- to faith as such but also specifically to theodicy. Is God in fact salvationally present and active in history? The experience of God's absence amidst suffering is not new; each generation of Jews had its "Auschwitz experience" and its "radical theology." Auschwitz does not "stand by itself," even though it is both the "most horrifying manifestation of divine silence" and the greatest crime in human history because of the Germans' "planned destruction of the human status of their victims." In all of the radical abandonments by God, the people of faith continued to insist on a Judge and Judgment. They insisted that God's attributes as Redeemer and Resurrector in history were true -- if not now, then yet in the future. One can only speak of the "silence" of one who is present.[18]

God is incapable of evil, but he is also long-suffering --

> with the wicked as well as with the righteous . . . This is the inescapable paradox of divine providence, [and] the ultimate tragedy of existence: God's very mercy and forebearance, his very love for man, [including his direct concern for the wrong-doer] necessitates the abandonment of some men to a fate that they may well experience as divine indifference to justice and human suffering . . .[19]

"God took a risk with man and he cannot divest himself of responsibility for man." God is caught in a paradox:

> If man is not to perish at the hand of man, . . . God must not withdraw his providence from his creation. He must be present in history. That man may be, God must absent himself . . . The God of history must be absent and present concurrently . . . He is present without being indubitably manifest; he is absent without being hopelessly inaccessible . . . Because of the necessity of his absence, there is the 'Hiding of the Face' and suffering of the innocent; because of the necessity of his presence, evil will not ultimately triumph; because of it, there is hope for man.[20]

The Nazi crime against Israel is "the most tragic testimony to this presence-in-absence." It was the Nazis' "metaphysical fear of . . . God's 'powerless' presence in history as 'revealed' in the [mysterious] continued survival of Israel" that led to the "satanic idea of the Final Solution. If the symbol of this presence-in-absence were eliminated, if the witness were destroyed, God himself would be dead." Then the irrational, the reversal of all human values, the satanic, could prevail.[21]

Neverthless, "while God is long-suffering, he is not so forever. That would not be divine mercy, but divine indifference. Were there no judgment in history over power history, faith history would have no chance of survival," nor could Israel itself have survived.[22] Yet a world ruled only by a just God could not

exist. Because God's mercy and love delay judgment, man may indulge in rebellion and become guilty of hubris and may get away with it -- for a while. But judgment is only delayed. "The man of hubris does not escape nemesis. There is judgment and there is a judge in world history."[23] As far as Christian responsibility for the Holocaust and other massacres of Jews is concerned, Professor Berkovits does not hesitate to accuse: Had Chrisitanity concerned itself with homicide, which is the real capital crime, instead of preoccupying itself with what it chose to consider an act of deicide, "mankind would have been spared much horror and tragedy." Neither Auschwitz nor Treblinka could ever have happened.

> God suffers not on account of what man does to him . . . He suffers because of what man does to himself and to his brother. He suffers the suffering of his servant, the agony of the guiltless . . . who carry the burden of his long-suffering patience and mercy . . . The status of [God's dilemma with man] at any one moment in history is revealed by the condition of Israel at that moment . . . God who leads man 'without might and without power' sent his people into the world without the might of power. This is the essence of the confrontation between Israel and the world [in which] Western man had to prove himself. God has pushed Israel right across the path of Christianity. Israel was God's question of destiny to Christendom. In its answer, the Christian world failed him tragically . . . This gruesome failure of Christianity has led the Western world to the greatest moral debacle of any civilization -- the Holocaust.[24]

At the same time, Professor Berkovits insists that one must not question God over the Holocaust because of its vastness; this is not the essential point. In fact, "the Holocaust was only possible because mankind was quite willing to tolerate less than the Holocaust." The question after the Holocaust is that of how long God will tolerate man as a failure. "God's dominion over the world is not a dominion of justice. In terms of justice, he is guilty. He is guilty of creation. But is he guilty of indifference or is he guilty of too much long-suffering?" When will he decide to "intervene and call a halt to misused freedom?"[25]

Related to this are the questions of whether, after Auschwitz, the Jewish people may still be witnesses to God's elusive presence in history, and how we are to understand the nemesis of history and Jewish survival. The ultimate in hubris -- Nazism -- was "overtaken by its complete and inescapable nemesis"; nor was this nemesis limited to Nazi Germany -- but "has overtaken Western civilization itself."[26] Berkovits shares the conviction with the Austrian Catholic, Friedrich Heer, that

> it is no mere coincidence that having countenanced the Final Solution to the Jewish problem, . . . the world is now confronted with the serious possibility of a Final Solution to the entire problematic existence of man on this planet . . . This post-Holocaust era is charged with the nemesis of history. This is the ignoble twilight hour of a disintegrating civilization.[27]

What then of the Jewish people? They have already paid a "terrible price for the

crimes of mankind," and now, as part of mankind, are also involved in the world-wide human crisis. Yet, "the Final Solution intended for [this people] is far from being final. Though truncated, Israel survived this vilest of all degradations of the human race [and] has emerged to new dignity and historic vindication in the state of Israel."[28]

Even while making this affirmation, Berkovits wonders whether the State perhaps came too late, arising after the wholesale slaughters, in the atomic age, and in the midst of a disintegrating civilization. Moreover, in a world of giant states and power blocs, a state such as Israel may be as "homeless" as the individual Jew during his long exile.[29]

But Berkovits, like others, is convinced that post-Auschwitz is a totally new era. The very surfeit of power is breaking the vicious circle of force being met by greater force. "Power has overreached itself and, thus, it has defeated itself." Consequently, he sees mankind as having the choice of "entering upon its Jewish era or else upon an era of self-immolation." Under the Lord of history, mankind and the nations of power will have to "survive as Jews have survived to this day - by the renunciation of force as the abiter of human destiny!" The meaning of the new era was tragically dramatized by Auschwitz, for it has shown "that man's lack of moral force is sufficient to bring about a final solution." The Holocaust proved "not what man was capable of doing to the Jew, but what man is capable of doing to his fellow. The bomb has rendered the final solution on a universal scale a practical possibility; Auschwitz has demonstrated it to be morally feasible."[30]

Are these attempts to grapple with the enormity of evil experienced in the Holocaust radical enough?, Do they go sufficently to the depths of the mystery of such iniquity? Not for some of our contemporaries in the two communities.

Richard Rubenstein testifies how his own theological "point of no return" came about, paradoxically, as a result of a conversation with one of the very few German Protestant pastors who had consistently risked his own life and that of his family during the Hitler era by opposing Nazism on Christian grounds and by extending all possible aid and comfort to Hitler's chief victims. Dean Heinz Gruber of Berlin insisted on the "very special providential relationship between Israel, what happened to it, and God's will," not just in biblical times but continuing to this very day. Unlike other German clergy and church members who had withdrawn, at least partially, from this theological position when Rubenstein pressed them on whether this meant that the Nazi slaughter of Jews was somehow God's will, Dean Gruber relentlessly and candidly followed the logic of his convictions by quoting Psalm 44:22 ". . . for Thy sake are we slaughtered every day. . . " Then he continued, "For some reason, it was part of God's plan that the Jews died. God demands our death daily. He is the Lord, He is the Master, all is in His keeping and ordering." In the same conviction, Gruber was willing to have his own life taken when God willed it (which almost happened at Dachau). Rubenstein realized then that "as long as Jews are thought of as special and apart from mankind in general, they are going to be the object of both abnormal demands and . . . decisive hatreds," as well as of the sort of theology that holds "God wanted Hitler to punish them." Consequently, Rubenstein has rejected any notion of chosenness, or special vocation, or peculiar responsiblity as a "thoroughly distasteful pill to swallow" after the Final Solution.[31]

Rabbi Rubenstein is convinced that the problem of God and the death camps are the central problem for Jewish theology in the twentieth century.

> The catastrophe of 1939-45 represents a psychological and religious time bomb which has yet to explode fully in the midst of Jewish religious life . . . God really died at Auschwitz [in the sense that] nothing in human choice, decision, value or meaning can any longer have vertical reference to transcendent standards. We are alone in a silent, unfeeling cosmos . . . Morality and religion can no longer rest upon the conviction that divinely validated norms offer a measure against which what we do can be judged.[32]

Despite such cosmic emptiness, Rubenstein is not in despair. "Death and rebirth are the greatest moments of religious experience," and Jews have known both in this century. In Europe

> we Jews tested the bitterest and most degrading of deaths. Yet death was not the last word . . . Death in Europe was followed by resurrection in our ancestral home. We are free as no men before us have ever been. Having lost everything, we have nothing further to lose and no further fear of loss . . . We have passed beyond all illusion and hope. We have learned . . . that we were totally and nakedly alone, that we could expect neither support nor succor from God or from our fellow creatures . . . We have lost all hope and faith. We have also lost all possibility of disappointment.[33]

> For Rubenstein, tragedy has liberated Jews. Yet here we must challenge his premise. Having regained the land of Israel, and national sovereignty, have Jews not also made themselves vulnerable again? Have they not reappropriated hope, and hence exposed themselves to the possibility of even greater disappointment, even unto despair? The very fact that Israel's Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir would advise the Knesset, in April 1973, that Israel "should openly admit [that it has] a Warsaw Ghetto complex" reveals this new vulnerability. Sapir went on to say that "it would show a lack of responsibility if Israel tried to rid itself of that complex," [for the] "world has not properly learnt the lesson of the Jewish Holocaust . . . "[34]

Mr. Sapir specifically made reference to the failure of nations to learn that appeasement will not save them from evil and chaos, and that while Jews may be the first victims of violence, they are not the last. We may suggest other lessons: "In some mysterious way the appreciation accorded the Jewish people is a measure of a civilization's devotion to humanity."[35] "The absence of morality generates its own laws of conduct."[36] To forget or ignore the past is to invite a repetition of it.

The refusal to learn such lessons, combined with the ingrained Christian conviction that the "new Israel" entails the death of the "old Israel," helps to explain for Professor Fackenheim why the Christian world "failed to recognize the danger of a second Holocaust [in 1967], for it still cannot face the fact of the first." Hitler widened the gulf between Jews and Christians. To the extent that it remains unbridged, Hitler has his posthumous victories.[37]

Though Fackenheim is at many points diametrically opposed to Professor Rubenstein's convictions, there are points on which they agree, especially about the nature of the Holocaust. Both are aware, along with Berkovits and Alfred Kazin, that for Nazism, the only war that really counted was that waged against defenseless Jews.[38] For Berkovits, it was "the ultimate of irrationality. The conscious and radical removal of every vestige of moral restraint on subhuman passions, . . . the extirpation of all human feelings, . . . the religion of brutality . . . was not 'of this world.'" It was metaphysical barbarism. It was not just inhuman -- it was satanic.[39] For Kazin, "The Holocaust was 'unaccountable,' yet in some way . . . the most 'irrational' side of the war was somehow at the heart of it."[40] For Fackenheim, Nazism's essence "was the murder-camp . . . a demonic, nihilistic celebration of death . . . " Auschwitz was "the scandal of evil for evil's sake."[41] There is no other way to explain the self-defeating emphasis and energies devoted to the annihilation of Jews when these energies were needed elsewhere to win the other war. Nor is there any other way to comprehend the zeal with which Hitler and his henchmen, including above all Eichmann, welcomed the total destruction of Germany while gloating over the success of their Final Solution of the Jewish question. Furthermore, Fackenheim and Rubenstein are equally convinced that with a German victory, the death machines would have been self-perpetuating.[42]

This intersecting of convictions about the Holocaust, and about aspects of life and faith as a result of the Final Solution, strikes one repeatedly as one reads the literature of those most deeply involved. Alexander Donat rejects Rubernstein's radical theology, Fackenheim's "learned theodicy," and Wiesel's "passionate din-Torah with God" (lawsuit before a religious court) as a failure to "come to grips with the immanent meaning of the Holocaust." Nevertheless, he believes with them that the "far-reaching religious implications have by no means been explored nor . . . completed."[43] Elie Wiesel says that "perhaps some day someone will explain how, on the level of man, Auschwitz was possible; but on the level of God, it will forever remain the most disturbing of mysteries."[44] Donat, like Rubenstein, Wiesel, Berkovits, Eckardt, and Heer, is convinced that "the Holocaust was the beginning of an era, not its end -- an era to turmoil and upheaval, of irrationality and madness . . ."[45] Just as Rubenstein sees the Jewish building of the State of Israel partly as a result of "the massive refusal of the survivors of Auschwitz ever again to live as a part of Christian Europe,"[46] so Donat asserts that "the legacy of the Warsaw ghetto can be epitomized in 'Never again!' Never again ghetto, never again Treblinka and Auschwitz, never again defenseless martyrdom." And paralleling Rubenstein's conviction that Jews have passed beyond all illusions and hope, Donat adds that the "never again" also means: "no more faith in hollow terms like humanity, culture, conscience of the world, proletarian solidarity."[47] Dr. Fackenheim hears God's voice in the midst of Auschwitz not as a redeeming voice, but as one of command, issuing a new, a 614th commandment to all Jews: Survive. Survive as Jews, lest my people perish; remember the victims of Auschwitz, lest their memory perish; do not despair of man and his world, lest you cooperate in delivering the world over to the forces of Auschwitz; and do not despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish. Above all, do not give Hitler a posthumous victory.[48] From the British Christian community Dr. Colin Morris responds to this reaction to the death camps with a call for Christian identification with the extraoridinary act of faith demonstrated by Jews in

bringing up their children as Jews in the post-Auschwitz age. Christians are to rejoice at such embodiment of hope based, necessarily, on survival.[49] Alan Davies also hears a new commandment from the crematoria for Christians: a command never again, "either through silence, speech, or act . . . to involve themselves in a second Auschwitz . . ." Implicit in this command is the Christian responsibility to eliminate antisemitism and the obligation to preserve the people and State of Israel.[50]

While Donat tells his grandson that "a new apocalyptic calendar may well start with a new Genesis: 'in the beginning there was the Holocaust. We must therefore start all over again. We have to write a new Talmud, just as we did after the destruction of the Second Temple . . . in order to accentuate the new beginning" since the Torah was taken back in the Kingdom of Night.[52] Indeed, Wiesel has been described as one who is already writing a new Bible.[53] Emil Fackenheim writes that perhaps the Jewish theologian must create a new Midrash. In any case, he asserts that this is "the heroic age par excellence in all of Jewish history." For the survivors of the two-work-permit custom, which "robbed [the individual Jew] of his soul and made him forever innocently guilty of the murder of all his family except one member, did not, by and large, commit suicide, go insane, or reject their Jewishness. Rather they reaffirmed their Jewishness and raised new Jewish children."[54] Speaking from a Christian perspective, A. Roy Eckardt also thinks in terms of a new age: "The dispensation of the first Torah is ended . . . This is the epoch of the incarnation of the Jews. B.F.S., [the age Before the Final Solution], is past."[55]

On the question of the uniqueness of the Holocaust, Franklin Littell has this to say:

> in the convulsion of history which was the Holocaust, Christendom stands exposed in rebellion and betrayal of the most awful measure. For the Holocaust was not another illustration of 'man's inhumanity to man.' . . . The Holocaust was the final blasphemy of the baptized Gentiles, and open revolt against the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob -- and the Jewish people who still kept the terms of their covenant, while the Christians had betrayed their own mandate . . . The Jews who suffered and perished in Hitler's Europe suffered and perished for what the baptized would have testified had they remained Christian: for being a counter-culture, a sign to the One who is the True God, the Author and Judge of history. The Holocaust is the major event in recent centuries of Christian history precisely because it exposed the thinness of the veneer which covered with a sham Christianity the actual devotion of the European tribes to other gods.[56]

Fackenheim pointedly notes that "Christians cannot yet face the fact that the returning Christ would have gone to Auschwitz . . . Still less can they face the fact that he would have gone involuntarily if not voluntarily."[57]

Is Christianity all that is on trial? Or is God himself? In his writing, Elie Wiesel has put God on trial (as did the Berditchever reb in the past) -- "not to chastise," but to beg that "He at least offer a plea on His own behalf . . . Despite [Wiesel's] yearning for God and for an answer, he must condemn God for the most unforgiveable crime -- useless murder."[58]

Roy Eckardt also says that God is among the major defendants at the trial now under way. "The excruciating question is whether, if God lives and is not helpless, he ought to go on living, he who has permitted the death of the six million." Can God live with himself? "For even after Auschwitz, God does not seem to be exactly working hard to prevent a recurrence . . . Must not the words be flung at him . . .'I accuse'? . . .What kind of a Father are you?, The world is God's, for the simple reason that it is he who created the world and it is he who permits monstrous suffering to take place . . . The new charge against God is no less than that of Satanism." Pleas of weakness and absence from the scene are not applicable; "if . . . in the Holocaust are 'the flames of God's ever-burning love for his chosen people, 'then the Lord of life and love becomes the Lord of death and hate. He is transmuted into the Devil."

Eckardt asks how God is to defend himself from such a charge? or do penance for the "unspeakable injustices for which he is plainly culpable?" There is only one way he can express his sorrow and never again be responsible for such suffering: by abrogating the Covenant. "For the Covenant is the blameworthy divine instrument of Jewish oppression . . . God's original sin was to insinuate the divine powerlessness, the divine perfection, into the life of ordinary human beings." Thus Eckardt surmises that Wiesel's proclamation that God took back the Torah and abrogated the Covenant reflects God's awareness that his "soul was in imminent danger of going to hell." Consequently, now we have a "total reversal of the doctrine of Jewish election. For the first time in the history of the people of God, their existence becomes an unqualifiedly normal, human reality . . . Chosenness now [must come] to mean election-beyond-suffering, election to life. The Covenant is fulfilled and yet transcended through a 614th commandment: the command to survive."[60] As Emil Fackenheim insists, after Auschwitz Jewish martyrdom is only an encouragement to potential criminals. Today a Jew "is commanded to descend from the cross and in so doing . . . suspend the time-honored exaltation of martyrdom."[61] Indeed, adds Dr. Eckardt, Jewish martyrdom in the age After the Final Solution would not sanctify God's name but only blacken it. The 614th commandment is not really a commandment but "an end to all commandments." It is "the free choice and right of Jewish existence as such."[62]

Here we are obliged to ask some questions of Eckardt and Fackenheim. Professor Eckardt asserts that this free choice of survival is a declaration of independence. But if it is indeed the voice of God that issued the new commandment on which the choice is made, then is it not in fact a gift of independence from God? On the other hand, if the commandment Fackenheim hears the voice from Auschwitz utter is not simply "Survive!" but "Survive as Jews," then are Jews really liberated? Or are they not still inextricably linked to God, and thus exposed to the fury of all those who wish to kill God and pursue their own idolatrous interests? Has God taken back the Torah? Or has He simply reasserted the binding of his people through, and despite, the Holocaust?

Has God begun to repent? Perhaps -- a little. Jews now have a place, "the only defense against the international spatiality of antisemitism."[63] If that place does not survive, we must conclude, in Professor Eckardt's terms, that God has not repented enough, and that his Satanism has prevailed.

What are the consequences of the Holocaust for Christianity? After the wholesale apostasy of Christendom, Professor Littell sees a desperate need for

Christians to "recover the language of events, especially as they begin to internalize the lessons of the Kirchenkampf, the Holocaust, and a restored Israel." This will necessitate "a major change of [Christian] spiritual condition" which in turn will require "a miracle as astonishing, as awesome, as the events which have trasformed the life and hope of the Jewish people." The possibility of a healing process and the possibility of Christian future are utterly dependent on Christians coming to terms with these major events of recent Jewish history, and appropriating them in their own symbols and liturgies.[64]

In turn, Dr. Eckardt asks, if the Torah has been taken back by a kind God in the new era of the Final solution, has the Cross and the Empty Tomb also been taken back? He responds with another question: Since the church of the Final Solution simply worked out the ultimate consummation of its own theology, and hence its own fate as Cain, a fugitive on the face of the earth, how else can Christian antisemitism ever die unless a new birth and resurrection of God take place? He believes that Professor Heer implied the answer in his book, God's First Love, a conclusion which Eckardt Himself endorses: Christians who wish to be faithful may now only commit themselves to the burial of the faith that men transmuted into a cancer, lest worse crimes be done in God's name. Faithfulness may require denying God for his sake, that is, for the sake of his other children. If God dies in this way, "perhaps then he will live once more, . . . because he is 'the coming God: A God of the present and the future, in which he will submerge the brutal past.'"[65]

Bryon Sherwin attests that "any word about the Holocaust in inadequate. But there is the paradox. The Holocaust imposes silence yet demands speech. It defies all solutions but calls for responses."[66]

The reponses are beginning to come. Will they be listened to? Will they come in time? Above all, will we remember? Elie Wiesel confided that though he could not explain an inner certainty, "I only know philosophically that for the first time man's fate and the Jewish fate have converged. That means it is impossible to try again another Holocaust without committing the collective suicide of the whole world."[67] In the spirit of Wiesel's own conviction that questions are far more important than answers, let us end with one: How is the world different, if it is, because Auschwitz happened?[68]

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1. Cf. William Jay Peck, "From Cain to the Death Camps: An Essay on Bonhoeffer and Judaism," Union Seminary Quarterly Review 28 (Winter 1973), pp. 160, 162: ". . .one can either have God and his people or no God and no people . . . to retain God and destroy his people is to murder God. . . " In a "structural sense, the whole of Christianity was responsible for the death camps. The denial of such involvement will doom the message of the Church to remain at the level of shallow and impotent argumentation."
2. Cf. Elwyn Smith, "The Christian Meaning of the Holocaust," Journal of Ecumenical Studies 6(Summer 1969), pp. 421-422: "Was not the holocaust a terrible test -- which the church failed? . . . It may be . . . . that the question whether Christianity is to remember the holocuast or dismiss it is a question of the abiltiy and the right of Christianity to survive in a form in any way conformable to the Scripture." Arthur C. Cochrane, "Pius XII: A Symbol," in The Storm Over the Deputy, ed. Eric Bentley (New York: Grove Press,

1964), p. 158: "No church, especially in our age can be expected to be taken seriously as the 'representative' of God on earth unless she acknowledges her solidarity with the sin of the world...Indeed, what is at stake...is the very possibility of faith in the face of man's rightful inhumanity and the Church's indifference" during the Holocaust. Friedrich Heer, "The Catholic Church and the Jews Today," Midstream 17 (May 1971), p. 27: "The actions and sacrificies of some ordinary people did not redeem the church, but exposed her guilt all the more clearly...Christianity cannot continue to exist unless Christians are constantly aware of their responsibility for the continued existence of Jews on this...earth." William Jay Peck, "From Cain to the Death Camps," pp. 159-160: "After Auschwitz, everything has changed subtly but genuinely. The old agendas have become partial, if not sterile. The central problem for theology in our time is...the problem of murder. In the West,...it is not only human survival which is at stake, the very being of God is also somehow tied up with the problem of murder."

3. Franklin H. Littell, "The Meaning of the Holocaust: A Christian Point of View," address at the University of Michigan, Nov. 3, 1971 (unpublished manuscript; italics in original). See also Littell, "Christendom, Holocaust and Israel," Journal of Ecumenical Studies 10 (Summer 1973), pp. 483-497.

4. A. Roy Eckardt, "The Nemesis of Christian Antisemitism," in Jewish-Christian Relations in Today's World, ed. James E. Wood, Jr. (Waco, Texas, Baylor University Press, 1971), pp. 59-60.

5. Emil L Fackenheim, "The People Israel Lives," The Christian Century 87 (May 6, 1970), p.568.

6. Nora Levin, "Life Over Death," Congress Bi-Weekly 40 (May 18, 1973), pp. 22-23.

7. Shagra Arian, "Teaching the Holocaust," Jewish Education (Fall, 1972), p. 44.

8. Gregory Baum, Man Becoming: God in Secular Experience (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), pp. ix, 245)

9. Ibid., pp. 242-44.

10. Ibid., pp. 248-49.

11. Arthur J. Lelyveld, Atheism is Dead (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 158, 176, 177.

12. Ibid., pp. 172, 174-75.

13. Ibid., pp. 181, 183.

14. Ibid., pp. 178-79. The "Ani-Ma-amin" is part of synagogue liturgy: "I affirm, with unbrokden firmness, that the Messiah will come. And even though He tarries, even so, I affirm it."

15. Ibid., p. 179.

16. Ibid., pp. 183-84.

17. Viktor Frankl, From Death Camp to Existentialism: A Psychiatrist's Path to a New Therapy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), pp. 77, 105, 107.

18. Eliezer Berkovits, Faith After the Holocaust (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1973), pp. 78, 94-101, 135.

19. Ibid., p. 106.

20. Ibid., p. 107.

21. Ibid., pp. 117-18.

22. This insight points up the intrinsically self-destructive nature of the other-worldly emphasis of so much of the Christian tradition, and the way in which it plays into the hands of evil.

23. Ibid., pp. 119-20.

24. Ibid., pp. 126-27; see also p. 136.
25. Ibid., pp. 130-31.
26. Ibid., pp. 131-133. Nazi hubris sought "the conscious extirpation from human nature of the last remainder of the fear of God in any form. It was the ultimate rebellion of nihilism against all moral emotion and all ethical values" (ibid., pp. 131-32).
27. Ibid., pp. 132, 133. Cf. Friedrich Heer, "The Catholic Church and the Jews Today," p. 29: "There is a straight line from the Church's failure to notice Hitler's attempt at a 'final solution of the Jewish problem' to her failure to notice today's and tomorrow's endeavors to bring about a 'final solution of the human problem.' The murder of millions of Jews during the Hitler era anticipated the murder of millions and perhaps hundreds of millions of human beings who would die if the Great War returned -- a war that could only end in mass murder and genocide." See also Friedrich Heer, God's First Love (New York: Weybright and Tatley, 1967), p. 392.
28. Berkovits, Faith After the Holocaust, p. 133. The issue of the State of Israel and its relationship to the Final Solution is only mentioned in passing in this paper. A proper discussion would entail another article.
29. Ibid., pp. 137-38.
30. Ibid., pp. 141-42.
31. Richard L. Rubenstein, After Auscwitz (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1966), pp. 52-54, 56, 58, 69. By contrast, Rabbi Lelyveld retains the concept of election, as meaning a special task (Lelyveld, Atheism is Dead, pp. 177-78).
32. Rubenstein, After Auschwitz, pp. x, 223-25.
33. Ibid., p. 128.
34. Pinhas Sapir, in The Jerusalem Post (overseas airmail edition), April 30, 1973. Rubenstein partly acknowledges this condition when he refers to the Israeli determination that there will never be another Auschwitz, though there may be another Masada (Richard L. Rubenstein, Foreword to Alan T. Davies, Anti-Semitism and the Christian Mind [New York: Herder and Herder, 1969], p. 11). Nora Levin sees the Holocaust as having shattered Jewish illusions about their indestructibility as a people, and made them aware of their total vulnerability ("Life Over Death," p. 23).
35. Littell, "The Meaning of the Holocaust."
36. Ernst Pawel, "Fiction of the Holocaust," Midstream 16 (June/July 1970), p.21.
37. Emil L. Fackenheim, Quest for Past and Future (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), pp. 24-25. The Rev. Edward Flannery goes even further than Fackenheim after considering Christian reactions to the Holocaust and to the emergence of the State of Israel: "there is a strong probability that many Christians harbor a deeply repressed death-wish for the Jewish people." See his "Anti-Zionism and the Christian Psyche," Journal of Ecumenical Studies 6(Spring 1969), p. 182.
38. Despite Fackenheim's claim that Rubenstein's "more recent spoken utterances have characterized the Nazi murder camp as simply the extreme technological nightmare" (see Fackenheim, "The Human Condition After Auschwitz," B.G. Rudolph Lectures in Judaic Studies [Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1971], p. 7), Rubenstein has written: "The Nazis often seemed far more intent upon achieving irrational victories over defenseless Jews and Gypsies than a real victory over their military opponents. They won the war that really counted for them, the war against the Jews" (After Auschwitz, p. 2). Fackenheim has dealt with the irrationality of Hitler's Final Solution in " The People Israel Lives," "The Human Condition After Auschwitz," Quest for Past and Future, and God's Presence

in History (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).
39. Berkovits, Faith After the Holocaust, p. 117.
40. Alfred Kazin, "Living With the Holocaust," Midstream 16 (June/July 1970), p. 6.
41. Frackenheim, "The Human Condition After Auschwitz," p. 8; Quest for Past and Future, p. 18.
42. Fackenheim, "The Human Condition After Auschwitz," pp. 7, 9; Rubenstein, After Auschwitz, pp. 35, 42-43.
43. Alexander Dont, "A letter to My Grandson," Midstream 16(June/July 1970), p. 43.
44. Elie Wiesel, Legends of Our Time (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), p. 6.
45. Donat, "A Letter to My Grandson," p. 43
46. Rubenstein, Foreword to Davies, Anti-Semitism and the Christian Mind, p. 11.
47. Donat, "A Letter to My Grandson," p. 44.
48. Fackenheim, God's Presence in History, p. 84. Also see his Quest for Past and Future, p. 20.
49. Colin Morris, The Hammer of the Lord: Signs of Hope (London: Epworth Press, 1973); excerpts in Christian Attitudes on Jews and Judaism (London) no. 29, April 1973, pp. 1, 2, 6.
50. Alan T. Davies, "The Contemporary Encounter of Christians and Jews," The Ecumenist 10 (May-June 1972), p. 58. See also "Statement of Christian Concern About the Middle East," issued October 17, 1973 by a number of Christians in Toronto, Canada, including Davies.
51. Donat, "A Letter to My Grandson," p. 43.
52. Elie Wiesel, in A Symposium: "Jewish Values in the Post-Holocaust Future," Judaism 16 (Summer 1967), p. 285; A Beggar in Jerusalem (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 200.
53. Byron Sherwin, "Elie Wiesel and Jewish Theology," Judaism 18 (Winter 1969), p. 40.
54. Seymour Cain, "Emil Fackenheim's Post-Auschwitz Theology," Midstream 17(May 1971), p. 74; Fackenheim, "The Human Condition After Auschwitz," pp. 10-11.
55. A Roy Eckardt, "In What Sense is the Holocaust Unique?" unpublished manuscript.
56. Franklin H. Littell, "Particularism and Universalism in Religious Perspective," address at the 17th Annual Institute of Religion, Beth Tzedec Congregation, Toronto, Canada, May 11, 1972 (unpublished manuscript).
57. Fackenheim, "The People Israel Lives," p. 568. Fackenheim assumes that the Christ would have gone to the murder-camp voluntarily, as did Father Riccardo in Rolf Hochhuth's The Deputy.
58. Sherwin, "Elie Wiesel," p. 41
59. Eckardt, "Toward An Authentic Jewish-Christian Relationship," in Jewish-Christian Relations in Today's World, pp. 94-95. The trial is occasioned by the "Holocaust and responsibility for it, the rebirth of the State of Israel, and the eventuality of a second Holocaust, namely, Israel's possible obliteration" (ibid., p. 93).
60. Eckardt, "In What Sense is the Holocaust Unique?" See Wiesel, in A Symposium, "Jewish Values," p. 281.
61. Fackenheim, God's Presence in History, pp. 75, 87.
62. Eckardt, "Toward an Authentic Relationship" (italics added).
63. Ibid.
64. Littell, "Christendom, Holocaust, and Israel," pp. 486, 494-496.
65. Eckardt, "Toward an Authentic Relationship." See also Eckardt's review of

Heer, God's First Love, in Commentary 51 (March 1971), pp. 91-98.
66. Byron Sherwin, "The Holocaust," Jewish Spectator 34 (October 1969), p. 25.
67. "Conversation with Elie Wiesel, "Women's American ORT Reporter (March/April 1970), p. 5. See also Wiesel, A Symposium, "Jewish Values," p. 287.
68. Cr. Arthur Hertzberg, "A Generation Later," Midstream 16 (June/July 1970), p. 9.

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Understanding Contemporary Judaism:

The Holocaust And The State of Israel

Blu Greenberg

It is not possible to understand contemporary Jewry, nor for that matter Judaism itself, in this post modern era, without keying in on the events of the holocaust and the rebirth of Israel. This is true for Jewish self-understanding as well for Christian understanding of Judaism. It is true for religious Jews as well as for non-religious; for committed as well as for marginal Jews. It is true for this generation as well as for all generations to follow ours.

These two events are of such magnitude, unparalleled in the history of the Jewish people - certainly in the last nineteen hundred years - that they go far beyond theological categories. No Jew is immune to these events: not the physical survivor, who relives nightly the horror of the camps, and recounts in his nightmares the loved ones who were part of the six million tortured, gassed, burned, and shot; not the psychological survivor who spent those years safe on foreign soil, yet experiences the guilt of not having done enough, nor the one who grew up safe and sound in America, in the fifties and sixties, only to have the soul forever seared in pain upon learning of the holocaust long after it was all over.

For that matter, no Jew who has experienced the exhilaration of Israel's creation or the terror of Yom Kippur, 1973, can go on living as if these things did not happen. No Jew whose consciousness has been informed of these two events will ever be the same again. These events are therefore bound to affect and reshape the central understanding and affirmation of Judaism.

In truth, this pattern - that experiences, colors and shapes theological structures and ethical relationships - is not revolutionary in Judaism. Jewish self-understanding has always been historically oriented, and Jewish theology never operated in a vacuum.[1] Almost everything - the basic teachings, the liturgical development - is related to the Exodus-Sinai event and in a lesser way, to prior and future events which carry basically the same message. Indeed, a Jew's calendar of events has been said to be his catechism.

Jewish Self-Definition

Prior to the holocaust, the messages of Judaism and Christianity were important and relevant only to those who openly identified themselves as religionists, as particularists. The bulk of nominal Jews and Christians were

off doing their own thing in the world of universal values. To put it bluntly, most secular Jews could not have cared less about those accidents of birth which made them what they were. Or, in the extreme case, if they cared at all, it was a negative caring. They were dissatisfied, angry at the fate which had played a dirty trick on them, and made them Jews; it is a phenomenon which we call Jewish self-hatred.

Coming to grips with the stark madness of the holocaust, and with the State of Israel in all of its majesty and vulnerability, has for many put an end to the ease of not identifying, an end to the inauthenticity of self-hatred. Many Jews who "passed," and who were only peripherally identified as Jews, returned to Jewish life and faith in response to the holocaust and Israel.

Organized Jewish life, which tends to have a non-theological character to it as expressed in the existence of its many secular agencies, has begun to incorporate the centrality of these events to Judaism. Reform Judaism which preferred to identify itself in universalist principles, couched in prophetic terms, and therefore resisting Jewish nationalism long after Orthodox and Conservative Judaism identified with it, has now put Israel and the holocaust at the front and center of its organizational, educational, and even theological concerns.

The reason for all this is that for many Jews, Israel and the holocaust have shattered the illusions of modernism, of universalism, of one world of good fellowship, of automatic, steady, moral progress up the ladder of civilization. The desire to hop on the band wagon of modernity turned out to be a race of sheep to the slaughter. Indeed these two events dramatized Jewish separateness and distinctiveness and have deeply shaken the faith of all those who swore absolute loyality to the opposite vision. Since acceptance of Jewishness as fate and calling has always been the foundation of Jewish existence, it is the holocaust and the rebirth of Israel which have uncovered the Jewish core within many Jews - Jews who were formally uninterested in Jewish identity.

The message is simple and clear: the Jews' fate is unique, the Jew stands alone. For Jewish self-understanding after the holocaust, Jewish destiny in all its particularity is the key. Jews who had never lived as Jews understood, after so many had died as Jews, that one would have to live now as a Jew. The story is told by Jakob Presser about the fifteen-year-old in Westerbork whose number was called in the morning round up. It means that he has been called up for that day's quota to Auschwitz -- and the gas chambers. In anger he turns on the saintly Jeremiah Hirsch, a Hebrew teacher who had befriended him during the past few months. He is angry because he is jealous -- jealous of his friend, for when his friend's number will be called he would at least have known the blessing -- to have lived as a Jew. The fifteen-year-old would only know the curse -- what it was to die as a Jew.[2]

Confronting the Holocaust

Neither has Judaism as a faith nor Jews as individuals solved these challenges posed by the holocaust -- perhaps they will remain forever insoluble, unanswerable. But Jews wrestling with these questions and their tentative responses have become central to Jewish life today. These responses fall into

the communal, theological and liturgical categories. The communal response has been an outpouring of life, re-creation and philanthropy. This will go down in Jewish history as one of the great ages of creation and reconstruction. First and foremost is the creation and support of the State of Israel of which I will speak more below. Unprecedented billions of dollars have been raised for health, welfare and social care in Israel and Diaspora. The reconstruction of religious institutions has reached staggering heights. One example: more people study Torah and Talmud full-time today than in any period of Jewish history -- ever -- despite the fact that most Jews have moved away from the lifestyle which supported that study. More books of Jewish learning, scholarship and tradition are being published and sold than at any time in Jewish history. And, after centuries of dissolution in the modern, there has been an extraordinary rebirth of Jewish consciousness. The most striking example is that occurring within highly assimilated and isolated Russian Jewry. While Russian anti-Semitism plays a role in the renaissance, the consciousness of the holocaust and the existence and experiences of Israel reborn have been the forces which evoked the positive response: "let me be a Jew, let me go up to the Jewish homeland," among hundreds of thousands of Russian Jews. And the process is not yet finished.

Theologically there have been a number of attempts to confront the holocaust. Elie Wiesel has been a central figure in post holocaust theological development. A survivor of Auschwitz himself, he claims to be only a teller of tales -- and as such has awakened the whole generation to the reality of the holocaust. But in truth his tales carry a profound message. Like the great Chassidic rabbi, Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev who disputed and argued with God, Wiesel questions and challenges God. He rebukes and even destroys God -- yet he never abandons him.[3]

Another extraordinary gift that Wiesel had given us has been his defense of the victims. When so many were ready to ask, "Why did the Jews not resist?" and to make the victims guilty for their own fate, Wiesel recreates the reality of the Nazi kingdom of Night and the abandonment of the victims by the rest of mankind. He makes us realize that the question is not why so many did not fight or morally resist -- but how so many of them did do this, given the psychological conditions, the overwhelming brutality and efficiency of the Nazi machine, and the incredible betrayal of the bystanders.[4]

For Richard Rubenstein, Auschwitz signalled the end of the promise of redemption; and that we live in the time of the death of God.[5] Emil Fackenheim arrives at the opposite conclusion.[6] He responds with affirmation of the covenant: the Jewish people, alive after the holocaust, gives even more heroic testimony to God and to the promise of ultimate redemption. Fackenheim talks of the 614th commandment -- not to give Hitler a post-humous victory.[7] This includes an end to Jewish martyrdom and the creation of Jewish life which is even more precious after the holocaust.

Another theologian, Eliezer Berkovits, grappling with the holocaust within the framework of a more traditional affirmation, stresses the theme of hester panim[8] -- the hiding of God's face in history as a clue to this demonic event. "Where was God?" may yet remain a legitimate and troubling question. On the other hand, Kiddush Hashem, the sanctification of God's name through the martyrdom of the Jews in the holocaust validates the ongoing faith and covenant of Israel. He emphasizes the role of the people, Israel, as witness

to history and says "If there were ever a time for the Jewish people to persevere, it is now." Berkovits allows that faith and tradition and destiny are not necessarily dependent on successful answers to Auschwitz.

Irving Greenberg understands the holocaust and the State of Israel as the orientating events which occurred in our time and which are on a par with the classic events of Exodus and Hurban: they shape our self-understanding and our way of life.[9] After the holocaust, faith in God can only be "moment faiths" in which encounters with God and hope of redemption alternate with moments of nothingness in the theological abyss. The true religious response is a new secularism, the recreation of the divine image in men/women through human dignity and love. At the heart of this new secularism is a hidden relationship to God's presence in history and a loving kindness that defies death and evil. The categories of secular and religious are totally undone. There is a profound dialectic in everything after the holocaust; human evil and human love are both taken more seriously; despair and salvation come together; halacha -- the religio-legal system governing every aspect of life -- is the Jewish way, constantly in tension, mediating between an unyielding Utopianism and affirmation of historical reality. That tension (never resolved in natural history, or at least until the Messiah comes) is the religious enterprise.

Liturgical Commemoration of the Holocaust

The holocaust has only lately begun to be integrated into the liturgical area some twenty-five to thirty years after the end of World War II. In view of the enormity of the event, it occupies a surprisingly small part of the religious ritual and liturgy. This can be explained by a number of different factors:

1) It is characteristic of Judaism that holidays and commemorative days were set by the rabbis in generations and sometimes centuries following the event. Often the leaders only formalized what the people already were doing instictively. Judaism is a religion which has changed slowly and gradually over the course of four thousand years. It is not only that today's rabbis are resistant to change but that this gradual rhythm of organic change takes time.

2) For many years no one talked about the holocaust. It was like a festering sore. Many hoped without hope that if ignored, perhaps it would go away -- yet in the deepest recesses of the mind, they knew this would not be. How often I have met children of the survivors of the death camps who said that their parents never told them about it, never discussed it in front of anyone, until their children came home with questions and information from other sources. I recall teaching a Bar Mitzvah class the most general details about the holocaust -- and their parents protesting that it was too soon, too much. For the first fifteen years following the holocaust, the witness literature was hardly read and the personal testimony hardly heard. Now, little by little the burden of memories has begun to be shared.

3) It is difficult to comprehend the event theologically and even more difficult to reconcile it with existing categories. The major emphasis in the liturgy is on joy, thankgiving, praise and deliverance. The holocaust does not

fit into any of these categories. True, Judaism has commemorative days such as the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av, when Jews fast in memory of the "Hurban," the destruction of the holy temple. Jews remember that event and the ensuing exile in the prayers of the pilgrim festival holidays. However, there the liturgical emphasis is that exile and destruction were the rod of divine anger. "Because of our sins, we were exiled from our land." The holocaust, with the death of so many innocents, so fresh in our minds, with wounds still so raw, cannot fit into this theological category either.

4) There is probably a subconscious reluctance to inject so morbid a subject into the ritual and liturgy. Some even feel that a constant dwelling on the event could encourage rather than prevent its occurrence and raise the odds of history repeating itself.

However, time increasing the distance between the event and the community is one factor that has begun to overcome these strains of resistance. The other factor is the growing awareness that we can never again live as if it did not happen -- even though to relive it means the repetition of pain and torment inflicted on the victims, the Jewish people.

We see the beginnings of these liturgical responses in the establishment of a Yom HaShoa, the day of holocaust remembrance, which falls in the calendar between Passover and the Pentecost. It is a day of prayers for the dead, of remembering and retelling the event. Thus far, the formal liturgy is very limited but growing numbers of individual communities are establishing their own ways of remembrance -- with films, with testimony of survivors, with readings of holocaust literature. I suspect that the day will grow in formal consciousness and will become a day of mourning, a day of fasting. In addition to Yom HaShoa many Jews, in groups, are making pilgrimages to Auschwitz, now a lifeless barren camp where only the barracks, crematoria, and gas chambers remain. The Jews go to remember and mourn the dead as one does at the graveside of a loved one. The State of Israel had established a museum of remembrance, the "Yad VaShem," as a memorial to the six million. It combines a museum exhibiting the history of the events, a research center on the holocaust and a sanctuary of remembrance. At its entrance is a pathway commemorating the "righteous of the nations of the world," people who saved the lives of Jews at the risk of their own. Every day, Jews and non-Jews from all over the world come here to reflect on the meaning of the holocaust. It is a central depository for collecting documents and other facts and literature about the holocaust. During the past few years, courses and lectures on the holocaust have spread to many college campuses in the United States, where there are sizable Jewish student bodies.

In the area of inter-religious dialogue the holocaust has played an increasing part. True, some Jewish theologians, such as Steven Schwarzchild and Eliezer, (who) have maintained that the holocaust puts an end to all such dialogue. Others, however, such as Irving Greenberg, maintain that precisely because of the holocaust Jews and Christians must engage in dialogue, that we have a stake in eliminating whatever is bad in each other's religion that engenders evil and that we must be linked to each other to prevent it from happening again.[10] The Jewish defense agencies instinctively understood the truth of this position and they took the lead in opening up the area of dialogue after World War II. (Of course, the other major factor in this opening up was the

Christian move toward dialogue.) As holocaust consciousness surfaced, Jews have sponsored and participated in ecumencial conferences, without hiding holocaust facts as they once did.

The State of Israel

Both for secular and religious Jews there have been two main responses to the death and destruction of the holocaust. One is "never again"; and the second is to recreate life as the only means to overcome death and destruction. That is why the State of Israel draws such fierce devotion from Jews all over the world, over and above the historical and religious dimensions cathected to it for thousands of years.

It was largely to Israel that the broken refugees from the holocaust came and had new life breathed into them.[11] And the Jews of Oriental countries often suffering discrimination, came to the infant state when their lives as Jews were threatened after the creation of the state. Israel truly represents the ingathering of the exiles; bringing together Jews from all parts of the world.

Israel, then is a restoration of life. In theological terms, it is the resurrection which overcomes death, the redemption which validates the covenant and the ultimate Messianic hope that the triumph of Satanic evil seemed to have destroyed them. At the same time it represents the building up of Jewish existence.[12] For both secular and religious Jews, there is tremendous sense of identification and pride at what is being achieved in the land. There is a sense of restored Jewish dignity in the Jewish national presence and from the signs of vitality that emanate from Israel. Stated in theological terms: the indestructible existence of the people of God, Israel, is the most awesome testimony to the eternity of God and the promises of God.

Israel also signifies to most Jews the only real hope that it will never happen again, that in their own homeland Jews will have a way of defending themselves and of caring for the lives entrusted to them. It is a place where no government and no admiration would persuade those who want to live as Jews, a place where no parents will ever again feel helpless to defend their children.

The formation of a national homeland, after the trauma of Auschwitz would have been valid for these reasons alone; but there are other dimensions to Israel, undergirding these new needs which the state satisfied. These make her existence that much more central and precious.

Judaism, the religion, was formed and shaped in the land. In the Bible the land itself is a sign of the covenant between God and the Jewish people. Much of the Halacha developed here and a great deal of it is specifically related to settlement on the land and most of the great historical events happened here.[13] Scripture comes to life when a Jew walks the land of Abraham and Sarah, of David, of all of the prophets and the rabbis, much as it does for Christians who traverse the routes of Jesus. Two thousand years of Jewish history were played out in this land, before the exile ever began. And during the exile there were Jews who never left the land. There were continuous Jewish settlements in Israel from early ancient times and continuous settlement attempts through the past two thousand years. Thus the emotional and physical links with Eretz Israel always remained alive in physical reality and

in memory. After the destruction and exile in 70 A.D., Jews continued to pray daily, several times a day for return to the land. Inserting a special prayer in the grace after meals, breaking a glass at every wedding ceremony, leaving a spot unfinished in the building of a new house, giving charity for the settlements in the Holy Land, praying towards Jerusalem -- these are but several of the many ways in which Jews in exile maintained their dream of the return to Zion for nineteen hundred years. Thus they kept alive their hope that some day they -- we -- would witness the fulfillment of the biblical promise of return to the land. In the incredible dialectic of the historical experience of this generation of Jews, the promise was fulfilled at the moment of ultimate defeat and hopelessness.

Theologically, therefore, many Jews perceive Israel as the fulfillment of prophecy, "the beginning of the growth of our redemption" in the words of a prayer for the State of Israel. As such its existence is a validator that the God of history is alive and that our central covenant and ultimate redemption is still valid.

Support of Israel

While there is residual reluctance to dwell on the holocaust, the good news of Israel has readily found expression in the liturgy and in Jewish communal life; it is quite natural to want to celebrate joy rather than sorrow.

The ancient prayers of longing for Zion are repeated with new meaning and feeling in them. The new prayer for the peace of the State of Israel has been created by the Chief Rabbinate and inserted into the liturgy all over the world. Israel's Independence Day is a day set aside by Jews everywhere, a day of prayer, celebration and rejoicing. On the social and communal level, Israel is of great importance. There is the stress on making pilgrimages to Israel. The youth groups, by and large, are geared to identification with Israel. The major fundraising organization in Jewish life, the United Jewish Appeal, gives the lion's share of its funds to the development of Israel's emerging needs. The Six Days War in 1967 brought out unparalleled support for the fledgling state. Jews and many Christians who had never before committed themselves openly to the existence of the state, now came forth to contribute or to speak out. That war and the tragic war of Yom Kippur 1973 affected and increased Jewish-Christian dialogue. Before these wars, Jews kept largely to themselves the passion they felt for the State of Israel. The silence of Christians in the face of another possible holocaust made Jews realize that they had better articulate what they felt in their hearts. Therefore, Israel and its absolute necessity to the Jewish people has become the thrust for further dialogue.

These are some of the many ways in which Jews understand the State of Israel. Israel has been under constant threat for twenty-eight years of her existence as a state. The tension and fear for her survival has sharpened all of these perceptions. If anything, the recurrent crises, the continual threats of a second holocaust levelled at Israel by hostile enemies, have heightened the sense of Jewish identity and have made Israel more central in the life of Jews everywhere. Jews have become aware of the absolute need for Jewish rootedness in the land and for the very survival of Israel.

In a very real sense then, to understand contemporary Jewry, Christians must come to grips with Israel as a vital Jewish state. It must wrestle with the problems that Israel poses to traditional Christian theology. For Christians in general and the Roman Catholic Church in particular, a revived Jewish state in Israel reverses and refutes a good deal of Christian dogma built up over centuries depicting the Jews as fossils, as eternal reprobates for rejecting Jesus, as punished by eternal exile. These theological underpinnings are the substructure for the "teaching of contempt," the covert and overt hostility which Jews met with all too often in medieval and modern times. It is not difficult to see these negative teachings continuing to operate in modern times; to wit, the refusal to this day by the Vatican to officially recognize the State of Israel, the negative stands towards Israel repeatedly taken by the World Council of Churches, the silence of the organized church when Israel was threatened in June 1967 and again in November 1973.

In this sense then Israel serves as the litmus test of Christian good will in understanding contemporary Jewry, indivisible as it is from the security of the contemporary Jewish people. Some great Christians, following the lead of the saintly Pope John (who will go down in the annals of Jewish history as an example of righteousness and genuine repentance) have indeed put their necks on the line in their outspokenness for Israel.[14] It is no accident that many of them have moved towards this position after confronting Christian guilt in the holocaust. Yet although their number is growing they are still a handful within the total body of Christendom. The organizational and hierarchical bodies of the church have yet to measure up to the challenge posed by these two watershed events in Jewish life.[15]

All that I have described is not only history; it is a situation still in process and still to be comprehended. These two events cannot be simply lumped together. No one daresay that Israel came as a recompense for the holocaust. To say that is to taint Israel. No Jew would want even such a precious gift at so high a price. Yet, in the inner core of a Jew, where the future is sensed but not yet articulated, these events are inseparable. Surely, they will be seen by future generations as one integral cycle; something like crucifixion-resurrection.

As with all revelatory events, it takes time to assimilate the event and find its proper expression. Only now do we see the genesis of this process as heightened consciousness of these two events begins to seep through all levels of the Jewish community and begins to find liturgical and sacral expressions. We can anticipate that this process will deepen and mature in the Judaism of generations to come. The question is: will contemporary Jews and Christians have the spiritual depth and openness to understand and to respond adequately? It will be challenging, painful, exhilarating, full of surprises -- if it will be done at all -- but that is what authentic religious existence is all about.

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1. I would recommend as starting points for an encounter with the holocaust, reading one book from different genres of holocaust literature. Surveys of the entire process: Raul Hilberg. The Destruction of the European Jews

(Chicago: Quadrangle Books), or Lucy Dawidowicz, The War Against the Jews (forthcoming 1975). A novel and personal testimony, Elie Wiesel, Night (1948) or Alexander Donat, The Holocaust Kingdom; Anthology of Holocaust Literature; Albert H. Friedlander, Out of the Whirlwind. Account of Life in a Concentration Camp; Primo Levi, Survival at Auschwitz or Evelyn LeChene, Matthausen: The Story of a Death Camp. Allied response: Arthur Morse, While Six Million Died or Henry L. Feingold, The Politcs of Rescue.

2. Cf. Jakob Presser, Breaking Point.

3. Cf. Elie Wiesel, Night; The Gates of the Forest; The Town Beyond the Wall.

4. In teaching my students about the holocaust, I always find that this is the first question they ask. "Why did they not resist?" To me, it is always a sign of the beginnings of grasping the enormity of the event. However, it also shows they have not yet lived through the event and are asking the question from outside of it. Wiesel's strength is that he brings reality to bear on what otherwise would be good retrospective logic. On this, in addition to Wiesel's novels, see his "A Plea for the Dead," in his Legends of Our Time.

5. Richard Rubenstein, After Auschwitz; also, "Holocaust and Homeland" in The Religious Situation: 1969.

6. Emil Fackenheim, God's Presence in History and Encounter with Modern Philosophy.

7. A reference to the 613 commandments in the Pentateuch.

8. Eliezer Berkovits, Faith After the Holocaust.

9. Irving Greenberg, Theological Reflections on the Holocaust from the proceedings of the conference on Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era held at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, June 1967 (publication forthcoming), and other unpublished manuscripts; "Holocaust and Homeland," in The Religious Situation: 1969. The conceptual framework and some of the details in this review are influenced by the work and thought of my husband, Irving Greenberg. Since that work is as yet unpublished, I wish to acknowledge that source for the benefit of readers who may use the material further.

10. See Greenberg, The New Encounter.

11. "The Law of Return." Contrary to laws of logic and expedient economic measures, Israel's first law, passed largely in response to the holocaust where there was no place to go, was the Law of Return. It stated that no matter what condition, how infirm, aged, broken in body or spirit, a Jew would have the right to return to the homeland of Israel and become a citizen.

12. Until the holocaust, European Jewry was the largest, most vital of all the Jewish communities. There were nine million Jews in Europe in the late 1930's as compared with five million in the United States and less than two million elsewhere in the world. European Jewry was a long established Jewry built up during the course of a 2,000 year Diaspora with roots going back even before then. Now Europe is a Jewish graveyard with a few pitiful aging remnants living there except for France (renewed by Jewish refugees from Arab North Africa) and England (which escaped the holocaust).

13. For example, the laws of the Sabbatical year, of tithes, of the Assembly. This latter law called for the assembly of the people every 7th year to hear the reading of the Torah and reaffirm its acceptance. This religious celebration lapsed after the Jews were exiled in 70 A.D. After the State of Israel was formed in 1948, the rabbinate reestablished this religious assembly.

14. Before Pope John died, he composed the following prayer to be read in all Catholic churches. It is a remarkable example of an act of reparation as its title indicates. "We are conscious today that many centuries of blindness

have cloaked our eyes so that we can no longer see the beauty of Thy chosen people nor recognize in their faces the features of our privileged brethren. We realize that the mark of Cain stands on our foreheads. Across the centuries, our brother, Abel, has lain in blood which we drew or shed tears we caused forgetting Thy love. Forgive us for the curse falsely attached to their names as Jews. Forgive us for crucifying Thee a second time in their flesh, for we knew not what we did." Pope John died before this prayer could be introduced into the liturgy. Those who followed him, regretfully, did not see fit to undertake such an act of repentance for Christianity.

15. People such as Roy Eckardt, Franklin H. Littell, Edward Flannery, Peter Schweitzer, John Oesterreicher and many others.

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Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire:

Judaism, Christianity, and

Modernity after the Holocaust

Irving ("Yitz") Greenberg

I. JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY: RELIGIONS OF REDEMPTION AND THE CHALLENGE OF HISTORY

Both Judaism and Christianity are religions of redemption. Both religions come to this affirmation about human fate out of central events in history. For Jews, the basic orientating experience has been the Exodus. Out of the overwhelming experience of God's deliverance of His people came the judgement that the ultimate truth is not the fact that most humans live nameless and burdened lives and die in poverty and oppression. Rather, the decisive truth is that man is of infinite value and will be redeemed. Every act of life is to be lived by that realization.

For Christians, the great paradigm of this meaning is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By its implications, all of life is lived.

The central events of both religions occur and affect humans in history. The shocking contrast of the events of salvation come and the cruel realities of actual historical existence have tempted Christians to cut loose from earthly time. Yet both religions ultimately have stood by the claim that redemption will be realized in actual human history. This view has had enormous impact on the general Western and modern view that human liberation can and will be realized in the here and now.
Implicit in both religions is the realization that events happen in history which change our perception of human fate, events from which we draw the fundamental norms by which we act and interpret what happens to us. One such event is the Holocaust - the destruction of European Jewry from 1933 to 1945.

The Challenge of the Holocaust

Both religions have always sought to isolate their central events -- Exodus and Easter -- from further revelations or from the challenge of the demonic counter-experience of evil in history. By and large, both religions have continued since 1945 as if nothing had happened to change their central understanding. It is increasingly obvious that this is impossible, that the Holocaust cannot be ignored.

By its very nature, the Holocaust is obviously central for Jews. The destruction cut so deeply that it is a question whether the community can recover from

it. When Adolf Eichmann went into hiding in 1945, he told his accomplice, Dieter Wisliceny, that if caught, he would leap into his grave laughing. He believed that although he had not completed the total destruction of Jewry, he had accomplished his basic goal -- because the Jews could never recover from this devastation of their life center. Indeed, Eichmann had destroyed 90 percent of East European Jewry, the spiritual and biological vital center of prewar world Jewry. Six million Jews were killed -- some 30 percent of the Jewish people in 1939; but among the dead were over 80 percent of the Jewish scholars, rabbis, full-time students and teachers of Torah alive in 1939.[1] Since there can be no covenant without the covenant people, the fundamental existence of Jews and Judaism is thrown into question by this genocide. For this reason alone, the trauma of the Holocaust cannot be overcome without some basic reorientation in light of it by the surviving Jewish community. Recent studies by Prof. Simon Herman, an Israeli social psychologist, have indicated that the perception of this event and its implications for the Jews' own fate has become a most widespread and powerful factor in individual Jewish consciousness and identity.[2]

The Holocaust as Radical Counter Testimony to Judaism and Christianity

For Christians, it is easier to continue living as if the event did not make any difference, as if the crime belongs to the history of another people and faith. But such a conclusion would be and therefore is sheer self-deception. The magnitude of suffering and the manifest worthlessness of human life radically contradict the fundamental statements of human value and divine concern in both religions. Failure to confront and account for this evil, then, would turn both religions into empty, Pollyanna assertions, credible only because believers ignore the realities of human history. It would be comparable to preaching that this is the best of all possible worlds to a well-fed, smug congregation, while next door little children starve slowly to death.

Judaism and Christianity do not merely tell of God's love for man, but stand or fall on their fundamental claim that the human being is, therefore, of ultimate and absolute value. ("He who saves one life it is as if he saved an entire world" - B.T. Sanhedrin 37a; "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son" - John 3:16.) It is the contradiction of this intrinsic value and the reality of human suffering that validates the absolute centrality and necessity of redemption, of the Messianic hope. But speak of the value of human life and hear the testimony of S. Szmaglewska, a Polish guard at Auschwitz, about the summer of 1944. The passage (from the Nuremburg trial record) deserves commentary:

> WITNESS: . . . women carrying children were (always) sent with them to the crematorium. (Children were of no labor value so they were killed. The mothers were sent along, too, because separation might lead to panic hysteria - which might slow up the destruction process, and this could not be afforded. It was simpler to condemn the mothers too and keep things quiet and smooth.) The children were then torn from their parents outside the crematorium and sent to the gas

chambers separately. (At that point, crowding more people into the gas chambers became the most urgent consideration. Separating meant that more children could be packed in separately, or they could be thrown in over the heads of adults once the chamber was packed.) When the extermination of the Jews in the gas chambers was at its height, orders were issued that children were to be thrown straight into the crematorium furnaces, or into a pit near the crematorium without being gassed first.

Smirnov (Russian prosecutor): How am I to understand this? Did they throw them into the fire alive, or did they kill them first?

WITNESS: They threw them in alive. Their screams could be heard at the camp. It is difficult to say how many children were destroyed in this way.

SMIRNOV: Why did they do this?

WITNESS: It's very difficult to say. We don't know whether they wanted to economize on gas, or if it was because there was not enough room in the gas chambers.[3]

A word must be said on the decision to economize on gas. By the summer of 1944, the collapse of the Eastern front meant that the destruction of European Jewry might not be completed before the advancing Allied armies arrived. So Hungarian Jewry was killed at maximum speed - at that rate of up to ten thousand people a day. Priority was given to transports of death over trains with reinforcements and munitions needed for the Wehrmacht. There was no time for selection of the healthy, of young Jews for labor, or even for registering the numbers of victims. Entire trainloads were marched straight to the gas chambers.

The gas used -- Zyklon B -- causes death by internal asphyxiation, with damage to the centers of respiration, accompanied by feelings of fear, dizziness, and vomiting. In the chamber, when released, "the gas climbs gradually to the ceiling, forcing the victims to claw and trample upon one another in their struggle to reach upward. Those on the top are the last to succumb...The corpses are piled one on top of another in an enormous heap...at the bottom of the pile are babies and children, women and old people..."[4]

The sheer volume of gas used in the summer of 1944 depleted the gas supply. In addition, the Nazis deemed the costs excessive. Therefore, in that summer, the dosage of gas was halved from twelve boxes to six per gassing. When the concentration of gas is quite high, death occurs quickly. The decision to cut the dosage in half was to more than double the agony.

How much did it cost to kill a person? The Nazi killing machine was orderly and kept records. The gas produced by the Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Schadlingsbekampfung m.b.H (German Vermin-Combating Corporation, called DEGESCH for short). It was a highly profitable business, which paid dividends of 100 percent to 200 percent per year (100 percent in 1940 and 1941; 200 percent in 1942, 1943) to I.G. Farben, one of the three corporations which owned it.[5] The bills for Zyklon B came to 195 kilograms for 975 marks = 5 marks per kilogram.

Approximately 5.5 kilograms were used on every chamberload, about fifteen hundred people. This means 27.5 marks per fifteen hundred people. With the mark equal to 25 cents, this yields $6.75 per fifteen hundred people, or forty-five hundreths of a cent per person. In the summer of 1944, a Jewish child's life was not worth the two-fifths of a cent it would have cost to put it to death rather than burn it alive. There, in its starkest form, is the ultimate denial.

In short, the Holocaust poses the most radical counter-testimony to both Judaism and Christianity. Elie Wiesel has stated it most profoundly:

> Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.
>
> Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever.
>
> Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live.
>
> Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust.
>
> Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God himself. Never.

The cruelty and the killing raise the question whether even those who believe after such an event dare talk about God who loves and cares without making a mockery of those who suffered.

Further Challenge of the Holocaust to Christianity

The Moral Failure and Complicity of Anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, however, the Holocaust poses a yet more devastating question to Christianity. What did Christianity contribute to make the Holocaust possible? The work of Jules Isaac, Norman Cohn, Raul Hilberg, Roy Eckardt, and others poses this question in a number of different ways. In 1942, the Nietra Rebbe went to Archbishop Kametko of Nietra to plead for Catholic intervention against the deportation of the Slovakian Jews. Tiso, the head of the Slovakian government, had been Kametko's secretary for many years, and the rebbe hoped that Kametko could persuade Tiso not to allow the deportations. Since the rebbe did not yet know of the gas chambers, he stressed the dangers of hunger and disease, especially for women, old people and children. The archbishop replied: "It is not just a matter of deportation. You will not die there of hunger and disease. They will slaughter all of you there, old and young alike, women and children, at once -- it is the punishment that you deserve for the death of our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ -- you have only one solution. Come over to our religion and I will work to annul this decree."[7]

There are literally hundreds of similar anti-Semitic statements by individual people reported in the Holocaust literature. As late as March 1941 -- admittedly still before the full destruction was unleashed -- Archbishop Grober (Germany), in a pastoral letter, blamed the Jews for the death of Christ and

added that "the self-imposed curse of the Jews, 'His blood be upon us and upon our children' had come true terribly, until the present time, until today."[8] Similarly, the Vatican responded to an inquiry from the Vichy government about the law of June 2, 1941, which isolated and deprived Jews of rights: "In principle, there is nothing in these measures which the Holy See would find to criticize."[9]

In general, there is an inverse ratio between the presence of a fundamentalist Christianity and the survival of the Jews during the Holocaust period. This is particularly damning because the attitude of the local population toward the Nazi assault on the Jews seems to be a critical variable in Jewish survival. (If the local population disapproved of the genocide or sympathized with the Jews, they were more likely to hide or help Jews, resist or condemn the Nazis, which weakened the effectiveness of the killing process or the killer's will to carry it out.) We must allow for the other factors which operated against the Jews in the countries with a fundamentalist Christianity. These factors include Poland and the Baltic nations' lack of modernity (modernity = tolerance, ideological dissapproval of mass murder, presence of Jews who can pass, etc.); the isolation and concentration of Jews in these countries, which made them easy to identify and destroy; the Nazis considered Slavs inferior and more freely used the death penalty for any help extended to the Jews; the Nazis concentrated more of the governing power in their own hands in these countries. Yet even when all these allowances are made, it is clear that anti-Semitism played a role in the decision not to shield Jews -- or to actually turn them in. If the Teaching of Contempt furnished an occasion -- or presented stereotypes which brought the Nazis to focus on the Jews as the scapegoat in the first place; or created a residue of anti-Semitism in Europe which affected the local populations' attitudes toward Jews; or enabled some Christians to feel they were doing God's duty in helping kill Jews or in not stopping it -- then Christianity may be hopelessly and fatally compromised. The fact is that during the Holocaust the church's protests were primarily on behalf of converted Jews. At the end of the war, the Vatican and circles close to it helped thousands of war criminals to escape, including Franz Stangl, the commandant of the most murderous of all the extermination camps, Treblinka, and other men of his ilk. Finally in 1948, the German Evangelical Conference at Darmstadt, meeting in the country which had only recently carried out this genocide, proclaimed that the terrible Jewish suffering in the Holocaust was a divine visitation and a call to the Jews to cease their rejection and ongoing crucifixion of Christ. May one morally be a Christian after this?[10]

Even some Christians who resisted Hitler failed on the Jewish question. Even the great Christians-who recognized the danger of idolatry, and resisted the Nazi government's takeover of the German Evangelical Church at great personal sacrifice and risk - did not speak out on the Jewish question.[11] All this suggests that something in Christian teaching supported or created a positive context for anti-Semitism, and even murder. Is not the faith of a gospel of love, then, fatally tainted with collaboration with genocide-conscious or unconscious? To put it another way: if the Holocaust changes the fundamental religious claims of Christianity (and Judaism), then the penumbra of Christian complicity may challenge the credibility of Christianity to make these claims.

Is The Wager of Christian Faith Lost? There is yet a third way in which this problem may be stated. In its origins, Christianity grew out of a wager of

faith. Growing in the bosom of Judaism and its Messianic hope, Jesus (like others), could be seen either as a false Messiah or as a new unfolding of God's love, and a revelation of love and salvation for mankind. Those who followed Jesus as the Christ, in effect, staked their lives that the new orientation was neither an illusion nor an evil, but yet another stage in salvation and a vehicle of love for mankind. "The acceptance. . . of Jesus as the Messiah means beholding him as one who transforms and will transform the world."[12] As is the case with every vehicle, divine and human, the spiritual record of this wager has been mixed-comprising great inspiration for love given and great evils caused. The hope is that the good outweighs the evil. But the throwing into the scales of so massive a weight of evil and guilt raises the question whether the balance might now be broken, whether one must not decide that it were better that Jesus had not come, rather than that such scenes be enacted six million times over - and more. Has the wager of faith in Jesus been lost?

II. THE CHALLENGE TO MODERN CULTURE

The Breaking of Limits

The same kinds of questions must be posed to modern culture as well. For the world, too, the Holocaust is an event which changes fundamental perceptions. Limits were broken, restraints shattered, that will never be recovered, and henceforth mankind must live with the dread of a world in which models for unlimited evil exist. Pre-modern man thought there were limits. But consider Einsatz Commando A, Stike Commando 3, which reported its daily activities as follows: (Executions)

8/23/41 Panevezys	1312 Jewish men, 4602 Jewish women 1609 Jewish children	7,523
8/18 to 22/41 Rasainiai District	466 Jewish men, 440 Jewish women, 1020 Jewish children	1,926
8/25/41 Obelisi	112 Jewish men, 627 Jewish women, 421 Jewish children	1,160
8/25 and 26/41 Seduva	230 Jewish men, 275 Jewish women, 159 Jewish children	664
8/26/41 Zarasai	767 Jewish men, 1113 Jewish women, 1 Russian communist woman, 1 Lithuanian communist, 687 Jewish children	2,569
8/26/41 Pasvalys	402 Jewish men, 738 Jewish women, 209 Jewish children	1,349
8/26/41 Kaisadorys	All Jews (men, women and children)	1,911
8/27/41 Prienai	All Jews (men, women and children)	1,078
8/27/41 Dagda and Kraslawa	212 Jews, 4 Russian prisoners-of-war	216

8/27/41 Goniskis	47 Jewish men, 165 Jewish women, 143 Jewish children	355
8/28/41 Wilkia	76 Jewish men, 192 Jewish women, 134 Jewish children	402
8/28/41 Kedainiai	710 Jewish men, 767 Jewish women, 599 Jewish children	2,076
8/29/41 Rumsiskis and Ziezmariai	20 Jewish men, 567 Jewish women, 197 Jewish children	784
8/29/41 Utena and Moletai	582 Jewish men, 1731 Jewish women, 1469 Jewish children	3,782
9/1/41 Mariampole	1763 Jewish men, 1812 Jewish women, 1404 Jewish children, 109 mental patients, 1 female German national who was married to a Jew, 1 Russian woman	5,090

The Demonic in the Modern World

In Zlutomir, Minsk, Firiatin, Mariampole, Nemirov, Stalinodorf, and Kiev among others, children were thrown alive into the killing pits or beaten over the head and dumped into the pits--to save bullets. In Berditchev the ground was turned into muck by the blood of the victims, and some wounded drowned in it. In Firiatin and Berdictchev the ground settled and turned from the cries and writhings of those still alive and superficially buried. No assessment of modern culture can ignore the fact that science and technology--the accepted flower and glory of modernity--now climaxed in the factories of death; the awareness that the unlimited, value-free use of knowledge and science, which we perceive as the great force for improving the human condition, had paved the way for the bureaucratic and scientific death campaign. There is the shock of recognition that the humanistic revolt, celebrated as the liberation of humankind in freeing man from centuries of dependence upon God and nature, is now revealed--at the very heart of the enterprise--to sustain a capacity for death and demonic evil.

Live through the Sabbath of the beginning of Elul 1942 with Rivka Yosselevseka in Zagrodski, Pinsk district. [15]

Attorney General: Yes. And what happened towards sunrise?

Witness, Yosselevseka: And thus the children screamed. They wanted food, water. This was not the first time. But we took nothing with us. We had no food and no water, and we did not know the reason. The children were hungry and thirsty. We were held this way for 24 hours while they were searching the houses all the time--searching for valuables.

I had my daughter in my arms and ran after the truck. There were mothers who had two or three children and held them in their arms running after the truck. We ran all the way. There were those who fell--we were not allowed to help them

rise. They were shot--right there--wherever they fell..... When we all reached the destination, the people from the truck were already down and they were undressed--all lined up. All my family was there--undressed, lined up. The people from the truck, those who arrived before us.....

When I came up to the place--we saw people naked lined up. But we were still hoping that this was only torture. Maybe there is hope--hope of living... One could not leave the line, but I wished to see what are they doing on the hillock? Is there anyone down below? I turned my head and saw that some three or four rows were already killed--on the ground. There were some twelve people amongst the dead. I also want to mention what my child said while we were lined up in the Ghetto, she said, "Mother, why did you make me wear the Shabbat dress; we are going to be shot"; and when we stood near the dug-outs, near the grave, she said, "Mother, why are we waiting, let us run!" Some of the young people tried to run, but they were caught immediately, and they were shot right there. It was difficult to hold on the children. We took all children, not ours, and we carried--we were anxious to get it all over--the suffering of the children was difficult; we all trudged along to come nearer to the place and to come nearer to the end of the torture of the children. The children were taking leave of their parents and parents of their elder people...

We were driven; we were already undressed; the clothes were removed and taken away; our father did not want to undress; he remained in his underwear. We were driven up to the grave, this shallow....

Attorney-General: And these garments were torn off his body, weren't they?

A: When it came to our turn, our father was beaten. We prayed, we begged with my father to undress, but he would not undress, he wanted to keep his underclothes. He did not want to stand naked.

Q: And then they tore them off?

A: Then they tore off the clothing of the old man and he was shot. I saw it with my own eyes. And then they took my mother, and she said, let us go before her; but they caught mother and shot her too; and then there was my grandmother, my father's mother standing there; she was eighty years old and she had two children in arms. And then there was my father's sister. She also had children in her arms and she was shot on the spot with the babies in her arms.....

And yet with my last strength I came up on top of the grave, and when I did, I did not know the place, so many bodies were lying all over, dead people; I wanted to see the end of this stretch of dead bodies but I could not. It was impossible. They were lying all over, all dying; suffering, not all of them dead, but in their last sufferings; naked; shot, but not dead. Children crying "Mother," "Father"; I could not stand on my feet....

I was searching among the dead for my little girl, and I cried for her--Merkele was her name--Merkele! There were children crying "Mother!" "Father!" --but they were all smeared with blood and one could not recognize the children. I cried for my daughter....

I was praying for death to come. I was praying for the grave to be opened and to swallow me alive. Blood was spurting from the grave in many places, like a

well of water, and whenever I pass a spring now, I remember the blood which spurted from the ground, from the grave I dug with my fingernails, but the grave would not open. I did not have enough strength. I cried out to my mother, to my father, "Why did they not kill me? What was my sin? I have no one to go to." I saw them all being killed. Why was I spared? Why was I not killed?

One of the most striking things about the Einsatzgruppen leadership makeup is the prevalence of educated people, professionals, especially lawyers, Ph.D.'s, and yes, even a clergyman.[16] How naive the nineteenth-century polemic with religion appears to be in retrospect; how simple Feuerbach, Nietzsche, and many others. The entire structure of autonomous logic and sovereign human reason now takes on a sinister character. It is like Hawthorne's pilgrims in "The Celestial Railroad," who speak so sweetly and convincingly of heavenly bliss while all the time the barely stifled flames of hell rage in their breasts. For Germany was one of the most "advanced" Western countries--at the heart of the academic, scientific, and technological enterprise. All the talk in the world about "atavism: cannot obscure the way in which such behavior is the outgrowth of democratic and modern values, as well as the pagan gods.[17]

As Toynbee put it, "a Western nation, which for good or evil, has played so central a part in Western history...could hardly have committed these flagrant crimes had they not been festering foully beneath the surface of life in the Western world's non-German provinces.... If a twentieth-century German was a monster, then, by the same token a twentieth-century Western civilization was a Frankenstein guilty of having been the author of this German monster's being. This responsibilty must be shared not only by Christianity, but by the Enlightenment and democratic cultures as well. Their apathy and encouragement strengthened the will and capacity of the murderers to carry out the genocide, even as moral resistance and condemnation weakened that capacity.

The Moral Failure and Complicity of Universalism

Would that liberalism, democracy, and internationalism had emerged looking morally better. But, in fact, the democracies closed their doors to millions of victims who could have been saved. America's record is one of a fumbling and feeble interest in the victims which allowed anti-Semites and provincial economic and patriotic concerns to rule the admission--or rather the nonadmission--of the refugees. Indeed, the ideology of universal human values did not even provide sufficient motivation to bomb the rail lines and the gas chambers of Auschwitz when these were operating at fullest capacity, and when disruption could have saved ten thousand lives a day. Thus the synthetic rubber factory at Buna in the Auschwitz complex was bombed, but the death factory did not merit such attention.[20] The ideology of universalism did have operational effects. It blocked specifying Jews as victims of Nazi atrocities, as in the Allied declaration of January 1942, when the Nazis were warned they would be held responsible for their cruel war on civilians. In this warning, the Jews were not mentioned by name on the grounds that they were after all humans, not Jews, and citizens of the countries in which they lived. The denial of Jewish particularity--in the face of the very specific Nazi war on the Jews--led to decisions to bomb industrial targets to win the war for democracy, but to exclude death factories--lest this be interpreted as a Jewish war! The very exclusion of specifying Jews from warnings and military objectives was

interpreted by the Nazis as a signal that Jews were expendable. They may have read the signal correctly. In any event, liberalism and internationalism became cover beliefs--designed to weaken the victims' perception that they were threatened and to block the kind of action needed to save their lives. [21]

The very isolation and sense of the indifference of the world cowed the victims, and made them go more quietly to their deaths. In agonizing over why Warsaw Jewry had let the Nazis round up 300,000 Jews and send them to (what were discovered to be) the gas chambers of Treblinka, Alexander Donat later wrote.[22]

> In vain we looked at that cloudless September sky for some sign of God's wrath. The heavens were silent. In vain we waited to hear from the lips of the great ones of the world--the champion of light and justice, the Roosevelts, the Churchills, the Stalins--the words of thunder, the threat of massive retaliation that might have halted the executioner's axe. In vain we implored help from our Polish brothers with whom we had shared good and bad fortune alike for seven centuries, but they were utterly unmoved in our hour of anguish. They did not show even normal human compassion at our ordeal, let alone demonstrate Christian charity. They did not even let political good sense guide them; for after all we were objectively allies in a struggle against a common enemy. While we bled and died, their attitude was at best indifference, and all too often "friendly neutrality" to the Germans. "Let the Germans do this dirty work for us." And there were far too many cases of willing, active, enthusiastic Polish assistance to the Nazi murderers. (p. 100)

Especially disatrous was the victims' faith in universalism and modern humanitarian values. It disarmed them.

> The basic factor in the Ghetto's lack of preparation for armed resistance was psychological; we did not at first believe the Resettlement Operation to be what in fact it was, systematic slaughter of the entire Jewish population. For generations East European Jews had looked to Berlin as the symbol of law, order, and culture. We could not now believe that the Third Reich was a government of gangsters embarked on a program of genocide "to solve the Jewish problem in Europe." We fell victim to our faith in mankind, our belief that humanity had set limits to the degradation and persecution of one's fellow man. (p. 103)

World Jewry Shares the Failure

Nor were Jews outside Europe models of overwhelming concern for their brothers and sisters. They were prepared neither to stop normal life nor to risk their standing in their own countries in order to pressure for top priority action to save European Jewry. While the historical balance sheet is not yet made, it is already clear that existing divisions and narrow organizational concerns ruled

Jewish life to a great extent even in response to the ongoing Holocaust.[23] The absence of unity and special priority meant that attempts to save Jews were carried out in less unified and urgent ways than the destruction process. Until the very end, the genocide received the highest priority and special consideration from the German authorities.

In retrospect, it is also clear that a major factor restricting the efforts of world Jewry was the paralyzing effect of the Jews' belief in, and burning passion to be fully accepted by the countries in which they lived. Organized Jewry felt bound by the principles of national loyalty and national interest, and feared to protest when the rubric was involved to justify only routine and restricted efforts by the national governments to save Jews. Here again the ideologies of liberalism, integration, and political equality played important roles in weakening the world Jewish capacity or will to maximally save (or pressure to save) their brothers and sisters. Part of this weakening lay within the Jewish psyche itself, where the strong consciousness of being an American Jew or English Jew, etc., meant that the community did not adequately see its fate as indivisible with that of the European Jews who were in Hitler's hands. Thus again, highly laudable values (secularist democracy, universalism, liberalism) are deeply implicated in creating the background for a relatively undisturbed pursuit of mass murder. The colossal human and moral failure needed to make possible such cruel slaughter has deeply tarnished the credibility and validity of all these values. In other words, no matter how valid a philosophy appears to be, no matter how internally convincing and autonomously persuasive it is, if it has the capacity to serve as a ground for unmitigated evil, then it must be challenged, shaken up, rethought--if it can survive at all. Failure to radically criticize and restructure means collaboration with the possibility of a repetition. Yet if there is any imperative at all that bursts forth from the hell of Auschwitz and Treblinka, if there is a flicker of human decency left in the observer, it surely must be: Never again!

III. THE HOLOCAUST AS ORIENTING EVENT AND REVELATION

Not to Confront Is to Repeat

For both Judaism and Christianity (and other religions of salvation--both secular and sacred) there is no choice but to confront the Holocaust, because it happened, and because the first Holocaust is the hardest. The fact of the Holocaust makes a repetition more likely--a limit was broken, a control or awe is gone--and the murder procedure is now better laid out and understood. Failure to confront it makes repetition all the more likely. So evil is the Holocaust, and so powerful a challenge to all other norms, that it forces a response, willy-nilly; not to respond is to collaborate in its repetition. This irony of human history which is already at work, is intensified by the radical power of the Holocaust. Because the world has not made the Holocaust a central point of departure for moral and political policy, the survivors of the Holocaust and their people have lived continually under the direct threat of another Holocaust throughout the past thirty years. Muslims who feel that the event is a Western problem and that Christian guilt has been imposed on them have been tempted to try to stage a repeat performance. They lack the guilt and concern, and that in itself leads to guilt.

The nemesis of denial is culpability. Pope John XXIII, who tried strongly to save Jews in the Holocaust (he made representations and protests, issued false

baptismal papers, helped Jews escape), felt guilty and deeply regretted the Catholic Church's past treatment of Jews. This pope did more than any other pope had ever done to remove the possibility of another destruction (through the Vatican II Declaration, revising Catholic instruction and liturgy with reference to the Jews, dialogue, etc.) Pope Paul VI, who denied the complicity or guilt of Pius XII in the Holocaust, was tempted thereby into a set of policies (he watered down the Declaration, referred to Jews in the old Passion story terms, refused to recognize Israel's de jure political existence, maintained silence in the face of the threat of genocide), which brings the dreadful guilt of collaboration in genocide so much closer.

This principle applies to secular religions of salvation as well. Thus, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) has denied any responsibility for the Holocaust, on the grounds that it was carried out by fascist and right-wing circles, whereas East Germany is socialist. As a result, it has allowed Nazis back into government with even more impunity than West Germany. Whereas West Germany has given back billions of dollars of Jewish money in the form of reparations (it is estimated that many more billions were directly stolen and spoiled), the GDR, having no guilty conscience, has yielded up none of the ill-gotten gains of mass murder. In fact, East Germany and its "socialist" allies have pursued policies which have kept the genocide of the Jewish people in Israel a live option to this day. Thus, failure to respond to the Holocaust turns a hallowed ideology of liberation into a cover for not returning robbed goods and for keeping alive the dream of another mass murder.

This is not to say that all-out support for Israel is the only way to avoid complicity in attempted genocide. The Communist world could have pursued a pro-Arab policy on its merits. Had they felt as guilty as they should have--as they actually were--they would have made a sine qua non the giving up of all genocidal hopes and talk by the Arabs. In actual fact, the opposite occurred. Several times, when such extreme possibilities were about to be dropped by the Arab world, Russian intervention, with no such policy conditions attached (or with tacit encouragement of destructive goals), restored this abominable option.

The Holocaust cannot be used for triumphalism. Its moral challenge must also be applied to Jews. Those Jews who feel no guilt for the Holocaust are also tempted to moral apathy. Religious Jews who use the Holocaust to morally impugn every other religious group but their own are the ones who are tempted thereby into indifference at the Holocaust of others (cf. the general policy of the American Orthodox rabinate on United States Vietnam policy). Those Israelis who place as much distance as possible between the weak, passive Diaspora victims and the "mighty Sabras" are tempted to use Israeli strength indiscriminately (i.e., beyond what is absolutely inescapable for self-defense and survival), which is to risk turning other people into victims of the Jews. Neither faith nor morality can function without serious twisting of perspective, even to the point of becoming demonic, unless they are illuminated by the fires of Auschwitz and Treblinka.

The Dialetical Revelation of the Holocaust

The Holocaust challenges the claims of all the standards that compete for modern man's loyalties. Nor does it give simple, clear answers or definitive solu-

tions. To claim that it does is not to take burning children seriously. This surf will--and should--undercut the ultimate adequacy of any category, unless there were one (religious, political, intellectual) that consistently produced the proper response of resistance and horror at the Holocaust. No such category exists, to my knowledge. To use the catastrophe to uphold the univocal validity of any category is to turn it into grist for propaganda mills. The Nazis turned their Jewish victims into soap and fertilizer after they were dead. The same moral gorge rises at turning them into propaganda. The Holocaust offers us only dialectical moves and understandings--often moves that stretch our capacity to the limit and torment us with their irresolvable tensions. In a way, it is the only morally tenable way for survivors and those guilty of bystanding to live. Woe to those so at ease that they feel no guilt or tension. Often this is the sign of the death of the soul. I have met many Germans motivated by guilt who came to Israel on pilgrimages of repentance. I have been struck that frequently these were young people, too young to have participated in the genocide; or, more often, persons or the children of persons who had been anti-Nazi or even imprisoned for resistance. I have yet to meet such a penitent who was himself an SS man or even a train official who transported Jews. Living in the dialetic becomes one of the verification principles for alternative theories after the Holocaust.

Let us offer, then, as working principle the following: No statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of the burning children. In his novel The Accident, Elie Wiesel has written of the encounter of a survivor with Sarah, a prostitute who is also a survivor. She began her career at twelve, when she was separated from her parents and sent to a special barracks for the camp officers' pleasure. Her life was spared because there were German officers who liked to make love to little girls her age. Every night she reenacts the first drunken officer's use of a twelve-year-old girl. Yet she lives on, with both life feeling and self-loathing. And she retains enough feeling to offer herself to a shy survivor boy, without money. "You are a saint," he says. "You are mad," she shrieks. He concludes, "Whoever listens to Sarah and doesn't change, whoever enters Sarah's world and doesn't invent new gods and new religious, deserves death and destruction. Sarah alone has the right to decide what is good and what is evil, the right to differentiate between what is true and what usurps the appearance of truth."[26]

In this story Wiesel has given us an extraordinary phenomenology of the dialetic in which we live after the Holocaust. Sarah's life of prostitution, religiously and morally negative in classic terms, undergoes a moral reversal of category. It is suffering sainthood in the context of her life and her ongoing response to the Holocaust experience. Yet this scene grants us no easy Sabbatianism, in which every act that can wrap itself in the garment of the Holocaust is justified and the old categories are no longer valid. The ultimate tension of the dialetic is maintained, and the moral disgust which Sarah's life inspires in her (and Wiesel? and us?) is not omitted either. The more we analyze the passage the more it throws us from pole to pole in ceaseless tension. The very disgust may, in fact, be the outcome of Sarah's mistaken judgment; she continues to judge herself by the categories in which she was raised before the event. This is suggested in the narrator's compassion and love for her. Yet he himself is overcome by moral nausea--or is it pity?--or protest?--until it is too late and Sarah is lost. There is no peace or surcease and no lightly grasped guide to action in this world. To enter into Sarah's world in fear and trembling, and

to remain there before and in acting and speech, is the essence of religious response today, as much as when normative Judaism bids us enter into the Exodus, and Christianity asks we enter into Easter and remain there before and in acting or speaking. The classic normative experiences themselves are not dismissed by Wiesel. They are tested and reformulated--dialectically attacked and affirmed--as they pass through the fires of the new revelatory event.[27]

Resistance to New Revelation: Jewish and Christian

Much of classic Jewish and Christian tradition will resist the claim that there have been new revelatory events in our time. Judaism has remained faithful to the covenant of Sinai and rejected this claim when expressed in the life of Jesus as understood by St. Paul and the Christian church, or in the career of Sabbetai Zvi and others.[28] There are precedents of the covenant in the light of great events, such as the developments which followed the destruction of the Temple, especially the Second Temple.[29] It took, however, a major flowering of Judaism and extraordinary spiritual leadership to articulate and restructure the tradition, and it was a painful, soul-searching, and highly conflictual process.[30] The very quality of faithfulness to the covenant resists acceptance of new revelation - as it should be. Human nature's love for the familiar conspires with faithfulness to keep new norms out. But no one said that the Holocaust should be simply assimilable. For traditional Jews to ignore or deny all significance to this event would be to repudiate the fundamental belief and affirmations of the Sinai convenant: that history is meaningful, and that ultimate liberation and relationship to God will take place in the realm of human events. Exodus-Sinai would be insulated from all contradictory events--at the cost of removing it from the realm of the real--the realm on which it staked its all--the realm of its origin and testimony. However much medieval Judaism was tempted to move redemption to the realm of eternal life, it never committed this sacrilege. It insisted that the Messianic Kingdom of God in this world was not fulfilled by the salvation of the world to come.[31] Even after the expulsion from Spain and the spread of Kabbalah, Messianic expectation was not totally spiritualized. There is an alternative for those whose faith can pass through the demonic, consuming flames of a crematorium: it is the willingness and ability to hear further revelation and reorient themselves. That is the way to wholeness. Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav once said that there is no heart so whole as a broken heart. After Auschwitz, there is no faith so whole as a faith shattered--and re-fused--in the ovens.

Since this further revelation grows in the womb of Judaism, it may be asked whether it speaks only to Jews, or to Christians also. Classic Christianity is tempted to deny further revelation after Easter. Christianity testified and built itself on the finality of revelation in Christ's life and teaching. Yet, at its core, Christinity claims that God sent a second revelation, which grew out of the ground of acknowledged covenant, superseded the authority of the first revelation, and even supplied a new, higher understanding of the first event. Christian polemic has mocked and criticized the people of Israel for being so blinded by the possession of an earlier revelation and by pride in its finality that Israel did not recognize the time of its visitation. However unjust the polemic against Judaism was (as I believe it was), it ill behooves Christianity to rule out further revelation a priori--lest it be hoist by its own petard. Rather, it should trust its own faith that God is not owned by anyone and the spirit blows where it lists. The very anguish and harsh

judgments which the Holocaust visits on Christianity (see above) open the possibility of freeing the Gospel of Love from the incubus of evil and hatred.

The desire to guarantee absolute salvation and understanding is an all too human need which both religions must resist as a snare and temptation. Just as refusal to encounter the Holocaust brings a nemesis of moral and religious ineffectiveness, openness and willingness to undergo the ordeal of reorienting by the event could well save or illuminate the treasure that is still contained in each tradition.

There are Jews who have sought to assimilate the Holocaust to certain unreconstructed traditional categories, to explain destruction as a visitation for evil.[32] To account for the Holocaust as God's punishment of Israel for its sins is to betray and mock the agony of the victims. Now that they have been cruelly tortured and killed, boiled into soap, their hair made into pillows and their bones into fertilizer, their unknown graves and the very fact of their death denied to them, the theologian would inflict on them the only indignity left: that is, insistence that it was done because of their sins. As Roy Eckardt wrote, this is the devil's work. God comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comforted, whereas the devil comforts the comforted and afflicts the afflicted.[33] A great Jewish scholar sought to account for the Holocaust in terms of Jewish sin. He was led by the logic of his position, first to blame the Zionists rather than the Nazis for the evil; then, to join the enemies of the Jewish state sworn to destroy the Jewish people in common ground of hatred and denunciation of Israel--in effect, collaborating in providing the setting for attempted genocide.[34] By the gracious irony of God, this satanic denouement was happily frustated by the strength and exploits of those he maligned and excoriated. It is a sobering demonstration that failure to respect the dialetic of the Holocaust can dialectically turn faithfulness into demonism.

IV. JEWISH THEOLOGICAL RESPONSES TO THE HOLOCAUST

A Critique

There have been some notable Jewish theological responses that have correctly grasped the centrality of the Holocaust to Jewish thought and faith. The two primary positions are polar. One witness upholds the God of History. Emil Fackenheim has described the Commanding Voice of Auschwitz, which bids us not to hand Hitler any posthumous victories, such as repudiating the covenant and retrospectively declaring Judaism to have been an illusion. Eliezer Berkovits has stressed that Jewish survival testifies to the Lord of History. The other witness affirms the death of God and the loss of all hope. Richard Rubenstein has written: "We learned in the crisis that we were totally and nakedly alone, that we could expect neither support nor succor from God nor from our fellow creatures. Therefore, the world will forever remain a place of pain, suffering, alienation and ultimate defeat.[35] These are genuine important responses to the Holocaust, but they fall afoul of the dialectical principle. Both positions give a definitive interpretation of the Holocaust which subsumes it under known classical categories. Neither classical theism nor atheism is adequate to incorporate the incommensurability of the Holocaust; neither produced a consistently proper response; neither is credible alone--in the presence of the burning children.

Rubenstein's definitiveness is part of this writer's disagreement with him. Rubenstein concluded that "Jewish history has written the final chapter in the terrible story of the God of History"; that "the world will forever remain a place of pain... and ultimate defeat," and that the "pathetic hope (of coming to grips with Auschwitz through the framework of traditional Judaism) will never be realized" (italics supplied).[36] After the Holocaust, there should be no final solutions, not even theological ones. I could not be more sympathetic to Rubenstein's positions, or more unsympathetic to his conclusions. That Auschwitz and the rebirth of Israel are normative; that there are traditional positions which Auschwitz moves us to repudiate (such as "We were punished for our sins") is a profoundly, authentically Jewish response. To declare that the destruction closes out hope forever is to claim divine omniscience and to use the Holocaust for theological grist. Contra Rubenstein, I would argue that it is not so much that any affirmations (or denials) cannot be made, but that they can be made authentically only if they are made after working through the Holocaust experience. In the same sense, however, the relationship to the God of the convenant cannot be unaffected.

Dialetical Faith, or "Moment Faiths"

Faith is living life in the presence of the Redeemer, even when the world is unredeemed. After Auschwitz, faith means there are times when faith is overcome. Buber has spoken of "moment gods": God is known only at the moment when Presence and awareness are fused in vital life. This knowledge is interspersed with moments when only natural, self-contained, routine existence is present. We now have to speak of "moment faiths," moments when Redeemer and vision of redemption are present, interspersed with times when the flames and smoke of the burning children blot out faith--though it flickers again. Such a moment is described in an extraordinary passage of Night, as the young boy sentenced to death but too light to hang struggles slowly on the rope. Eliezer finally responds to the man aksing, "Where is God now?" by saying, "Here He is--He is hanging here on this gallows..."[37]

This ends the easy dichotomy of atheist/theist, the confusion of faith with doctrine or demonstration. It makes clear that faith is a life response of the whole person to the Presence in life and history. Like life, this response ebbs and flows. The difference between the skeptic and the believer is frequency of faith, and not certitude of position. The rejection of the unbeliever by the believer is literally the denial or attempted suppression of what is within oneself. The ability to live with moment faith is the ability to live with pluralism and without the self-flattering, ethnocentric solutions which warp religion, or make it a source of hatred for the other.

Why Dialectical Faith Is Still Possible

THE PERSISTENCE OF EXODUS. Of course, the question may still be asked: Why is it not a permanent destruction of faith to be in the presence of the murdered children?

One reason is that there are still moments when the reality of the Exodus is reenacted and present. There are moments when a member of the community of Israel shares the reality of the child who was to have been bricked into the wall but instead experienced the liberation and dignity of Exodus. (The

reference here is to the rabbinic legend that in Egypt, Jewish children were bricked into a wall if their parent did not meet their daily quota of bricklaying.) This happens even to those who have both literally and figuratively lived through the Holocaust. Wiesel describes this moment for us in the The Gates of the Forest, when Gregor "recites the Kaddish, the solemn affirmation ... by which man returns to God his crown and his scepter."[37] Neither Exodus nor Easter wins out or is totally blotted out by Buchenwald, but we encounter both polar experiences; the life of faith is lived between them. And this dialetic opens new models of response to God, as we shall show below.

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE SECULAR ABSOLUTE. A second reason is that we do not stand in a vacuum when faith encounters the crematoria. In a real sense, we are always choosing between alternative faiths when we make a decision about ultimate meaning. In this culture the primary alternative to religion is secular man in a world closed off from any transcendence, or divine incursion. This world grows out of the intellectual framework of science, philosophy, and social science, of rationalism and human liberation, which created the enterprise of modernity. This value system was--and is--the major alternative faith which Jews and Christians joined in large numbers in the last two centuries, transferring allegiance from the Lord of History and Revelation to the Lord of Science and Humanism. In so many ways, the Holocaust is the direct fruit and will of this alternative. Modernity fostered the excessive rationalism and utilitarian relations which created the need for and susceptibility to totalitarian mass movements and the surrender of moral judgment. The secular city sustained the emphasis on value-free sciences and objectivity, which created unparalleled power but weakened its moral limits. (Surely it is no accident that so many members of the Einsatzgruppen were professionals.) Mass communication and universalization of values weakened resistance to centralized power, and served as a cover to deny the unique danger posted to particular, i.e. Jewish, existence.

In the light of Auschwitz, secular twentieth-century civilization is not worthy of this transfer of our ultimate loyalty. The victims ask that we not jump to a conclusion that retrospectively makes the convenant they lived an illusion and their death a gigantic travesty--a product of their illusions and Gentile jealousy of those pathetically mistaken claims.[39] It is not that emotional sympathy decides the validity or invalidity of philosophic positions. The truth is sometimes very unpleasant, and may contradict cherished beliefs or moral preferences. But the credibility of systems does rise or fall in the light of events which enhance or reduce the credibility of their claims.[40] A system associated with creating a framework for mass murder must be very persuasive before gaining intellectual assent. The burden of the proofs should be unquestionable. Nothing in the record of secular culture on the Holocaust justifies its authority claims. The victims ask us, above all, not to allow the creation of another matrix of values that might sustain another attempt at genocide. The absence of strong alternative value systems gives a moral monopoly to the wielders of power and authority. Secular authority unchecked becomes absolute. Relative values thus become the seedbed of absolute claims, and this is idolatry. This vacuum was a major factor in the Nazi ability to concentrate power and carry out the destruction without protest or resistance. (The primary sources of resistance were systems of absolute alternative values--the Barmen Conference in the Confessional Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.)[41] After the Holocaust it is all the more urgent to resist this absolutization of the secular. As Emil Fackenheim has pointed out, the all-out celebration of the

secular city by Harvey Cox reflected the assimilation of Christian values to a secular civilization given absolute status.[42] It is potential idolatry, an idolatry to which we more easily succumb if we have failed to look at the Holocaust.

If nothing else sufficed to undercut this absolute claim of nonaccessibility of the divine, it is the knowledge that the absence of limits or belief in a judge, and the belief that persons could therefore become God, underlay the structure of l'uni-vers concentrationnaire. Mengele and other selectors of Auschwitz openly joked about this. I will argue below that the need to deny God leads directly to the assumption of omnipotent power over life and death. The desire to control people leads directly to crushing the image of God within them, so that the jailer becomes God. Then one cannot easily surrender to the temptation of being cut off from the transcendence, and must explore the alternatives. Surely it is no accident that in the past forty years language analysts like Wittgenstein, critics of value-free science and social sciences, existentialists, evangelical and counter-culture movements alike, have fought to set limits to the absolute claims of scientific knowledge and of reason, and to ensure the freedom for renewed encounter with the transcendental.

THE LOGIC OF POST-HOLOCAUST AND, THEREFORE, POST-MODERN FAITH. A third reason to resist abandoning the divine is the moral urgency that grows out of the Holocaust and fights for the presence of the Lord of History. Emil Fackenheim has articulated this position in terms of not handing Hitler posthumous victories. I prefer an even more traditional category, and would argue that the moral necessity of a world to come, and even of resurrection, arises powerfully out of the encounter with the Holocaust. Against this, Rubenstein and others would maintain that the wish is not always father to the fact, and that such an illusion may endanger even more lives. To this last point I would reply that the proper belief will save, not cost, lives (see below). It is true that moral appropriateness is not always a good guide to philosophic sufficiency; but the Holocaust experience insists that we best err on the side of moral necessity. To put it more rationally, sometimes we see the narrower logic of a specific argument rather than the deeper logic of the historical moment or setting. This could make the narrower logical grounds formally consistent and persuasive, yet utterly misleading, since they may start from and finish with the wrong assumptions.

Moral necessity validates the search for religious experience rather than surrender to the immediate logic of nonbelief. Thus, if the Holocaust strikes at the credibility of faith, especially unreconstructed faith, dialectically it also erodes the persuasiveness of the secular option. If someone is told that a line of argument leads to the conclusion that he should not exist, not surprisingly the victim may argue that there must be alternative philosophical frameworks. Insofar as the Holocaust grows out of Western civilization, then, at least for Jews, it is a powerful incentive to guard against being overimpressed by this culture's intellectual assumptions and to seek other philosophical and historical frameworks. (cf. Wiesel's more mystical version of this argument--Gyula's comment in the The Accident: "Lucidity is fate's victory, not man's. It is an act of freedom that carries within itself the negation of freedom. Man must keep moving, searching, weighing, holding out his hand, offering himself, inventing himself." [43]

The point to keep in mind is that currents of thought and popular assumptions are so ubiquitous that they appear to be self-evident and beyond cavil. It has been pointed out that the opposing positions with in one civilization (such as religion and secularity) may have more in common with each other than their presumed associated positions across civilization lines. Thus modern religion and secularity may have more in common with each other than with their respective official analogues--medieval religion and secularity. The flaws, the hidden assumptions that turn out to be questionable, often do not become obvious until the whole climate of opinions and range of assumptions has changed as a new civilization emerges. The moral light shed by the Holocaust on the nature of Western culture validates skepticism toward contemporary claims--even before philosophic critiques emerge to justify the skepticism. It is enough that this civilization is the the locus of the Holocaust. The Holocaust calls on Jews, Christians, and others to absolutely resist the total authority of this cultural moment. The experience frees them to respond to their own claim, which comes from outside the framework of this civilization, to relate to a divine other, who sets limits and judges the absolute claims of contemporary philosophic and scientific and human political systems. To follow this orientation is to be opened again to the possibilities of Exodus and immortality.

This is a crucial point. The Holocaust comes after two centuries of Emancipation's steadily growing domination of Judaism and the Jews. Rubenstein's self-perception as a radical breaking from the Jewish past is, I think, misleading. A more correct view would argue that he is repeating the repudiation of the God of History and the Chosen that was emphasized by the modernizing schools, such as Reconstructionism. This position had become the stuff of the values and views of the majority of Jews. "Being right with modernity" (defined by each group differently) has been the dominant value norm of a growing number of Jews since 1750, as well as Christians. Despite the rear-guard action of Orthodox Judaism and Roman Catholicism (until the 1960s) and of fundamentalist groups, the modern tide has steadily risen higher. The capacity to resist, criticize, or break away from these models is one of the litmus tests of the Holocaust as the new orienting experience of Jews, and an indication that a new era of Jewish civilization is under way. This new era will not turn its back on many aspects of modernity, but clearly it will be freer to reject some of its elements, and to take from the past (and future) much more fully.

THE REVELATION IN THE REDEMPTION OF ISRAEL. I have saved for last the most important reason why the moment of despair and disbelief in redemption cannot be final, at least in this generation's community of Israel. Another event has taken place in our lifetime which also has extraordinary scope and normative impact--the rebirth of the State of Israel. As difficult to absorb in its own way and, like the Holocaust, a scandal for many traditional Jewish and Christian categories, it is an inescapable part of the Jewish historical experience in our time. And while it is a continuation and outgrowth of certain responses to the Holocaust, it is at the same time a dialectical contradiction to many of its implications. If the experience of Auschwitz symbolizes that we are cut off from God and hope, and that the convenant may be destroyed, then the experience of Jerusalem symbolizes that God's promises are faithful and His people live on. Burning children speak of the absence of all value--human and divine; the rehabilitation of one-half million Holocaust survivors in Israel speaks of the reclamation of tremendous human dignity and value. If Treblinka makes human

hope an illusion, then the Western Wall asserts that human dreams are more real than force and facts. Israel's faith in the God of History demands that an unprecedented event of destruction be matched by an unprecedented act of redemption, and this has happened.[44]

This is not simply a question of the memories of Exodus versus the experience of Auschwitz. If it were a question of Exodus only, then those Jews already cut off from Exodus by the encounter with modern culture would be excluded and only "religious" Jews could still be believers.

But almost all Jews acknowledge this phenomenon--the event of redemption and the event of catastrophe and their dialectical interrelationship--and it touches their lives. Studies show that the number of those who affirm this pheonomenon as central (even if in nontheological categories) has grown from year to year; that its impact is now almost universal among those who will acknowledge themselves as Jews, and that its force has overthrown some hierarchies of values that grew as modernity came to dominate Jewish life. In fact, the religious situation is explosive and fermenting on a deeper level than anyone wishes to acknowledge at this point. The whole Jewish people is caught between immersion in nihilism and immersion in redemption--both are present in immediate experience, and not just historical memory. To deny either pole in our time is to be cut off from historical Jewish experience. In the incredible dialectical tension between the two we are fated to live. Biblical theology already suggested that the time would come when consciousness of God out of the restoration of Israel would outweigh consciousness of God out of the Exodus. In the words of Jeremiah: "The days will come, says the Lord, when it shall no longer be said: ' as God lives who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt' but 'as God lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries whither He had driven them,' and I will bring them back into their land that I gave to their fathers" (Jer.16:14-15)

DESPITE REDEMPTION, FAITH REMAINS DIALECTICAL. But if Israel is so redeeming, why then must faith be "moment faith," and why should the experience of nothingness ever dominate?

The answer is that faith is living in the presence of the Redeemer, and in the moment of utter chaos, of genocide, one does not live in His presence. One must be faithful to the reality of the nothingness. Faith is a moment truth, but there are moments when it is not true. This is certainly demonstrable in dialectical truths, when invoking the truth at the wrong moment is a lie. To let Auschwitz overwhelm Jerusalem is to lie (i.e., to speak a truth out of its appropriate moment); and to let Jerusalem deny Auschwitz is to lie for the same reason.

The biblical witness is that a permanent repudiation of the covenant would also have been a lie. "Behold, they say: our bones are dried up and our hope is lost; we are cut off entirely" (Ezek. 37:11). There were many who chose this answer, but their logic led to dissolution in the pagan world around them. After losing hope in the Lord of History, they were absorbed into idolatry -- the faith of the gods of that moment. In the resolution of the crisis of the biblical faith, those who abandoned hope ceased to testify. However persuasive the reaction may have been at that time, every such decision in Israel's history-until Auschwitz-has been premature, and even wrong. Yet in striking

talmudic interpretation, the rabbis say that Daniel and Jeremiah refused to speak of God as awesome or powerful any longer in light of the destruction of the Temple.[46] The line between the repudiation of the God of the covenant and the Daniel-Jeremiah reaction is so thin that the repudiation must be seen as an authentic reaction even if we reject it. There is a faithfulness in the rejection; serious theism must be troubled after such an event.

This points to another flaw in interpreting the Holocaust through the traditional response, which declares, "We were punished for our sins." Blaming Israel is an attempt to be faithful to the Holocaust and to the tradition, as well as the Exodus experience. But it lacks the combination of imagination and faithfulness of the rabbis and the honesty of Daniel and Jeremiah. It justifies God, not man. Yet surely it is God who did not keep His share of the covenant in defending His people in this generation. It is the miracle of the people of Israel that they persist in faith. Surely it is they who should be justified. The Talmud teaches that if one suffers personally, it is meritorious to say, "I am suffering for my sins," and thereby motivated to repentance. But if someone else is suffering and cannot help himself, and one tells him he is suffering for his sins, it is considered abuse with words. The Talmud calls it onaat devarim, literally, "to exploit or abuse with words." Since, in fact, even if the sufferer repented, he would continue to suffer, explanations of the agony that charge him with guilt are mockery and abuse.[47]

Moreover, summon up the principle that no statement should be made that could not be made in the presence of the burning children. On this rock, the traditionalist argument breaks. Tell the children in the pits they are burning for their sins. An honest man -- better, a decent man -- would spit at such a God rather than accept this rationale if it were true. If this justification is loyalty, then surely treason is the honorable choice. If this were the only choice, then surely God would prefer atheism. In this context, the Darmstadt Conference's statement for the Holocaust as God's call for a Jewish mea culpa which leads to Christ may have totally compromised the legitimacy of the cross as a religious symbol for any decent human being.

V. EXPLORATIONS IN POST-HOLOCAUST THEOLOGICAL MODELS

Job and Renewed Divine Encounter

What, then, are the theological models that could come to the fore in a post-Holocaust interpretation of the relationship between God and man?

One is the model of Job, the righteous man from whom everything is taken: possessions, loved ones, health. It is interesting that his wife proposes that Job "curse God and die;" his friends propose that he is being punished for his sins. Job rejects both propositions. (At the end, God specifically rebukes the friends for their "answer.") The ending of the book, in which Job is restored and has a new wife and children, is of course unacceptable by our principle. Six million murdered Jews have not been and cannot be restored. But Job also offers us a different understanding. His suffering is not justified by God, nor is he consoled by the words about God's majesty and the grandeur of the universe surpassing man's understanding. Rather, what is meaningful in Job's experience is that in the whirlwind the contact with God is restored. That sense of Presence gives the strength to go on living in the contradiction.[48]

The theological implications of Job, then, are the rejection of easy pieties or denials and the dialectical response of looking for, expecting, further revelations of the Presence. This is the primary religious dimension of the reborn State of Israel for all religious people. When suffering had all but overwhelmed Jews and all but blocked out God's Presence, a sign out of the whirlwind gave us the strength to go on, and the right to speak authentically of God's Presence still.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveichik has presented a related image, "the knock on the door" of history. The image is taken from the Song of Songs. Shulamit has been taken to the king's court, is separated from her lover so long that she begins to waver and to doubt the reality of her past love. Suddenly there is a knock on the door. It must be her beloved, but she hesitates to answer-she is too tired from the experience of separation and defeat. Then the emotional realization that it may be her lover fires her and she goes to the door. By the time she does open the door, he is not to be seen (Song of Songs 5:1ff.). The entire episode is so ambiguous that it can be dismissed as the reaction of an overheated imagination, of romantic longing. But the knock has so keenly recrystallized her feelings for her beloved that she will not betray the relationship again.[49] As ambiguous as the secularity and flawed character of the reborn state is, it is enough to confirm the conviction not to "sell out to the court" and deny the past-or future-relationship with the beloved.

Israel's relationship to the Holocaust enormously intensifies the theological weight and testimony of both events. In turn, this deepens the irony of Jewish history and its dialectical impact on Christianity. Christian resistance to the possible new revelatory events in Judaism's history stems from the desire to be faithful to the finality of Christ. But inability to hear new revelation may be one of the signs of the death of the soul. (The phrase "may be one of the signs of the death of the soul" is used advisedly. It may be, in fact, that there is no revelation here. Those who deem it revelation may be mistaken, or it may be heard only by those for whom it is intended; those who do not hear it may not hear it because it is not addressed to them at all.)

One of the classic Christian self-validations has been the claim that the Old Covenant is finished; the old olive tree is blasted and bears no more fruit. New revelation in Judaism is perceived as incompatible with Christianity's superseding nature; the admission could destroy the structure of Christian authority. Yet confession by Christians of Judaism's ongoing life and acceptance in gratitude of a new harvest of revelation would, at one stroke, undercut the whole Teaching of Contempt tradition in Christianity. This tradition has been a major sustainer of hatred within Christianity, and has made it the accomplice of many crimes that compromise its authority. Similarly, revelation in a time so secular and so closed to the transcendent restores the presence of God and sustains all faiths. In light of the Holocaust, classical Christianity "dies" to be reborn to new life; or it lives unaffected, to die to God and man.

The Suffering Servant and the Limits of Modernity

There is a second theological model that seems destined for a greater role in Jewish theology and, I dare say, for new meaning in Christianity; the Suffering Servant. Hitherto, this image has been played down by Jews because of its

centrality in Christian theology. We are indebted to J. Coert Rylarsdaam for opening our eyes to this neglected model. Rylarsdaam once said that if being Christian meant taking up the cross and being crucified for God, then the only practicing Christians were the Jews.

The Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53 sounds like a passage out of Holocaust literature. He is led as a sheep to slaughter (a term much and unfairly used in reference to the Holocaust). He is despised and forsaken of men. The term "despised" is repeated twice in verse 3. He is not only held in contempt, but there is a contempt-evoking element in him: he stinks. He is a man of pain and disease, with no comeliness. Men look away from him. (The chapter reads like an eyewitness description of the inmates of concentration camps after a month or two.) The Suffering Servant is smitten by God, but not for his sins. He is struck for the sins of all men. (In biblical language, in which all human actions have their source in God, it is stated: "The Lord hath made to light on him the iniquity of us all.")

Of course, the concept of vicarious suffering is not new to Jewish tradition. It is one of the great themes of the High Holy Day liturgy. Isaac's binding in particular is held up as a paradigm of suffering for others. "For the sake of the son who was bound, he will silence those who condemn us."

Karl Barth, Roy Eckardt, and Eliezer Berkovitz have suggested that Israel suffers for the nations' anger at God. Because Israel is God's people, "other nations are constantly enraged by its existence, revolting against it, and wishing its destruction." Or, as Eckardt puts it: "In the existence of the Jewish people, we are confronted by God's electing grace, by His mercy as the only basis of Human life. By our antagonism to Jews we show that we really do not like this fact.."[50]

I would suggest another nuance, closer to Berkovits's emphasis on the Jews as witness. By its existence, Israel testifies to the God who promises ultimate redemption and perfection in an unredeemed world. Thus it arouses the anger of all who claim already to have found absolute perfection. Whenever there are Christian claims to absolute spiritual salvation, or Stalinist or Nazi claims to absolute social and political perfection, or capitalist or superpatriot claims to ultimate national loyalty, then Jews naturally become the object of suspicion and rejection. For this people's existence testifies: not yet. Beyond this point there are other civilizations and future perfections. Israel lays down this gauntlet whether or not it consciously testifies for God. How many times has the "non-Jewish Jew" testified, if not for God, then against idolatry, against the absolutizing of the relative current status quo.

Here I would suggest that a less mystical model of the Suffering Servant is crucial to our understanding. The treatment of the Suffering Servant is a kind of early warning system of the sins intrinsic in the culture but often not seen until later. Take the experience of Russia. The dangers of absolute power (even in the name of the proletariat) corrupting absolutely were not so apparent until the late period of Stalin. But the danger now broadcast aloud for all to see was foreshadowed earlier in the treatment of the Jews.

To borrow a homely metaphor: The old coal mines had no gas detectors. Instead, canaries and parakeets were kept in the mines. When coal gas escaped, it would

poison the birds, for they were more sensitive to it than humans. When the birds were poisoned, the miners knew it was time to go to another vein or move in a different direction.

The Holocaust was an advance warning of the demonic potential in modern culture. If one could conceive of Hitler coming to power not in 1933 but in 1963, after the invention of nuclear and hydrogen bombs, then the Holocaust would have been truly universal. It is a kind of last warning that if man will perceive and overcome the demonism unleashed in modern culture, the world may survive. Otherwise, the next Holocaust will embrace the whole world.

Unfortunately, the strain of evil is deeply embedded in the best potentials of modernity. the pollution is in the liberating technology; the uniformity in the powerful communication and cultural explosion; the mass murder in the efficient bureaucracy. This suggests a desperate need to delegitimatize the excessive authority claims of our culture. Yet some of its most attractive features may be the ones to lead us into the path of no return.

From this fact comes a call to Jews and Christians to resist the overwhelming attractions of the secular city even at its best. For as much as humanity needs immersion in the pluralism of its humanizing communications, and the freedom from fixed roles of its extraordinary options, and the liberating materialism of the city, it also needs groups to stay in spiritual tension with these same forces. The analogy may be to Ulysses, who must strap himself to the mast to make sure that, no matter how beautiful the siren song, he would not let himself be swept into the whirlpool of absolute commitment-shipwreck. Christians and Jews are called upon to preserve their inner community and its testimony, out of the past and future. Their task is harder than Ulysses', for they are also called by the Holocaust to correct that very testimony's faults through participation in the new, open civilization. Let Gunter Lewy's and Gordon Zahn' studies of Catholics in Germany serve as warning.[51] The price of commitment to a Kulturreligion may be the inability to resist the worst moral possibilities in an otherwise good society. Once the center of loyalty is placed in that structure and there is absolute commitment to that society's values, then religion is powerless to check the excesses.

The Holocaust warns us that our current values breed their own nemesis of evil when unchecked-even as Nazi Germany grew in the matrix of modernity. To save ourselves from such error, we will have to draw on the warning of the experiences of the Suffering Servant. The Holocaust suggests a fundamental skepticism about all human movements, left and right, political and religious-even as we participate in them. Nothing dare evoke our absolute, unquestioning loyalty, not even our God, for this leads to possibilities of SS loyalties. SS Reichsfuhrer Himmler could speak of "honor" and "decency" in carrying out the slaughter of millions. "By and large, however we can say that we have performed this task in love of our people. And we have suffered no damage from it in our inner self, in our soul, in our character."[52]

At the same time, the Holocaust demands a reinterpretation of the Suffering Servant model, especially for Christians, who have tended to glorify this role. It is a warning that when suffering is overwhelming, then the servant may be driven to yield to evil. In The Holocaust Kingdom Alexander Donat tells of the experience of Sawek and his wife. When the expulsion of adults is ordered and

they are included, they give their two-year-old Miriam a sedative and sling her in a knapsack over her father's shoulder. (Taking children along is prohibited, and in fact the children should have been taken by that time.) As they wait in line for processing, a baby which is being smuggled through ahead of them awakens and begins to cry. A Ukrainian guard goes over, bayonets the baby, and kills the baby, and kills the father in front of them. All the blood drains from Sawek's face. "Take off the knapsack," his wife hissed. "As if in a trance, he did so...and carefully deposited the knapsack on the curb...then he went back to his original place, eyes vacant."[53]

There is also a conflict between the need for the promise of the sanctity of the Suffering Servant and of the world to come, and the danger of passivity at the fact of children burning now. The redemptive nature of suffering must be in absolute tension with the dialectical reality that it must be fought, cut dowm, eliminated. I once visited a great Christian, who had gone to India and devoted his life to a community caring in extraordinary sacrificial love for brain-damaged little children. Yet the community had never thought of bringing in a doctor to diagnose what treatment might be available to improve the condition of the children.

The Controversy with God-and with the Gospels

There is yet a third theological model which comes to the forefront after the Holocaust. I would call it the Lamentations 3 model (finding it in Chapter 3 of the Lamentations). It is the dominant theme in the writings of Elie Wiesel.

The early chapters of Lamentations are full of the "obvious" biblical solution: punishment for sins. Chapter 3 sounds a different note: "I am the man who has seen suffering." "God ate up my flesh and skin." "He [God] is a bear who stalks, and attacks me like a lion..." The agony is inflicted by God, but there is no note of sinfulness. There is only anger and pain. "And I said: my eternity and my hope from God has been lost." The climax is not guilt, but control, anger, and a feeling of being cut off from God.

Says Wiesel on Rosh Hashanah: "This day I had ceased to plead...on the contrary, I felt very strong. I was the accuser, God the accused....I had ceased to be anything but ashes, yet I felt myself to be stronger than the Almighty..." Or again, "man is very strong, greater than God. When You were deceived by Adam and Eve, You drove them out of Paradise....But there are men here whom You have betrayed, whom You have allowed to be betrayed, gassed, burned; what do they do? They pray before You. They praise Your name!"[54]

In Lamentations, what pulls the narrator through is the sudden memory of past goodness. "This I recall to mind, therefore I have hope: the Lord's mercies, for they are not consumed." The Exodus memory is sustaining.

Wiesel teaches us that in the very anger and controversy itself is the first stage of a new relationship, perhaps the only kind of relationship possible with God at this point in history. Could it be that the banal quality of prayer in our time is due to the fact that there are not enough prayers that, in our anger, we can say? Is it because we lack a prayer on the Holocaust that expresses the anger-that, at least, blames God? Anger is more compatible with love and involvement than pleasant niceties and old compliments.

Again, these are direct implications of this model. Centrally: it is to justify human beings, not God. It suggests a total and thoroughgoing self-criticism that would purge the emotional dependency and self abasement of traditional religion and its false crutch of certainty and security. It involves a willingness to confess and clear up the violations of the image of God (of women, Jews, blacks, others) in our values, and a willingness to overcome the institutionalism that sacrifices God to self-interest. (One of the defenses of Pius XII's silence is that he felt he should not endanger the church and the faithful by stopping genocide.[55] If true faith means taking up the cross for God, then when will there ever be a truer time to be crucified, if necessary? Even if the attempt to help is doomed to failure, when will it be more appropriate to risk one's life or the church's life than to stop the crucifixion of children?) Justifying people means the fullest willingness, in both Judaism and Christianity, to defend the revolt against God and the faith that grows out of the desire to liberate man. Yet here too, the Holocaust demands a dialectical capacity from us. Rebels are not usually good at conserving; but if we simply validate the contemporary, we fall into idolatry and prepare the legitimization of another Holocaust.

In this model we find the source for one of the fundamental steps Christianity must take after the Holocaust: to quarrel with the Gospels themselves for being a source of anti-Semitism. For the devout Christian, the New Testament is the word of God. Yet even the word of God must be held to account for nourishing hatred, as well as for culpability in, or being an accessory and purification of the Gospels themselves can begin to purify Christianity from being a source of hatred. The Holocaust reveals that Christianity has the stark choice of contrition, repentance, and self-purification, or the continual temptation to participate in genocide or pave the way for it. If Christianity has barely survived the first Holocaust, I do not believe that it can survive a second with any real moral capital at all. As painful as is the prospect, then, of a surrender of missionary enterprise to the Jew or a critique of the Gospels, this is possible out of a faith purged by the flames of the Holocaust. Ultimately it will be less painful than the alternative, of being accessory to the once and future fact of genocide. It will take extraordinary sacrificial effort to achieve this. But extraordinary catastrophes are not mastered by routine treatment or evasion. Only extraordinary outbursts of life or creativity can overcome them. To overwhelming death one must respond with overwhelming life.

Of course, none of these models can fully articulate the tensions of the relationship to God after the Holocaust. And it will take time to develop these models. This suggests that we are entering a period of silence in theology-a silence about God that corresponds to His silence. In this silence, God may be presence and hope, but no longer the simple <u>deus ex machina</u>.

VI. THE CENTRAL RELIGIOUS TESTIMONY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

Recreating Human Life

In the silence of God and of theology, there is one fundamental testimony that can still be given-the testimony of human life itself. This was always the basic evidence, but after Auschwitz its import is incredibly heightened. In fact, it is the only testimony that can still be heard.

The vast number of dead and morally destroyed is the phenomenology of absurdity and radical evil, the continuing statement of human worthlessness and meaninglessness that shouts down all talk of God and human worth. The Holocaust is even model and pedagogy for future generations that genocide can be carried out with impunity-one need fear neither God nor man. There is one response to such overwhelming tragedy: the reaffirmation of meaningfulness, worth, and life-through acts of love and life-giving. The act of creating a life or enhancing its dignity is the counter-testimony to Auschwitz. To talk of love and of a God who cares in the presence of the burning children is obscene and incredible; to leap in and pull a child out of a pit, to clean its face and heal its body, is to make the most powerful statement-the only statement that counts.

In the first moment after the Flood, with its testimony of Absurd and mass human death, Noah is given two instructions-the only two that can testify after such an event. "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1-7), and "but your life blood I will hold you responsible for"-"who sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man" (Gen. 9:5-6). Each act of creating a life, each act of enhancing or holding people responsible for human life, becomes multiplied in its resonance because it contradicts the mass graves of biblical Shinar-or Treblinka.

Recreating the Image of God

This becomes the critical religious act. Only a million or billion such acts can begin to right the balance of testimony so drastically shifted by the mass weight of six million dead. In an age when one is ashamed or embarassed to talk about God in the presence of the burning children, the image of God, which points beyond itself to transcendence, is the only statement about God that one can make. And it is human life itself that makes the statement-words will not help.

Put it another way: the overwhelming testimony of the six million is so strong that it all but irretrievably closes out religious language. Therefore the religious enterprise after this event must see itself as a desperate attempt to create, save, and heal the image of God wherever it still exists-lest further evidence of meaninglessness finally tilt the scale irreversibly. Before this calling, all other "religious" activity is dwarfed.

But where does one find the strength to have a child after Auschwitz? Why bring a child into a world where Auschwitz is possible? Why expose it to such a risk again? The perspective of Auschwitz sheds new light on the nature of childrearing and faith. It takes enormous faith in ultimate redemption and meaningfulness to choose to create or even enhance life again. In fact, faith is revealed by this not to be a belief or even an emotion, but an ontological life-force that reaffirms creation and life in the teeth of overwhelming death. One must silently assume redemption in order to have the child-and having the child makes the statement of redemption.

There is a Jewish tradition that unashamedly traces the lineage of the Messiah to Lot's two daughters (Gen. 19:30 ff.), the survivors of the brimstone-and-fire catastrophe of Sodom. Lot and the two daughters believed that they were the only survivors of another world catastrophe (ibid.,v.31). What is the point, then, of still conceiving? What possible meaning or value can there be to life?

The answer to absurd death is unreasoning life; it is chesed - lovingkindness that seeks to create an object of its love, that sees that life and love can overcome the present reality, which points to and proves a new creation and final redemption. So the daughters stopped at nothing-getting their own father drunk, seducing him, committing drunken incest-yet conceiving the Messiah. (Jewish tradition traces the Messiah from Moab to Ruth, to David, to the final Redeemer.)[56] It is quite a contrast to the Immaculate Conception, but it is truer to human reality and redemption out of the human condition. In the welter of grubby human reality and redemption out of the human reality, with evil and death rampant, with mixed human motives and lusts, the Redeemer comes out of the ground of new creation and hope. "On the day the Temple was destroyed, the Messiah was born."[57] After the war, one of the highest birth-rates in the world prevailed in the displaced-persons camps, where survivors lived in their erstwhile concentration camps.

The reborn State of Israel is this fundamental act of life and meaning of the Jewish people after Auschwitz. To fail to grasp that inextricable connection and response is to utterly fail to comprehend the theological significance of Israel. The most bitterly secular atheist involved in Israel's upbuilding is the front line of the Messianic life-force struggling to give renewed testimony to the Exodus as ultimate reality. Israel was built by rehabilitating a half-million survivors of the Holocaust. Each one of those lives had to be rebuilt, given opportunity for trust restored. I have been told of an Israeli Youth Aliyah village settled by orphan children from the European camps, which suffered from an infestation of mice for a long time. There were children in this village who had lived through the shattering effect of the total uprooting and destruction of their reality, of the overnight transition from affluence to permanent hunger. Ten years after the Holocaust, some of these children would still sneak bread out of the dining room and hide it in their quarters. They could not believe that this fragile world of love would not again be shattered at any time. They were determined not to be caught without a supply of bread. And neither reassurances nor constant searches could uncover the bread; it was hidden in evermore clever caches-only to bring the mice. Yet these half a million-and the eight hundred thousand Jewish refugees from Arab countries-were absorbed and given new opportunity and dignity. (They found enough strength to live under the shadow of another genocide aimed at themselves for more than twenty-five years.)

The Context of an Image of God

In a world of overpopulation and mass starvation and of zero population growth, something further must be said. I, for one, believe that in the light of the crematoria, the Jewish people are called to re-create life. Nor is such testimony easily given. One knows the risk to the children.

But it is not only the act of creating life that speaks. To bring the child into a world in which it will be hungry and diseased and neglected, is to torment and debase the image of God; to build a world in which wealth and resources are created and distributed to provide the matrix for existence as an image of God.

We also face the urgent call to eliminate every sterotype discrimination that reduces-and denies-this image in the other. It was the ability to distinguish

some people as human and others as not that enabled the Nazis to segregate and then destroy the "subhumans" (Jews, Gypsies, Slavs). The ability to differentiate the foreign Jews from French-born Jews paved the way for the deportation first of foreign-born, then of native, French Jews. The indivisibility of human dignity and equality becomes an essential bulwark against the repetition of another Holocaust. It is the command rising out of Auschwitz.

This means a vigourous self-criticism, and review of every cultural or religious framework that may sustain some devaluation or denial of the absolute and equal dignity of the other. This is the overriding command and the essential criterion for religious existence, to whoever walks by the light of the flames. Without this testimony and the creation of facts that give it persuasiveness, the act of the religious enterprise simply lacks credibility. To the extent that religion may extend or justify the evils of dignity denied, it becomes the devil's testimony. Whoever joins in the work of creation and rehabilitation of the image of God is, therefore, participating in "restoring to God his scepter and crown." Whoever does not support-or opposes-this process is seeking to complete the attack on God's presence in the world. These must be seen as the central religious acts. They shed a pitiless light on popes who deny birth control to starving millions because of a need to uphold the religious authority of the magestrium; or on rabbis who deny women's dignity out of loyalty to divinely given traditions.

VII. RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

The End Of The Secular-Religious Dichotomy. This argument makes manifest an underlying thrust in this interpretation. The Holocaust has destroyed the meaning of the categories of "secular" and "religious." Illuminated by the light of the crematoria, these categories are dissolved and not infrequently turned inside out.

We must remember the many "religious" people who carried out the Holocaust. There were killers and murderers who continued to practice organized religion, including Christianity. There were many "good Christians," millions of respectable people, who turned in, rounded up, and transported millions of Jews. Some sympathized with or were apathetic to the murder process, while perceiving themselves as religiously observant and faithful-including those who did an extra measure of Jew-hunting or betrayal because they perceived it as an appropriate expression of Christian theology. Vast numbers of people practiced religion in this period, but saw no need to stand up to or resist the destruction process.

As Camus said:

> I continue to struggle against this universe in which children suffer and die.
>
> For a long time during those frightful years I waited for a great voice to speak up in Rome. I, an unbeliever? Precisely. For I knew that the spirit would be lost if I did not utter a cry of condemnation when faced with force. It seems that the voice did speak up. But I assure you that millions of men like me did not hear it and that at that time

> believers and unbelievers alike shared a solitude that continued to spread as the days went by and the executioners multiplied.
>
> It has been explained to me since that the condemnation was indeed voiced. But that it was in the style of the encyclicals, which is not at all clear. The condemnation was voiced and it was not understood! Who could fail to feel where the true condemnation lies in this case and to see that this example by itself gives part of the reply, perhaps the whole reply, that you ask of me.[58]

To add a final, more obscene note on the domestication of God and the denaturing of religion: Heinrich Himmler, overall head of the kingdom of death, told Felix Kersten, his masseur, "some higher Being...is behind Nature...If we refused to recognize that we should be no better than the Marxists...I insist that members of the SS must believe in God."[59] (Whenever I reread this passage, I swear that the name of God must be hidden away in the absolute silence and secrecy for so long that all the murderers and bystanders will have forgotten it. Only then can it be brought out and used again.)

IF "ALL IS PERMITTED," WHAT IS THE "FEAR OF GOD"? The Holocaust is overwhelming witness that "all is permitted." It showed that there are no limits of sacredness or dignity to stop the death process. There were no thunderbolts or divine curses to check mass murder or torture. The Holocaust also showed that one can literally get away with murder. After the war a handful of killers were punished, but the vast majority were not. Catholic priests supplied disguises and passports for mass mudrderers to help them escape punishment. German and Austrian officials cleared them of guilt-or imposed a few years of prison for killing tens of thousands. Men in charge of legally ostracizing Jews and clearing them for destruction became secretaries to cabinet ministers. Men who owned gas-producing comanpies, those who had built crematoria, were restored to their full ownership rights and wealth. Thirty years later, an anti-Nazi woman was imprisoned for seeking to kidnap and deliver for extradition a mass murderer, while he went free. Austrian juries acquitted the architect of the Auschwitz gas chambers. If all is permitted, why should anyone hold back from getting away with whatever one can? The prudential argument, that it is utilitarian not to do so, surely is outweighed by the reality that one can get away with so much. And the example of millions continually testifies against any sense of reverence or dignity to check potential evil.

I would propose that there is an explanation; a biblical category applies here. Whoever consistently holds back from murder or human exploitation when he could perpetrate it with immunity-or any person who unswervingly devotes himself to reverence, care, and protection of the divine image which is man, beyond that respect which can be coerced-reveals the presence within of a primordial awe-"fear of God"-which alone evokes such a response.

The biblical category suggests that fear of God is present where people simply cannot do certain things. It is, as it were, a field of force that prevents certain actions. The midwives feared God (Exod. 1:21), and therefore, they simply could not kill newborn babies. When fear of God is not present, then there are no limits. Amalek could attack the weak and those who lagged behind

because Amalek did not "fear God" (Deut. 25:18). A man can be killed in order to be robbed of his fair wife in a place where there is no fear of God (Gen.20:11). We posit that this presence is a shield. This is why people cannot kill human beings in the "image of God"-they must first take them outside the pale of uniqueness and value before they can unleash murder. They must first be convinced that there is no divine limit. In the glare of the fires, by their piercing rays, we now can see clearly who has this fear of God and who does not.

It makes no difference whether the person admits the presence of God. From the biblical perspective, the power of the limit reveals that the divine presence's force is operating. (This is the meaning of Rabbi Akiva's statement in the Talmud, that in the moment that the thief steals, he is an atheist. Otherwise, how could he disobey the divine voice that says: Thou shalt not steal.)

Religious and Secular Self-Definition in the light of Auschwitz. Nor can we take self-definitions seriously. During the Holocaust, many (most?) of the church's protests were on behalf of Jews converted to Christianity. Consider what this means. It is not important to protest the murder of Jews; only if a person believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is there a moral need to protest his fate.[60] Can we take such self-definitions of religious people as reflection of belief in God?

When, in May and June 1967, it appeared that another Holocaust loomed, men of God remained silent. Pople Paul VI, moved by all sorts of legitimate or normal considerations (concern for Christian Arabs, concern for holy places, theological hang-ups about secular Israel) remained silent. A self-avowed atheist, root source of much of modern atheism, Jean-Paul Sartre, spoke out against potential genocide-even though he had to break with his deepest political alliances and self-image in his links to Arabs and Third World figures to do so. He knew that there is one command: Never another Holocaust. Which is the man of god, which the atheist? By biblical perspective? By Auchwitz perspective? Are title, self-definition, official dress, public opinion-even sincere personal profession-more significant than action?

If someone were to begin to strangle you, all the while protesting loudly and sincerely: "I love you!" at what point would the perception of that person's sincerity change? At what point would you say, "Actions speak louder than words"? As you turn blue, you say , "Uh...pardon me, are you sure that I am the person you had in mind...when you said, "I love you'?"

One must fully respect the atheist's right to his own self-definition. But from the religious perspective, the action speaks for itself. The denial of faith has to be seen as the action of one determined to be a secret servant, giving up the advantages of acknowledged faith, because at such a time such advantages are blasphemous. Perhaps it reveals a deeper religious consciousness that knows there must be a silence about God-if faith in Him is not to be fatally destroyed in light of the Holocaust and of the abuse of faith in God expressed by a Himmler. Thus, the atheist who consistently shows reverence for the image of God, but denies that he does so because he is a believer in God, is revealed by the flames to be one of the thirty-six righteous-the hidden righteous, whom Jewish tradition asserts to be the most righteous, those for whose sake the world exists. Their faith is totally inward and they renounce the prerequisites of overt faith; and for their sake the world of evil is borne by God.[61]

The State Of Israel: A Study In Secularity and Religion after Auschwitz. By this standard, the "secular" state of Israel is revealed for the deeply religious state that it is. Both its officially nonreligious majority as well as its official and established religious minority are irrelevenat to this judgement. The real point is that after Auschwitz, the existence of the Jew is a great affirmation and an act of faith. The recreation of the body of the people, Israel, is renewed testimony to Exodus as ultimate reality, to God's continuing presence in history proven by the fact that his people, depsite the attempt to annihilate them, still exist.

Moreover, who show that they know that God's covenant must be upheld by re-creating his people? Who heard this overriding claim and set aside personal comfort, cut personal living standards drastically, gave life, health, energy to the rehabilitation of the remnants of the covenant people? Who give their own lives repeatedly in war and/or guard duty to protect the remnant? Surely the secular Jews of Israel as much as, or more than, the religious Jews, or non-Jews anywhere.

The religious-secular paradox goes deeper still. Instead of choosing to flee at all costs from the terrible fate of exposure to genocide, instead of spending all their energy and money to hide and disappear, Jews all over the world - secular Jews included - renewed and intensified their Jewish existence and continued to have and raise Jewish children. Knowing if the fate to which this choice exposes them (a fate especially dramatically clear in Israel, where year after year the Arabs have preached extermination); aware of how little the world really cared, or cares, and that the first time is always the hardest - what is one to make of the faith of those who made this decision and who live it every day, especially in Israel? The answer has been given most clearly by Emil Fackenheim. To raise a Jewish child today is to bind the child and the child's child on the altar, even as father Abraham bound Isaac. Only, those who do so today know that there is no angel to stop the process and no ram to substitute for more than one and one-half million Jewish children in this lifetime. Such an act then, can only come out of resources of faith, of ultimate meaningfulness - of Exodus trust - on a par with, or superior to, father Abraham at the peak of his life as God's loved and covenanted follower. Before such faith, who shall categorize in easy categories the secular and the devout Israeli or Jew?

A classical revelation of the deeper levels can be found in the "Who is a Jew" controversy, and in the Israeli "Law of Return," which guarantees every Jew automatic admittance into Israel. This law has been used against Israel, in slogans of "racism," by those who say that if Israel only de-Zionizes and gives up this law she would have peace from her Arab neighbors, and by Christian and other non-Jews who then assess Israel as religiously discriminatory. All of these judgments cost the secular Israelis a great deal-not least because any weakening of public support means a heightened prospect of genocide for themselves and their children. In turn, the secular Israeli is bitterly criticized by observant Jews. In 1974 this issue even disrupted attempts to form a government, at a time when life and death negotiations hung in the balance. Why, then, has the law been stubbornly upheld by the vast majority of secular Israelis?

It reveals the deepest recesses of their souls. They refuse to formally secualarize the definition of "Israeli" and thereby cut the link between the

covenant people of history and the political body of present Israel-despite their own inability to affirm, or even their vigorous denial of, the covenant! They see Auschwitz as revelatory and commanding, normative as great events in covenant history are, and they are determined to guarantee automatic admission to every Jew-knowning full well he is always exposed (by covenantal existence) to the possibility of another Holocaust with no place to flee. The lesson of Auschwitz is that no human being should lack a guaranteed place to flee again, just as the lesson of the Exodus was that no runaway slave should be turned back to his master (Deut. 23:16). (Needless to say, there is self-interest involved also-more Jews in Israel strengthen the security of Israel. But the admixture of self-interest is part of the reality in which religious imperatives are acted upon by all human beings.)

In light of this, Zionism, criticized by some devout Jews as secular revolt against religion and by other observant Jews for its failures to create a state that fully observes Jewish tradition, is carrying out the central religious actions of the Jewish people after Auschwitz. Irony piles upon irony! The re-creation of the state is the strongest suggestion that God's promises are still valid and reliable. Thus the secularist pheonomenon gives the central religious testimony of the Jewish people today. In the Holocaust many rabbis ruled that every Jew killed for being Jewish has died for the sanctification of the name of God. In death as in life, the religious-secular dichotomy is essentially ended.

Dialectial Reflections on the End of the Secular-Religious Difficulty

CONTRA HUMANISM. Once we establish the centrality of the reverence for the image of God and the erosion of the secular-religious dichotomy after Auschwitz, then the dialectic of the Holocaust becomes visible. Such views could easily become embodied in a simple humanism or a new universalist liberation that is totally absorbed in the current secular option. To collapse into this option would be to set up the possibility of another idolatry; but it reopens the possibility of the concentration of power and legitimacy which could carry out another Holocaust. We were bidden to resist this temptation. Indeed, there is a general principle at work here. Every solution that is totally at ease with a dominant option is to be seen as an attempt to escape from the dialectical torment of living with the Holocaust. If you do escape, you open up the option that the Holocaust may recur. A radical self-critical humanism springing out of the Holocaust says no to the demons of Auschwitz; a celebration of the death of God or of secular man is collaboration with these demons.

CONTRA PROTEAN MAN. The fury of the Holocaust also undercuts the persuasiveness of another modern emphasis-the sense of option and choice of existence. The sense of widespread freedom to choose identity and of the weakening of biological or inherited status is among the most pervasive values of contemporary culture. It clearly grows out of the quantum leap in human power and control through medicine and technology, backed by the development of democratic and universalist norms. It has generated a revolt against inherited disadvantage, and even genetic or biological limitations. The freedom of being almost protean is perceived as positive-the source of liberation and human dignity. In light of the Holocaust, we must grapple with the question anew. Is the breaking of organic relationships and deracination itself the source of the pathology which erupted at the heart of modernity? Erich Fromm has raised the issue in Escape from Freedom. Otto Ohlendorf-the head of D Einsatzgruppe, and one of the very

few war criminals willing to admit frankly what he did and why-stressed the search for restored authority and rootedness (e.g. the failure to conserve the given as well as the freely chosen in modern culture) as a major factor in the scope and irrationality of the Nazis' murderous enterprise. Since the attack started against the people of Israel, but planned to go on to Slavs and other groups, it poses a fundamental question to the credibility of modern culture itself. There has not been enough testing and study of this possibility in the evidence of the Holocaust yet, but it warrants a serious study and an immediate reconsideration of the persuasiveness of the "freedom-of-being" option in modernity. The concept is profoundly challenged by the Jewish experience in the Holocaust.[62] For the demonic assault on the people of Israel recognized no such choice. Unlike the situation that prevailed in medieval persecutions, one could not cease to be a Jew through conversion. In retrospect, liberation turned out to be an illusion that weakened the victims capacity to recognize their coming fate or the fact that the world would not save them-because they were Jews.

CONTRA THE SUPERIORITY OF THE SPIRIT OVER THE FLESH. This insight also reverses the historical, easy Christian polemic concerning the "Israel of the flesh" versus "Israel of the spirit". After all, is not Israel of the spirit a more universal and more committed category, a more spiritually meaningful state, than the status conferred by accident of birth? Yet the Holocaust teaches the reverse. When absolute power arose and claimed to be God, then Israel's existence was antithetical to its own. Israel of the flesh by its mere existence gives testimony, and therefore was "objectively" an enemy of the totalitarian state. By the same token neither commitment to secularism, atheism, or any other faith-nor even joining Christianity-could remove the intrinsic status of being Jewish, and being forced to stand and testify. Fackenheim, Berkovits, Rubenstein, and others have spoken of the denial of significance to the individual Jew by the fact that his fate was decided by his birth-whatever his personal perference. But classical Jewish commentators had a different interpretation. The mere fact that the Jew's existence denies the absolute claims of others means that the Jew is testifying. The act of living speaks louder than the denial of intention to testify, as I have suggested in my comments on fear of God above. During the Holocaust, rabbis began to quote a purported ruling by Maimonides that a Jew killed by bandits-who presumably feel freer to kill him because he is a Jew-has died for the sanctification of the Name, whether or not he was pressured before death to deny his Judaism and his God.[63] This testimony, voluntarily given or not, turns out to be the secret significance of "Israel of the flesh." A Jew's life is on the line and therefore every kind of Jew gives testimony at all times.

Israel of the spirit testifies against the same idolatry and evil. Indeed, there were sincere Christians who stood up for their principles, were recognized as threats, and sent to concentration camps. However, Israel of the spirit only has the choice of being silent; with this measure of collaboration, it can live safely and at ease. Not surprisingly, the vast majority chose to be safe. As Franklin Littell put it, when paganism is persecuting, Christians "can homogenize and become mere gentiles again; while Jews, believing or secularized, remain representatives of another history, another providence."[64] It suggests that from now on one of the great keys to testimony in the face of the enormously powerful forces available to evil, will be to have given hostages, to be on the line because one is inextricably bound to this fate. The Christian analogy of this experience would be a surrender of the often self-deceiving univer-

salist rhetoric of the church and a conception of itself as people of God-a distinct community of faith with some identification-that must testify to the world.

VIII. FINAL DIALECTIC: THE DIALECTIC OF POWER

There is yet another dialectic we must confront. To do so we must encounter the Holocaust once more, in a scene form Tadeus Borowski's account of life at Auschwitz. Says Borowski:

> They go, they vanish. Men, women, and children. Some of them know. Here is a woman-she walks quickly but tries to appear calm. A small child with a pink cherub's face runs after her and, unable to keep up. stretches out his little arms and cries: "Mama! Mama!" "Pick up your child, woman!" "It's not mine, sir, not mine!" she shouts hysterically and runs on, covering her face with her hands. She wants to hide, she wants to reach those who will not ride the trucks, those who will go on foot, those who will stay alive. She is young, healthy, good-looking, she wants to live.
>
> But the child runs after her wailing loudly: "Mama, mama, don't leave me!" It's not mine, not mine, no!" Andrei, a sailor from Sevastopol, grabs hold of her. His eyes are glassy from vodka and the heat. With one powerful blow he knocks her off her feet, then, as she falls, takes her by the hair and pulls her up again. His face twitches with rage. "Ah, you bloody Jewess! So you're running from your own child; I'll show you, you whore!" His huge hand chokes her, he lifts her in the air and leaves her on the truck like a heavy sack of grain. "Here! And take this with you, bitch!" and he throws the child at her feet. "Gut gemacht, good work. That's the way to deal with degenerate mothers," says the S.S. man standing at the foot of the truck. "Gut, gut, Russki"[65]

We have to comprehend that mother. We know from hundreds of accounts that Jews went to their death because they wanted to stay with their families. We know of mothers who gave themselves up to transport when their children were seized. We know of parents who declined to go to the forests or to the Aryan side because their children could not go. Imagine, then this mother. She had voluntarily gone on the train to be with her child; she had declined to escape. She arrives at Auschwitz after a stupefying trip, described by another as follows:

> When I climbed in, the carriage was half-full. The smell of chlorine hit my nose. The walls and the floor were white and everything was covered with disinfectant-powder. Immediately experienced a dryness and a queer burning in my mouth and throat. Thirst began to torture me... The heat grew worse all the time. Moisture which had condensed from the vapors began to drip from the ceiling. People began to unbutton their coats to get relief from the heat and the stuffiness... The

> heat in the carriage became worse every moment, and so did our state. We were dazed: half sane, half mad. The will-to-live became independent of the person and uncontrollable .... Manners and coventions which everyone observed up till now are no longer seen. They evaporate in the heat. The will-to-live has taken the floor. Women of all ages remove their coats. They tear their dresses from themselves. They stand half naked. Someone relieves himself. Everything is overturned and uprooted; a mist fogs one's consciousness.[66]

In this state, when she suddenly understood where she was, when she smelled the stench of the burning bodies-perhaps heard the cries of the living in the flames-she abandoned her child and ran.

Out of this wells up the cry: Surely here is where the cross is smashed. There has been a terrible misunderstanding of the symbol of the crucifixion. Surely, we understand now that the point of the account is the cry; "My lord, my lord, why have you abandoned me?" Never again should anyone be exposed to such one-sided power on the side of evil-for in such extremis not only does evil triumph, but the Suffering Servant now breaks and betrays herself. Out of the Holocaust experience comes the demand for redistribution of power. The principle is simple. No one should ever have to depend again on anyone else's goodwill or respect for their basic security and right to exist. The Jews of Europe needed that goodwill and these good offices desperately--and the democracies and the church and the Communists and their fellow-Jews failed them. No one should ever be equipped with less power than is necessary to assure one's dignity. To argue dependence on law, or human goodness, or universal equality is to join the ranks of those who would like to repeat the Holocaust. Anyone who wants to prevent a repetition must support a redistribution of power. Since this, in turn, raises a large number of issues and problems with regard to power, we will not analyze it here. But the analysis of the risks of power and the dialectic of its redistribution is a central ongoing task of religion and morality, and a vast pedagogical challenge to all who are committed to prevent a second Auschwitz.

IX. LIVING WITH THE DIALECTIC

The dialectic I have outlined is incredibly difficult to live by. How can we reconcile such extraordinary human and moral tensions? The classical traditions of Judaism and Christianity suggest: by reenacting constantly the event which is normative and revelatory. Only those who experience the normative event in their bones-through the community of the faith-will live by it.[67] I would suggest, then, that in the decades and centuries to come, Jews and others who seek to orient themselves by the Holocaust will unfold another sacral round. Men and women will gather to eat the putrid bread of Auschwitz, the potato peelings of Bergen-Belsen. They will tell of the children who went, the starvation and hunger of the ghettos, the darkening of the light in the Mussulmen's eyes. To enable people to reenact and relive Auschwitz there are records, pictures, even films-some taken by the murderers, some by the victims. That this pain will be incorporated in the round of life we regret; yet we may hope that it will not destroy hope but rather strengthen responsibility, will, and faith.

After Auschwitz, one must beware of easy hope. Israel is a perfect symbol for this. On the one hand, it validates the right to hope and speak of life renewed

after destruction. On the other hand, it has been threatened with genocide all along. At the moment it is at a low point-yet prospects for a peace also suddenly emerge. Any hope must be sober, and built on the sands of despair, free from illusions. Yet Jewish history affirms hope.

I dare to use another biblical image. The cloud of smoke of the bodies by day and the pillar of fire of the crematoria by night may yet guide humanity to a goal and a day when human beings are attached to each other; and have so much shared each other's pain and have so purified and criticized themselves, that never again will a Holocaust be possible. Perhaps we can pray that out of the welter of blood and pain will come a chastened mankind and faith that may take some tentative and mutual steps toward redemption. Then truly will the Messiah be here among us. Perhaps then the silence will be broken. At the prospect of such hope, however, certainly in our time, it is more appropriate to fall silent.

1. Dieter Wisliceny, affidavit dated November 29, 1945, printed in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1946), 8:610; he quotes Eichmann as follows: "I laugh when I jump into the grave because of the feeling I have killed 5,000,000 Jews. That gives me great satisfaction and gratification." Rudolf Hoess, the head of Auschwitz, reports Eichmann's joy grew out of his conviction that he had landed a fatal blow by devastating Jewry's life center. In Hoess's responses to Dr. Jan Sehn, the examining judge, printed as appendix 3 in Hoess's autobiography, *Commandant of Auschwitz* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1959), p. 215. The estimate of Jewish scholars, rabbis, and full-time students killed is by Rabbi M. J. Itamar (Wohlgelernter), formerly secretary-general of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. Heydrich, the original head of the Final Solution project and its driving force until his death by assassination, instructed the Einsatzgruppen that in killing the Jews of Eastern Europe, they would be killing the "intellectual reservoir of the Jews."

2. Simon Herman, *Israelis and Jews: A Study in the Continuity of an Identity* (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 78–80, 175, 186, 191, 203–4, 211–13; idem, lecture given at the annual meeting of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture in Geneva, July 9, 1974, published in 1975 *Proceedings of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture;* idem, "Ethnic Identity and Historical Time Perspective: An Illustrated Case Study; the Impact of the Holocaust (Destruction of European Jewry) on Jewish Identity," mimeographed (Jerusalem, 1972); idem, research in progress.

3. S. Szmaglewska, in *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal* (Nuremberg, 1947–49), 8:319–20, quoted in Erich Kulka and Uta Kraus, *The Death Factory* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1966), p. 114. (In the IMT record she is listed as Shmaglevskaya); cf. also Hoess, *Commandant of Auschwitz*, pp. 149–51.

4. S. Szmaglewska, ibid.

5. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1966); Hilberg, ibid., p. 569, fn. 65, cites 5.28 RM per kg. for TESTA's price from DEGESCH before resale to Gerstein, the chief disinfection officer in the office of the hygienic chief of the Waffen-SS, for use in Auschwitz. However, a photograph of an invoice from DEGESCH to Kurt Gerstein dated March 13, 1944, published in *La Deportation* (n.d., n.p., published by Fédération Nationale des Déportés et Internis Resistants et Patriots), p. 138, clearly shows a price of 5 RM per kg. (210 kg. for 1,050 RM).

6. Elie Wiesel, *Night* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1960), pp. 43–44.

7. Michael Dov Weissmandl, *Min Hametzar* (1960; reprint ed., Jerusalem, n.d.) p. 24. See also Weissmandl's report of his conversation with the papal nuncio in 1944. He quotes the nuncio as saying: "There is no innocent blood of Jewish children in the world. All Jewish blood is guilty. You have to die. This is the punishment that has been awaiting you because of that sin [dei-

cide]." Dr. Livia Rotkirchen of Yad Vashem has called my attention to the fact that the papal nuncio tried to help save Jews and used his influence to do so. Weissmandl's quote appears to be incompatible with that image. Dr. Rotkirchen speculates that Weissmandl, in retrospect, attributed the statement to the wrong person. In any event, this judgment that the Jews deserved their fate as punishment for deicide or rejecting Christ is a strong and recurrent phenomenon. On the papal nuncio's work, see Livia Rotkirchen, "Vatican Policy and the Jewish 'Independent' Slovakia (1939–1945)," *Yad Vashem Studies* 6 (1967): 27–54.

8. Pastoral letter of March 25, 1941, A.B. Freiburg, no. 9, March 27, 1941, p. 388; quoted in Günter Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 294.

9. Saul Friedlander, *Pius XII and the Third Reich: A Documentation* (New York: Knopf, 1966), p. 97. Cf. the whole discussion of the decrees by the Vatican, ibid., pp. 92–99.

10. "Ein Wort zur Judenfrage, der Reichsbruderrat der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland," issued on April 8, 1948 in Dietrich Goldschmidt and Hans-Joachim Kraus, eds., *Der Ungekundigte Bund: Neue Begegnung von Juden und christlicher* (Stuttgart, 1962), pp. 251–54. The extent to which Vatican circles helped Nazi war criminals escape is only now becoming evident. See on this Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1974), pp. 289–323. See also Ladislav Farago, *Aftermath: Martin Bormann and the Fourth Reich* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974).

11. Cf. memorandum submitted to Chancellor Hitler, June 4, 1936, in Arthur C. Cochrane, *The Church's Confession Under Hitler* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 268–79; J. S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), pp. xx, xxiii, 84–85, 261–65.

12. A. Roy Eckardt, *Elder and Younger Brothers* (New York: Scribner's, 1967), p. 107.

13. Raul Hilberg, *Documents of Destruction* (Chicago, 1973), pp. 50–51.

14. A selection of these and other testimonies can be found in Binyamin West, *B'Havlei K'laya* [*In the throes of destruction*] *(Tel Aviv, 1963), pp. 43, 43, 62, 65, 66, 77, 96, 106, 112, 118, 155 ff.*

15. In the District Court of Jerusalem, criminal case no. 40/61, The Attorney-General of the Government of Israel v. Adolf, the son of Adolf Karle, Eichmann. Minutes of Session no. 30, pp. L1, L2, M1, M2, N1, partially quoted in Hilberg, *Documents of Destruction,* pp. 61–62.

16. The trial record of the Einsatzgruppen leaders shows that of twenty-four defendants, Herren Schubert (p. 97), Lindow (p. 99), Schulz (p. 135), Blume (p. 139), Braune (p. 214), Sandberger (p. 532), Haensch (p. 547), Strauch (p. 563), and Klingelhoefer (p. 564) were lawyers. Other professionals included architect Blobel (p. 211), economist Sieberg (p. 536), professor Six (p. 555), banker Noske (p. 570), secondary-school instructor Steimle (p. 578), economist Ohlendorf (p. 224), dentist Fendler (p. 570), and last but not least, clergyman Biberstein (p. 542).

17. Cf. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950). Also see Jacob Talmon, *The Rise of Totalitarian Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), and *Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1960).

18. Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. 60, p. 433, quoted in Eliezer Berkovits, *Faith After the Holocaust* (New York: KTAV, 1973), p. 18.

19. Arthur Herzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968); Uriel Tal, *Yahadut V'Natzrut BaReich Ha-Sheni* [Jews and Christians in the Second Reich], *1870–1914* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1969); and Eleanore Sterling, *Er Ist Wie Du: Fruh Geschichte des Anti Semitismus in Deutschland, 1915–1850* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1956). One should also note Elie Wiesel's biting words on the moral collapse in the camps of "the intellectuals, the liberals, the humanists, the professors of sociology and the like." Elie Wiesel, "Talking and Writing and Keeping Silent," in Franklin H. Littell and Hubert G. Locke, *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974), p. 273. It could be that relativism and tolerance, in themselves good or neutral moral qualities, combine with excessive rationalism and functionalism to weaken the capacity to take absolute stands against evil: they rationalize that everything is relative and there is no need to say no! at all costs.

20. Henry Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), passim and summary, pp. 295–307; David Wyman, *Paper Walls* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968).

21. *Punishment for War Crimes: The Inter-Allied Declaration Signed at St. James's Palace, London on 13th January, 1942 and Relative Documents* (New York: United Nations Information Office, [1943], pp. 5–6. See also U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1942* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), vol. 1, p. 45, and *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1941* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1958), vol. 1, p. 447.

22. Alexander Donat, *The Holocaust Kingdom: A Memoir* (New York: Rinehart, 1965), pp. 100, 103.

23. Chayim Greenberg, "Bankrupt!" in *The Inner Eye*, vol. 2 (New York: Jewish Frontier Association 1964), pp. 193–202. Cf. also Fred Lazin, "American Jewish Organizations' Response to the Holocaust," unpublished MS.

24. Henry Feingold, "Roosevelt and the Holocaust," *Judaism*, Summer 1969, pp. 259–76; idem, *Politics of Rescue*, especially pp. 126–66, 208–47; Wyman, *Paper Walls*, passim. See also Yehuda Bauer, *From Diplomacy to Resistance* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1970); Ovadia Margalit, *Bamaagal HaSatoom* (Tel Aviv: Bronfman, 1974).

25. F. E. Cartus [pseud.], "Vatican II and the Jews," *Commentary*, January 1965, p. 21.

26. Elie Wiesel, *The Accident* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1962), p. 91.

27. Elie Wiesel, "The Death of My Father," in *Legends of our Time* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968), pp. 2, 4, 5, 6, 7; idem, *The Gates of the Forest* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), pp. 194, 196, 197, 198, 224, 225–26.

28. Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

29. Jacob Neusner, *A Life of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962); idem, *Fellowship in Judaism in the First Century* (New York, KTAV, 1972). But see also idem, "Judaism in a Time of Crisis: Four Responses to the Destruction of the Temple," *Judaism* 21, no. 3 (Summer 1972): 313–27.

See Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (Philadelphia, 1968); and Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), epilogue; see also Salo W. Baron, *Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), vol. 1, chaps. 4, 5, on the impact of the destruction of the First Temple.

30. See Irving Greenberg, *Crossroads of Destiny* (New York: United Jewish Appeal [1975]), and any of the standard history books, such as Salo W. Baron, *Social and Religious History,* vol. 2, chaps. 11, 12, et seq.

31. Cf. Maimonides, *Commentary on the Mishnah,* Sanhedrin, chap. 10, mishnah 1.

32. Cf. the moving article by Immanuel Hartom, "Hirhurim al Ha Shoa," *Deot* 18 (Winter 5720 [1961]): 28–31, and the responses of Isachar Jacobson, "HaChashiva HaMikrait V'HaShoah," *Deot* 21 (Spring 5722 [1962]): 26–28, and David Chomsky, "Hirhurim al HaShoah v'al Tekumat Yisrael" ibid., pp. 28–39, and Jacob Rothschild, "Od L'Inyan Darkei HaHashgachah V'HaArachat HaShoah," *Deot* 20 (Summer 5722 [1962]): 39–40. Compare this to the ugly work of R. Joel Teitelbaum, *Al HaGeulah v'al Hatemurah* (Brooklyn: Jerusalem Publishing, 1967).

33. A. Roy Eckardt, "Is the Holocaust Unique?" *Worldview,* September 1974, pp. 21–35. See also idem, "The Devil and the Yom Kippur War," *Midstream,* August–September 1974, pp. 67–74.

34. Teitelbaum, *Al HaGeulah v'al Hatemurah,* pp. 6, 11, 18, 29, 77, 84, 88. This is foreshadowed in Teitelbaum's earlier work, *VaYoel Moshe* (Brooklyn: Jerusalem Publishing, 1962), pp. 6–8, 122–24, 140, and passim. Cf. *New York Times* April 1967, seriatim. A news account in *Ha'aretz,* February 16, 1975, reported that a meeting between Neturei Karta representatives (allied with R. Joel Teitelbaum against Israel) and PLO representatives was held. The Neturei Karta delegates identified with the PLO's commitment to destroy the present state of Israel and replace it with a "secular, democratic" Palestine.

35. Berkovits, *Faith After the Holocaust;* Emil Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History* (New York: New York University Press, 1970); Richard Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), especially pp. 128–29.

36. Richard Rubenstein, "Homeland and Holocaust," in *The Religious Situation 1968* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 39–111.

37. Wiesel, *Night,* p. 71.

38. Wiesel, *The Gates of the Forest,* p. 225–26.

39. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz,* pp. 9–101.

40. Anthony Flew and Alistair MacIntyre, *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1958), pp. 103–5, 109–30.

41. Cf. Hoess, *Commandant of Auschwitz,* pp. 88–91; Saul Friedlander, *Counterfeit Nazi: The Ambiguity of Good,* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969); p. 21–22, 36, 59, 64.

42. Emil Fackenheim, "On the Self-Exposure of Faith to the Modern Secular World," reprinted in *Quest for Past and Future* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), pp. 289 ff.

43. Wiesel, *The Accident,* p. 118.

44. Cf. I. Greenberg, *The Rebirth of Israel: Event and Interpretation* (forthcoming).

45. Compare and contrast Marshall Sklare (with Joseph Greenblum), *Jewish*

Identity on the Suburban Frontier (New York: Basic Books, 1967), especially pp. 214–49, 322–26, with T. I. Lenn and Associates, *Rabbi and Synagogue in Reform Judaism* (Hartford: Lenn and Associates, 1972), especially chap. 13, pp. 234–52. Note especially the younger age shift on p. 242. Cf. also how low Israel rates in the "essential" category of being a good Jew, in respondents in Sklare, p. 322.

46. Cf. B.T. Yoma 68b.

47. B.T. Baba Mezia 58b.

48. Jose Faur, "Reflections on Job and Situation Morality," *Judaism* 19, no. 2 (Spring 1970): 219–25, especially p. 220; André Neher, "Job: The Biblical Man," *Judaism* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 37–47; Robert Gordis, "The Lord Out of the Whirlwind," ibid., especially pp. 49–50, 55–58, 62–63. See also Margarethe Susman, *Das Buch Hiob und das Schicksal des jüdischen Volkes* (Zurich: Steinberg, 1946).

49. Joseph B. Soloveichik, "Kol Dodi Dofek," in *Torah U'Meluchah*, ed. Simon Federbush (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1961), pp. 11–44, especially pp. 21–25.

50. Eckardt, *Elder and Younger Brothers*, p. 21.

51. Gunter Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany;* Gordon C. Zahn, *German Catholics and Hitler's Wars: A Study in Social Control* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1962); idem, *In Solitary Witness: The Life and Death of Franz Jaggerstratter* (London: Chapman, 1966).

52. *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal* (Nuremberg, 1947–49), vol. 29, 1919. PS printed in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* vol. 4, pp. 518–72 especially pp. 559, 563–64, 566 ff., quoted in Joachim C. Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970), p. 119.

53. Donat, *Holocaust Kingdom*, p. 91.

54. Wiesel, *Night*, pp. 73–74.

55. Falconi, *The Silence of Pius XII* (Boston: Little Brown, 1970), pp. 74–80; Saul Friedlander, *Pius XII and the Third Reich*, pp. 123, 139 ff.

56. Cf. *Bereshith Raba, Seder VaYera*, parsha 50, par. 16; also ibid., parsha 51, par. 10; B.T. Yevamot 77a; see Z. Y. Lipovitz, *Commentary on the Book of Ruth* (Tel Aviv, 1959).

57. Talmud Yerushalmi, *Berakhot* 15b (chap. 2, halakhah 4); *Aychah Rabba*, parsha 1, sec. 51.

58. Albert Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion and Death* (New York: Knopf, 1961), p. 71.

59. Quoted in Roger Manvell, *S.S. and Gestapo* (New York: Ballantine, 1969), p. 109.

60. J. S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches*, pp. 261–65; Saul Friedlander, *Counterfeit Nazi*, pp. 37, 38, 145–49; Falconi, *Silence of Pius XII*, p. 87; Friedlander, *Pius XII and the Third Reich*, pp. 92–102, but see also pp. 114 ff.; Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, pp. 276 ff., 292–303. See also Weissmandl, *Min Hametzar*, pp. 21–22, 23–24. Cf. also Karl Barth's mea culpa on the Jewish Issue in a letter to Eberhard Bethge quoted in E. Bethge, "Troubled Self-Interpretation and Uncertain Response in the Church Struggle," in Littell and Locke, *German Church Struggle*, p. 167.

61. Cf. Irving Greenberg, "A Hymn to Secularists" (Dialogue of Irving

Greenberg and Leonard Fein at the General Assembly in Chicago, November 15, 1974 [cassette distributed by Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, New York, 1975]).

62. Cf. Erich Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom* (American title, *Escape from Freedom*), 1st ed. (London; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1942). See George Stein, *The Waffen SS* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970); for Ohlendorf's testimony, see *Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law No. 10, October 1946–April 1949* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952), vol. 4; *United States of America* v. *Otto Ohlendorf et al.*, case No. 9, pp. 384–91.

63. The purported Maimonides ruling is quoted in Rabbi Simon Huberband's essay on Kiddush Hashem (Sanctification of God's name), found in the collection of his Holocaust writings printed under the title *Kiddush Hashem* (Tel Aviv: Zachor 1969), p. 23. Rabbi Menachem Ziemba, the great rabbinical scholar of Warsaw, is quoted as citing the same Maimonides ruling in Hillel Seidman, *Yoman Ghetto Varsha* (New York: Jewish Book, 1959), p. 221. An exhaustive search of Maimonides' work (including consultation with Dr. Haym Soloveichik, who has edited a mimeographed collection of Maimonides' writings on Kiddush Hashem for the Hebrew University) makes clear that there is no such ruling in Maimonides. The acceptance during the Holocaust of the view that Maimonides issued such a ruling—even by scholars of Maimonides such as Ziemba—only shows the urgency of the need for such a ruling. The Rabbis instinctively recognized that every Jew was making a statement when killed in the Holocaust—the very statement that the Nazis were so frantically trying to silence by killing all the Jews. This is contra Richard Rubenstein's comments in "Some Perspectives on Religious Faith After Auschwitz," in Littell and Locke, *German Church Struggle*, p. 263.

64. Franklin H. Littell, *The German Phoenix: Men and Movements in the Church in Germany* (Garden City, N.Y., 1960), p. 217.

65. Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* (New York: Viking, 1967), p. 87.

66. A. Carmi, "The Journey to Eretz Israel," in *Extermination and Resistance* (Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot, Israel, 1958), 1:87–101, especially pp. 94–96.

67. Haggadah of Pesach; Exod. 12:13, 20:1–14, 22:21; Lev. 11, esp. v. 45, 19:33–36, 23:42–43, 25:34–55; Deut. 4:30–45, 5:6–18, 15:12–18, 16:1–12, 26:1–11; Josh. 24; Judg. 2:1–5, 11–12; Jer. 2:1–9, 7:22–27, 11:1–8, 16:14–15, 22:7–8, 31:3–33, 32:16–22, 34:8–22; Ezek. 20; Neh. 9.

Writing And The Holocaust

Irving Howe

OUR SUBJECT RESISTS the usual capacities of mind. We may read the Holocaust as the central event of this century; we may register the pain of its unhealed wounds; but finally we must acknowledge that it leaves us intellectually disarmed, staring helplessly at the reality or, if you prefer, the mystery of mass extermination. There is little likelihood of finding a rational structure of explanation for the Holocaust: it forms a sequence of events without historical or moral precedent. To think about ways in which the literary imagination might "use" the Holocaust is to entangle ourselves with a multitude of problems for which no aesthetic can prepare us. Neither encompassing theory nor religious faith enables us to reach a firm conviction that now, at last, we understand what happened during the "Final Solution."

I.

THE HOLOCAUST is continuous with, indeed forms, a sequence of events within Western history, and at the same time it is a unique historical enterprise. To study its genesis within Western history may help us discover its roots in traditional anti-Semitism, fed in turn by Christian myth, German romanticism, and the breakdown of capitalism in 20th-century Europe between the wars. But it is a grave error to make, or "elevate," the Holocaust into an occurrence outside of history, a sort of diabolic visitation, for then we tacitly absolve its human agents of their responsibility. To do this is a grave error even if, so far and perhaps forever, we lack adequate categories for comprehending how such a sequence of events could occur. The Holocaust was long prepared for in the history of Western civilization, though not all those who engaged in the preparation knew what they were doing or would have welcomed the outcome.

In the concentration camps set up by the Nazis, such as those at Dachau and Buchenwald, there was an endless quantity of cruelty and sadism, some of it the spontaneous doings of psychopaths and thugs given total command of the camps by the Nazi government, and some of it the result of a calculated policy taking into cynical account the consequences of allowing psychopaths and thugs total command. Piles of corpses accumulated in these camps. Yet a thin continuity can be detected between earlier locales of brutality and the "concentrationary universe." In some pitiable sense, the prisoners in these camps still lived--they were starved, broken, tormented, but they still lived. A faint margin of space could sometimes be carved out for the human need to maintain community and personality, even while both were being steadily destroyed. Horrible these camps surely were; but even as they pointed toward, they did not yet constitute the "Final Solution."

The Nazis had an idea. To dehumanize systematically both guards and prisoners, torturers and tortured, meant to create a realm of subjugation no longer responsive to the common norms and expectations of human society; and from this process of dehumanization they had themselves set in motion, the Nazis could then "conclude" that, indeed, Jews were not human.

This Nazi idea would lead to and draw upon sadism, but at least among the leaders and theoreticians, it was to be distinguished from mere sadism: it was an abstract rage, the most terrible of all rages. This Nazi idea formed a low parody of that messianism that declared that once mankind offered a warrant of faith and conduct, deliverance would come to earth in the shape of a savior bringing the good days--a notion corrupted by false messiahs into a "forcing of days" and by totalitarian movements into the physical elimination of "contaminating" races and classes. There was also in Nazi ideology a low parody of that yearning or mania for "completely" remaking societies and cultures that has marked modern political life.

When the Nazis established their realm of subjection in the concentration camps, they brought the impulse to nihilism, so strong in modern culture, to a point of completion no earlier advocate had supposed possible. The Italian-Jewish writer Primo Levi, soon after arriving at Auschwitz, was told by a Nazi guard: Hier ist kein warum, here there is no why, here nothing need be explained. This passing observation by a shrewd thug provides as good an insight into the world of the camps as anything found in the entire scholarly literature. What we may still find difficult to grasp is the peculiar blend of ideology and nihilism--the way these two elements of thought, seemingly in friction, were able to join harmoniously, thereby releasing the satanic energies of Nazism.

By now we have an enormous body of memoirs and studies describing the experience of imprisonment in the concentration camps. Inevitably, there are clashes of remembrance and opinion. For the psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim, held captive in Dachau and Buchenwald in 1939, it was apparently still possible to cope with life in the camps, if only through inner moral resistance, a struggle to "understand" that might "safeguard (one's ego) in such a way that, if by any good luck he should regain liberty, (the prisoner) would be approximately the same person he was" before being deprived of liberty. Precisely this seemed impossible to Jean Amery, a gifted Austrian-Jewish writer who had been imprisoned in Auschwitz. No survivor, no one who had ever been tortured by the SS, he later wrote, could be "approximately the same person" as before.

Even to hope for survival meant, in Amery's view, to "capitulate unconditionally in the face of reality" and that reality was neither more nor less than the unlimited power and readiness of the SS to kill. The victim lived under "an absolute sovereign" whose mission--a mission of pleasure--was torture, "in an orgy of unchecked selfexpansion." Thereby "the transformation of the person into flesh became complete." As for "the word"--which for Amery signified something akin to what "safeguarding the ego" meant for Bettelheim--it "always dies when the claim of some reality is total." For then no space remains between thought and everything external to thought.

It would be impudent to choose between the testimonies of Bettelheim and Amery. A partial explanation for their differences of memory and understanding may be that Bettelheim was a prisoner in 1939 and Amery in 1943-5. Bettelheim's ordeal predated slightly the "Final Solution," while Amery was held captive in the Auschwitz that Hannah Arendt quite soberly called a "corpse factory."

It is also possible that these writers, in reflecting upon more or less similar experiences, were revealing "natural" differences in human response. We cannot be certain.

By the time the Nazis launched their "Final Solution" such differences of testimony had become relatively insignificant. The Holocaust reached its point of culmination as the systematic and impersonal extermination of millions of human beings, denied life, and even death as mankind had traditionally conceived it, simply because they fell under the abstract category of "Jew." It became clear that the sadism before and during the "Final Solution" on the trains that brought the Jews to the camps and in the camps themselves was not just incidental or gratuitous; it was a carefully worked-out preparation for the gas chambers. But for the Nazi leaders, originating theoreticians of death, what mattered most was the program of extermination. No personal qualities or accomplishments of the victims, no features of character or appearance, mattered. The abstract perversity of categorization declaring Jews to be Untermenschen as determined by allegedly biological traits was unconditional.

No absolute division of kind existed between concentration and death camps, and some, like the grouping of camps at Auschwitz, contained both quarters for slave laborers and gas chambers, with recurrent "selections" from the former feeding the latter. Still, the distinction between the two varieties of camps has some descriptive and analytic value: it enables us to distinguish between what was and was not historically unique about the Holocaust.

Whatever was unique took place in the death camps, forming a sequence of events radically different from all previous butcheries in the history of mankind. Revenge, enslavement, dispersion, large-scale slaughter of enemies, all are a commonplace of the past; but the physical elimination of a categorized segment of mankind was, both as idea and fact, new. "The destruction of Europe's Jews," Claude Lanzmann has written, "cannot be logically deduced from any ... system of presuppositions.... Between the conditions that permittd extermination and the extermination itself--the fact of the extermination--there is a break in continuity, a hiatus, an abyss." That abyss forms the essence of the Holocaust.

II

I cannot think of another area of literary discourse in which a single writer has exerted so strong, if diffused, an influene as Theodore Adorno has on discussions of literature and the Holocaust. What Adorno offered in the early 1950s was not a complete text or even a fully developed argument. Yet his few scattered remarks had an immediate impact, evidently because they brought out feelings held by many people.

"After Auschwitz," wrote Adorno, "to write a poem is barbaric." It means to

> squeeze aesthetic pleasure out of artistic representation of the naked bodily pain of those who have been knocked down by rifle butts.... Through aesthetic principles or stylization ... the unimaginable ordeal still appears as if it had some ulterior purpose. It is transfigured and stripped of some of its horror, and with this, injustice is already done to the victims.

Adorno was by no means alone in expressing such sentiments, nor in recognizing that his sentiments, no matter how solemnly approved, were not likely to keep anyone from trying to represent through fictions or evoke through poetic symbols

the concentration and death camps. A Yiddish poet, Aaron Tsaytlin, wrote in a similar vein after the Holocaust:

> Were Jeremiah to sit by the ashes of Israel today, he would not cry out a lamentation....The Almighty Himself would be powerless to open his well of tears. He would maintain a deep silence. For even an outcry is now a lie, even tears are mere literature, even prayers are false.

Tsaytlin's concluding sentence anticipated the frequently asserted but a frequently ignored claim that all responses to the Holocaust are inadequate, including, and perhaps especially, those made with the most exalted sentiments and language. Here, for instance, is Piotr Rawicz, a Jewish writer born in the Ukraine who after his release from the camps wrote in French. In his novel Blood from the Sky, Rawicz put down certain precepts that the very existence of his book seems to violate:

> The "literary manner" is an obscenity.... Literature (is) the art, occasionally remunerative, of rummaging in vomit. And yet, it would appear, one has to write. So as to trick loneliness, so as to trick other people.

Looking back at such remarks of several decades ago, we may wonder what these writers were struggling to express, what half-formed or hidden feelings prompted their outcries. I will offer a few speculations, confining myself to Adorno.

Adorno was not so naive as to prescribe for writers a line of conduct that would threaten their very future as writers. Through a dramatic outburst he probably meant to focus upon the sheer difficulty--the literary risk, the moral peril--of dealing with Holocaust in literature. It was as if he were saying: given the absence of usable norms through which to grasp the meaning (if there is one) of the scientific extermination of millions, given the intolerable gap between the aesthetic conventions and the loathsome realities of the Holocaust, and given the improbability of coming up with images and symbols that might serve as "obective correlatives" for events that the imagination can hardly take in, writers in the post-Holocaust era might be wise to be silent.

Silent, at least, about the Holocaust. This warning, if such it was, had a certain prophetic force. It anticipated, first, the common but mistaken notion that literature somehow has an obligation to encompass (or as professors say, to "cover") all areas of human experience, no matter how extreme or impenetrable they might be; and, second, the corruptions of the mass media that would suppose itself equipped to master upon demand any theme or subject. (I think here of a story that I have on the highest authority. The producers of the television serial called "Holocaust" first approached Leo Tolstoy with a tempting offer to write the script, for they had heard he was the author of some good books. After listening to them politely, the Russian writer turned pale and mumbled: "No, no, there are some things that even I cannot do. For what you want, you should turn to Gerald Green.")

Adorno might have been rehearsing a traditional aesthetic idea: that the representation of a horrible event, especially if in drawing upon literary skills it achieves a certain graphic power, could serve to domesticate it, rendering it familiar and in some sense even tolerable, and thereby shearing away part of the horror. The comeliness of even the loosest literary forms is likely to soften the inmpact of what is being rendered, and in most renderings of ima-

ginary situations we tacitly expect and welcome this. But with a historical event such as the Holocaust--an event regarding which the phrase "such as" cannot really be employed--the chastening aspects of literary mimesis can be felt to be misleading, a questionable way of reconciling us with the irreconcilable or of projecting a symbolic "transcendence" that in actuality is no more than a reflex of our baffled will.

Adorno might have had in mind the possibility of an insidious relation between the represented (or even the merely evoked) Holocaust and the spectator enthralled precisely as, or perhaps even because, he is appalled--a relation carring a good share of voyeuristic sadomasochism. Can we really say that in reading a memoir or novel about the Holocaust, or in seeing a film such as Shoah, we gain the pleasure, or catharsis, that is customarily associated with the aesthetic transaction? More disquieting, can we be sure that we do not gain a sort of illicit pleasure from our pained submission to such works? I do not know how to answer these questions, which threaten many of our usual assumptions about what constitutes an aesthetic experience; but I think that even the most disciplined scholar of the Holocaust ought every once in a while to re-examine the nature of his responses.

More speculative still is the thought that Adorno, perhaps with only a partial awareness, was turning back to a "primitive" religious feeling--the feeling that there are some things in our experience, or some aspects of the universe, that are too terrible to be looked at or into directly.

In ancient mythologies and religions there are things and beings that are not to be named. They may be the superemely good or supremely bad, but for mortals they are the unutterable, since there is felt to be a limit to what man may see or dare, certainly to what he may meet. Perseus would turn to stone if he were to look directly at the serpent-headed Medusa, though he would be safe if he looked at her only through a reflection in a mirror or a shield (this latter being, as I shall argue, the very strategy that the cannier writers have adopted in dealing with the Holocaust).

Perhaps dimly, Adorno wished to suggest that the Holocaust might be regarded as a secular equivalent--if there can be such a thing--of that which in the ancient myths could not be gazed at or named dirctly; that before which men had to avert their eyes; that which in the properly responsive witness would arouse the "holy dread" Freud saw as the essence of taboos. And in such taboos, I suppose, the prohibition was imposed not in order to enforce ignorance but to regulate, or guard against the consequences of, knowledge.

How this taboo might operate without the sanctions and structure of an organized religion and its linked mythology I cannot grasp: it would require a quantity of shared or communal discipline beyond anything we can suppose. Adorno must have known this as well as anyone else. He must have known that in our culture the concept of limit serves mostly as a barrier or hurdle to be overcome, not as a perimeter of respect. Perhaps his remarks are to be taken as a hopeless admonition, a plea for the improvization of limit that he knew would not and indeed could not be heeded, but which it was nevertheless necessary to make.

III.

HOLOCAUST writings make their primary claim, I would say, through facts recorded or remembered. About this most extreme of human experiences there cannot be too much documentation, and what matters most in such materials is exactitude: the sober number, the somber date. Beyond that, Holocaust writings often reveal the helplessness of the imagination before an evil that cannot quite be understood.

This shared helplessness is the major reason for placing so high a value on the memoir, a kind of writing in which the author has no obligation to do anything but, in accurate and sober terms, tell what he experienced and witnessed. To do this, as Isaac Rosenfeld once remarked, is to have the rare "courage ... to stay near the thing itself and not to cast out for the usual reassurance."

Can we so readily justify our feelings about the primary worth of reliable testimony? Prudential arguments seem increasingly dubious here, since it should by now be clear that remembering does not necessarily forestall repetition. The instinctive respect we accord honest testimony, regardless of whether it is "well written," may in part be due to a persuasion that the aesthetic is not the primary standard for judgments of human experience, and that there can be, indeed often enough have been, situations in which aesthetic and moral standards come into conflict. Our respect for testimony may also be due in part to an unspoken persuasion that we owe something to the survivors who expose themselves to the trauma of recollection: we feel that we should listen to them apart from whether it "does any good." As for the millions who did not survive, it would be mere indulgence to suppose that any ceremonies of recollection could "make up for" or "transcend" their destruction--all such chatter, too frequent in writings about the Holocaust, is at best the futility of eloquence. Still, there are pieties that civilized people want to confirm even if, sometimes because, these are not more than gestures.

Another piety is to be invoked here. We may feel that heeding the survivors' testimony contributes to the fund of shared consciousness, which also means to our own precarious sense of being, whether indvidual or collective, and that, somehow, this is good. Henry James speaks somewhere of an ideal observer upon whom nothing is lost, who witnesses the entirety of the human lot, and though James in his concerns is about as far from something like the Holocaust as any writer could be, I think it just to borrow his vision of consciousness for other very different ends. The past summoned by Holocaust memoirs not only tells us something unbearable, and therefore unforgettable, about the life of mankind; it is a crucial part of our own time, if not of our direct experience. To keep the testimony of Holocaust witnesses in the forefront of our consciousness may not make us "better" people, but it may at least bring a touch of accord with our sense of the time we have lived in and where we have come from.

There is still another use of this testimony, and that is to keep the Holocaust firmly within the bounds of history, so that it will not end up as a preface to apocalypse or eschatology, or worse still, decline into being the legend of a small people. "Nobody," said the historian Ignacy Schipper in Maidenek, "will want to believe us, because our disaster is the disaster of the entire civilized world." Schipper's phrasing merits close attention. He does not say that the disaster was experienced by the entire civilized world, which might entail a sentimental "universalizing" of the Holocaust in the manner of writers like William Styron; he says that the disaster of the Jews was (or should have been) shared by the entire civilized world, so that what happened to "us" might form a weight upon the consciousness of that world, even as we may recognize that sooner or later the world will seek to transfer it to some realm "beyond" history, a realm at once more exalted and less accusatory. Yet history is exactly where the Holocaust must remain, and for that, there can never be enough testimony.

Let us now turn briefly to a few witnesses, invoking them along a slope of destruction.

Chaim Kaplan's Warsaw diary, covering a bit less than a year from its opening

date of September 1, 1938, is a document still recognizably within the main tradition of Western writing: a man observes crucial events and strives to grasp their significance. Kaplan's diary shows the discipline of a trained observer; his prose is lucid and restrained; he records the effort of Warsaw Jewry to keep a fragment of its culture alive even as it stumbles into death; and he reveals a torn soul wondering what premises of faith, or delusion, sustain his "need to record." Barely, precariously, we are still in the world of the human as we have understood it, for nothing can be more human than to keep operating with familiar categories of thought while discovering they will no longer suffice.

ELIE WIESEL'S first book, Night, written simply and without rhetorical indulgence, is a slightly fictionalized record of his sufferings as a boy in Auschwitz and during a forced march together with his father and other prisoners through the frozen countryside to Buchenwald. The father dies of dysentery in Buchenwald, and the boy--or the writer remembering himself as a boy--reveals his guilty relief at feeling that the death of his father has left him "free at last," not as any son might feel but in the sense that now he may be able to save himself without the burden of an ailing father.

No sensitive reader will feel an impulse to judgment here. Indeed, that is one of the major effects of honest testimony about the Holocaust--it dissolves any impulse to judge what the victims did or did not do, since there are situations so extreme that it seems immoral to make judgments about those who must endure them. We are transported here into a dark subworld, where freedom and moral sensibility may survive in memory but cannot be exercised in practice. Enforced degradation--from which no one, finally, is exempt--forms the penultimate step toward the ovens.

The ovens dominate the camps that the Nazis, not inaccurately, called anus mundi. Filip Mueller's Eyewitness Auschwitz is the artless account of being transported from his native Slovakia in April 1942 to Auschwitz, where he worked for two-and-a-half years as a Sonderkommando, or assistant at the gas chambers. Somehow Mueller survived. His narrative is free of verbal embellishment or thematic reflection; he indulges neither in self-apology nor self-attack; he writes neither art nor history. His book is simply the story of a simple man who processed many corpses. Even in this book, terrible beyond any that I have ever read, there are still a few touches recalling what we take to be humanity: efforts at theodicy by men who cannot justify their faith, a recital of the kaddish by doomed prisoners who know that no one else will say it for them. In the world Mueller inhabited and served, "the transformation of the person into flesh" and of flesh into dust "became complete." It was a world for which, finally, we have no words.

But isn't there, a skeptical voice may interject, a touch of empiricist naivete in such high claims for Holocaust memoirs? Memory can be treacherous among people who have suffered terribly and must feel a measure of guilt at being alive at all. Nor can we be sure of the truth supplied by damaged and overwrought witnesses, for whatever knowledge we may claim about these matters is likely to come mainly from the very memoirs we find ourselves submitting, however uneasily, to critical judgment.

The skeptical voice is cogent, and I would only say in reply that we are not helpless before the accumulated mass of recollection. Our awe before the suffering and our respect for the sufferers does not disable us from making discriminations of value, tone, authority. There remain the usual historical tests, both through external check and internal comparison; and there is still that

indispensable organ, the reader's ear, bending toward credence or doubt.

The test of the ear is a delicate and perilous one, entailing a shift from testimony to witness--a shift that, except perhaps with regard to the scrappiest of chronicles, seems unavoidable. Reading Holocaust memoirs we respond not just to their accounts of what happened; we respond also to qualities of being, tremors of sensibility, as these emerge even from the bloodiest pages. We respond to the modesty or boastfulness, the candor or evasiveness, the self-effacement or self-promotion of the writers. We respond, most of all, to a quality that might be called moral poise, by which I mean a readiness to engage in a complete reckoning with the past, insofar as there can be one--a strength of remembrance that leads the writer into despair and then perhaps a little beyond it, so that he does not flinch from anything, neither shame nor degradation, yet refuses to indulge in those outbursts of self-pity, sometimes sliding into self-aggrandizement, that understandably mar a fair number of Holocaust memoirs.

But is there not something shameful in subjecting the work of survivors to this kind of scrutiny? Perhaps so; yet in choosing to become writers, they have no choice but to accept this burden.

The Holocaust was structured to destroy the very idea of private being. It was a sequence of events entirely "out there," in the objective world, the world of force and power. Yet as we read Holocaust memoirs and reaffirm their value as evidence, we find ourselves veering--less by choice than necessity--from the brute external to the fragile subjective, from matter to voice, from story to storyteller. And this leaves us profoundly uneasy, signifying that our earlier stress upon the value of testimony has now been complicated, perhaps even compromised, by the intoduction of aesthetic considerations. We may wish with all our hearts to yield entirely to the demands of memory and evidence, but simply by virtue of reading, we cannot forget that the diarist was a person formed before and the memoirist a person formed after the Holocaust. We are ensnared in the cruelty of remembering, a compounded cruelty, in which our need for truthful testimony lures us into tests of authenticity.

That, in any case, is how we read. I bring as a "negative" witness a memoirist not to be named: he puts his ordeal at the service of a familiar faith or ideology, and it comes to seem sad, for that faith or ideology cannot bear the explanatory and expiatory burdens he would place upon it. Another memoirist, also not to be named: he suborns his grief to public self-aggrandizement, and the grief he declares, surely sincere, is alloyed by streaks of publicity.

But Chaim Kaplan cares for nothing except the impossible effort to comprehend the incomprehensible; Filip Mueller for nothing except to recall happenings even he finds hard to credit; Primo Levi for nothing but to render his days in the camps through a language unadorned and chaste.

We are trapped. Our need for testimony that will forever place the Holocaust squarely within history requires that we respond to voice, nuance, personality. Our desire to see the Holocaust in weightier terms than the merely aesthetic lures us into a shy recognition of the moral reverberations of the aesthetic. This does not make us happy, but the only alternative is the silence we all remember, now and then, to praise.

IV.

"We became aware," writes Primo Levi, "that our language lacks words to express the offense, the demolition of man." Every serious writer approaching the

Holocaust sooner or latter says much the same. If there is a way of coping with this difficulty, it lies in a muted tactfulness recognizing that there are some things that can be said and some that cannot.

Let me cite a few sentences from T.S. Eliot:

> Great simplicity is only won by an intense moment or by years of intelligent effort, or by both. It represents one of the most arduous conquests of the human spirit: the triumph of feeling and thought over the natural sin of language.

Exactly what Eliot meant by that astonishing phrase, "the natural sin of language," I cannot say with assurance, but that it applies to a fair portion of Holocaust writing, both memoir and fiction, seems to me indisputable. A "natural sin" might here signify the inclination to grow wanton over our deepest griefs, thereby making them the substance of public exploitation. Or a mistaken effort, sincere or grandiose, to whip language into doing more than it can possibly do, more than thought and imagination and prayer can do. Language as it seduces us into the comforting grandiose.

When, by now as a virtual cliche, we say that language cannot deal with the Holocaust, we really have in mind, or perhaps are covering up for, our inadequacies of thought and feeling. We succumb to that "natural sin of language" because anyone who tries seriously to engage with the implications of the Holocaust must come up against a wall of incomprehension: How could it be? Not the behavior, admirable or deplorable, of the victims, and not the ideologies the Nazis drew upon form the crux of our bewilderment, but--how could human beings, raised in the center of European civilization, do this? If we then fall back on intellectual shorthand, invoking the problem of radical evil, what are we really doing but expressing our helplessness in another vocabulary? Not only is this an impassable barrier for the thought of moralists and the recall of memoirists; it is, I think, the greatest thematic and psychological difficulty confronting writers of fiction who try to represent or even evoke the Holocaust.

For the central question to be asked about these writings, a few of them distinguished and most decent failures, is this: What can the literary imagination, traditionally so proud of its selfgenerating capacities, add to--how can it go beyond--the intolerable matter cast up by memory? What could be the organizing categories, the implicit premises of perception and comprehension, through which the literary imagination might be able to render intelligible the gassing of 12,000 people a day at Auschwitz? If, as Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi remarks, literature has traditionally called upon "the timeless archetypes of human experience" to structure and infer significance from its materials, how can this now be done with a sequence of events that radically breaks from those "timeless archetypes"? A novelist can rehearse what we have learned from the documentation of David Rousset and Filip Mueller, from Primo Levi and Eugen Kogon, but apart from some minor smoothing and shaping, what can the novelist do with all this? And if, through sheer lack of any other recourse, he does fall back upon the ideological or theological categories of received Western thought, he faces the immediate risk of producing a fiction with a severe fissure between rendered event and imposed category--so that even a sympathetic reader may be inclined to judge the work as resembling a failed allegory in which narrative and moral are, at best, chained together by mere decision.

Let us see all this concretely, as it might affect a novelist's job of work. Yes, the facts are there, fearful and oppressive, piled up endlessly in memoirs and histories. He has studied them, tried to "make sense" of them in his mind, submitted himself to the barrage of horror. But what he needs--and does not have--is something that for most ordinary fictions written about most ordinary themes would come to him spontaneously, without his even being aware that it figures crucially in the act of composition: namely, a structuring set of ethical premises, to which are subordinately linked aesthetic biases, through which he can form, that is, integrate his materials.

These ethical premises and aesthetic biases are likely to obtrude in consciousness only as a felt lack, only when a writer brooding over the endlessness of murder and torment asks how it can be turned or shaped into significant narrative. Nor, if he tries to escape from a confining realism and venture into symbolic or grotesque modes, can he find sufficiently used--you might say, sufficiently "broken in"--myths and metaphors that might serve as workable, publicly recognizable analogues for the Holocaust experience. Before this reality, the imagination comes to seem intimidated, overwhelmed, helpless. It can rehearse, but neither enlarge nor escape; it can describe happenings, but not endow them with the autonomy and freedom of a complex fiction; it remains--and perhaps this may even figure as a moral obligation--the captive of its raw material.

The Holocaust memoirist, as writer, is in a far less difficult position. True, he needs to order his materials in the rudimentary sense of minimal chronology and reportorial selectivity (though anything he honestly remembers could prove to be significant, even if not part of his own story). Insofar as he remains a memoirist, he is not obliged to interpret what he remembers. But the novelist, even if he supposes he is merely "telling a story," must--precisely in order to tell a story--"make sense" of his materials, either through explicit theory or, what is usually better, absorbed assumptions. Otherwise, no matter how vivid his style or sincere his feelings, he will finally be at a loss. All he will then be able to do is to present a kind of "fictionalized memoir"--which means not to move very far beyond what the memoirist has already done.

To avoid this difficulty, some novelists have concentrated on those camps that were not just "corpse factories" and that allowed some faint simulacrum of human life; or, like Jorge Semprun in The Long Voyage, they have employed flashbacks of life before imprisonment, so as to allow for some of that interplay of character and extension of narrative that is essential to works of imaginative fiction. Once our focus is narrowed, however, to the death camps, the locale of what must be considered the essential Holocaust, the novelist's difficulties come to seem awesome. For then, apart from the lack of cognitive structures, he has to face a number of problems that are specifically, narrowly literary.

The Holocaust is not, essentially, a dramatic subject. Much before, much after, and much surrounding the mass exterminations may be open to dramatic rendering. But the exterminations, in which thousands of dazed and broken people were sent up each day in smoke, hardly knowing and often barely able to respond to their fate, have little of drama in them. Terribleness yes; drama no.

Of those conflicts between wills, those inner clashes of belief and wrenchings of desire, those enactments of passion, all of which make up our sense of the dramatic, there can be little in the course of a fiction focused mainly on the mass exterminations. A heroic figure here, a memorable outcry there--that is possible.

But those soon to be dead are already half or almost dead; the gas chambers

merely finish the job begun in the ghettos and continued on the trains. The basic minimum of freedom to choose and act that is a central postulate of drama had been taken from the victims. The Nazis indulged in a peculiarly vicious parody of this freedom when they sometimes gave Jewish parents the "choice" of which child should be murdered.

The extermination process was so "brilliantly" organized that the life, and thereby the moral energy upon which drama ultimately depends, had largely been snuffed out of the victims before they entered the gas chambers. Here, in the death camps, the pitiful margin of space that had been allowed the human enterprise in the concentration camps was negated. Nor was it exactly death that reigned; it was annihilation. What then can the novelist make of this--what great clash or subtle inference--that a Filip Mueller has not already shown us?

If the death camps and mass exterminations allow little opening for the dramatic, they also give little space for the tragic in any traditional sense of that term. In classical tragedy man is defeated; in the Holocaust man is destroyed. In tragedy man struggles against forces that overwhelm him, struggles against both the gods and his own nature; and the downfall that follows may have an aspect of grandeur. This struggle allows for the possibility of an enlargement of character through the purgation of suffering, which in turn may bring a measure of understanding and a kind of peace. But except for some religious Jews who were persuaded that the Holocaust was a re-enactment of the great tradition of Jewish martyrdom, or for some secular Jews who lived out their ethic by choosing to die in solidarity with their fellows, or for those inmates who undertook doomed rebellions, the Jews destroyed in the camps were not martyrs continuing along the ways of their forefathers. They died, probably most of them, not because they chose at all costs to remain Jews, but because the Nazis chose to believe that being Jewish was an unchangeable, irredeemable condition. They were victims of a destruction that for many of them had little or only a fragmentary meaning--few of the victims, it seems,could even grasp the idea of total annihilation, let alone regard it as an act of high martyrdom. All of this does not make their death less terrible; it makes their death more terrible.

So much so that it becomes an almost irresistible temptation for Holocaust writers, whether discursive or fictional, to search for some redemptive token, some cry of retribution, some balancing of judgment against history's evil, some sign of ultimate spiritual triumph. It is as if, through the retrospect of language, they would lend a tragic aura....

Many of the customary resources and conventions of the novel are unavailable to the writer dealing with Holocaust. Small shifts in tone due to the surprises of freedom or caprice; the slow, rich development of character through testing and overcoming; the exertion of heroic energies by characters granted unexpectedly large opportunities; the slow emergence of moral flaws through an accumulation of seemingly trivial incidents; the withdrawal of characters into the recesses of their selves; the yielding of characters to large social impulses, movements, energies--these may not be entirely impossible in Holocaust fiction, but all must prove to be painfully limited.

Even so apparently simple a matter as how a work of fiction is ended takes on a new and problematic aspect, for while a memoirist can just stop at some convenient point, the novelist must think in terms of resolutions and completions. But what, after having surrendered his characters to their fate, can he suppose those resolutions and completions to be? Finally, all such literary problems come down to the single inclusive problem of freedom. In the past even those

writers most strongly inclined to determinism or naturalism have grasped intuitively that to animate their narratives they must give a least a touch of freedom to their characters. And that, as his characters inexorably approach the ovens, is precisely what the Holocaust writer cannot do.

V.

The Israeli critic Hannah Yaoz, reports Sidra Ezrahi, has

> divided Holocaust fiction into historical
> and transhistorical modes--the first representing
> a mimetic approach which incorporates
> the events into the continuum of history
> and human experience, and the second
> transfiguring the events into a mythic reality
> where madness reigns and all historical
> loci are relinguished.

At least with regard to the Holocaust, the notion that there can be a "mythic reality" without "historical loci" seems to me dubious--for where then could the imagination find the materials for its act of "transfiguring"? Still, the division of Holocaust fiction proposed by the Israeli critic has some uses, if only to persuade us that finally both the writers who submit to and those who rebel against the historical mode must face pretty much the same problems.

The "mimetic approach" incorporating "events into the continuum of history" has been most strongly employed by the Polish writer Tadeusz Borowski in his collection of stories, This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen. Himself an Auschwitz survivor, Borowski writes in a cold, harsh, even coarse style, heavy with glaunted cynicism, and offering no reliefs of the heroic. Kapo Tadeusz, the narrator, works not only with but on behalf of the death system. "Write," he says, "that a portion of the sad fame of Auschwitz belongs to you as well." The wretched truth is that here survival means the complete yielding of self.

Like Filip Mueller in his memoir, Borowski's narrator admits that he lives because there is a steady flow of new "material" from the ghettos to the gas chambers. "It is true, others may be dying, but one is somehow still alive, one has enough food, enough strength to work...." Let the transports stop and Kapo Tadeusz together with other members of "Canada" (the labor gang that unloads the transports) will be liquidated.

Kapo Tadeusz lives in a world where mass murder is normal: it is there, it works, and it manages very well without moral justifications. The tone of detachment, which in a naturalistic novel would signal moral revulsion from represented ugliness, has here become a condition of survival.

To lapse into what we might regard as human feeling--and sometimes Kapo Tadeusz and his fellow prisoners do that--is to risk not only the ordeal of memory but the loss of life: a pointless loss, without record or rebellion.

Borowski's Style conveys the rhythm of a hammering factuality, and in a way almost too complex to describe, one appreciates his absolute refusal to strike any note of redemptive nobility. Truthful and powerful as they are, Borowski's stories seem very close to those relentless Holocaust memoirs that show that there need be no limit to dehumanization. And that is just the point: for truthful and powerful as they are, Borowski's stories "work" mainly as testimony. Their authenticity makes us, I would say, all but indifferent to their status as art. We do not, perhaps cannot, read these stories as mediated fic-

tions, imaginative versions of a human milieu in which men and women enter the usual range of relations. In Kapo Tadeusz's barrack there is simply no space for that complex interplay of action, emotion, dream, ambivalence, generosity, envy, and love that forms the basis of Western literature. The usual norms of human conduct--except for flashes of memory threatening survival--do not operate here. "We are not evoking evil irresponsibly," writes Borowski, "for we have now become part of it." Nor does it really matter whether Borowski was drawing upon personal memories or "making up" some of his stories. Composed in the fumes of destruction, even the stories he might have "made up" are not actually "made up": they are the substance of collective memory. Hier ist kein warum.

Inevitably, some Holocaust writers would try to escape from the vise of historical realism, and one of the most talented of these was the Ukrainian Jew Piotr Rawicz. Resting on a very thin narrative base, Rawicz's novel Blood from the Sky is a sustained, almost heroic rebellion against the demands of narrative--though in the end those demands reassert themselves, even providing the strongest parts of this wantonly brilliant book. What starts out as a traditional story soon turns into expressionist phantasmagoria seeking to project imagistic tokens for the Holocaust, or at least for the hallucinations it induces in the minds of witnesses. The story, often pressed far into the background, centers on a rich, highly educated, aristocratic Jew named Boris who saves himself from the Nazis through his expert command of German and Ukrainian--also through a disinclination to indulge in noble gestures. Upon this fragile strand of narrative Rawicz hangs a series of vignettes, excoriations, prose and verse poems, and mordant reflections of varying quality. The most effective are the ones visibly tied to some historical event, as in a brief sketch of a Nazi commander who orders the transport from Boris's town of all women named Goldberg because a woman of that name has infected him with a venereal disease. Symbolically freighted passages achieve their greatest force when they are also renderings of social reality, as in this description of a work party of prisoners sent by the Nazis to tear apart a Jewish cemetery:

> The party was demolishing some old tombstones.
> The blind, deafening hammer
> blows were scattering the sacred characters
> from inscriptions half a millennium old,
> and composed in praise of some holy
> man ....An aleph would go flying off to the
> left, while a he carved on another piece of
> stone dropped to the right. A gimel would
> bite the dust and a nun follow in its
> wake....Several examples of shin, a letter
> symbolizing the miraculous intervention of
> God, had just been smashed and trampled
> on by the hammers and feet of these moribund
> workmen.

And then, several sentences later:

> Death--that of their fellow men, of
> the stones, of their own--had become
> unimportant to them; but hunger hadn't.

The strength of this passage rests upon a fusion of event described and symbol evoked, but that fusion is successfully achieved because the realistic description is immediately persuasive in its own right. Mimesis remains the foundation. When Rawicz, however, abandons story and character in his straining after constructs of language that will in some sense "parallel" the Holocaust theme, the prose cracks under an intolerable pressure. We become aware of an excess of tension between the narrative (pushed into the background but through its sheer horror still dominant) and the virtuosity of language (too often willed and literary). Rawicz's outcroppings of expressionist rage and grief, no matter how graphic in their own right, can only seem puny when set against the events looming across the book.

Still, there are passages in which Rawicz succeeds in endowing his language with a kind of hallucinatory fury, and then it lures us into an autonomous realm of the horrifying and the absurd. But when that happens, virtuosity takes command, coming to seem self-sufficient, without fixed points of reference, as if floating off on its own. Losing the causal tie with the Holocaust that the writer evidently hopes to maintain, the language overflows as if a discharge of sheer nausea. At least with regard to Holocaust fiction, I would say that efforts to employ "transhistorical modes" or "mythic reality" are likely to collapse into the very "continuum of history" they seek to escape--or else to come loose from the grounds of their creation.

VI.

M'ken nisht, literally Yiddish for "one cannot"--so the Israeli writer Aharon Applefeld once explained to me why in his fictions about the Holocaust he did not try to represent it directly, always ending before or starting after the exterminations. He spoke with the intuitive shrewdness of the writer who knows when to stop--a rare and precious gift. But his remark also conveyed a certain ambiguity, as if m'ken nisht had a way of becoming m'tur nisht, "one must not," so that an acknowledgement of limit might serve as a warning of the forbidden.

In approaching the Holocaust, the canniest writers keep a wary distance. They know or sense that their subject cannot be met full-face. It must be taken on a tangent, with extreme wariness, through strategies of indirection and circuitous narratives that leave untouched the central horror--leave it untouched but always invoke or evoke it as hovering shadow. And this brings us to another of the ironies that recur in discussing this subject. We may begin with a suspicion that it is morally unseemly to submit Holocaust writings to fine critical discriminations, yet once we speak, as we must, about ways of approaching or apprehending this subject, we find ourselves going back to a fundamental concern of literary criticism, namely, how a writer validates his material.

Before. Aharon Applefeld's Badenheim 1939 is a novella that at first glance contains little more than a series of banal incidents in a Jewish resort near Vienna at the start of the Second World War. Each trivial event brings with it a vague drift of anxiety. A character feels "haunted by a hidden fear, not her own." Posters go up in the town: "The Air Is Fresher in Poland." Guests in the hotel fear that "some alien spirit (has) descended." A musician explains deportations of Jews as if he were the very spirit of the century: it is "Historical Necessity." Applefeld keeps accumulating nervous detail; the writing flows seamlessly, enticingly, until one notices that the logic of this quiet narrative is logic of hallucination and its quietness mounts into a thick cloud of foreboding. At the end, the guests are being packed into "four filthy freight cars"--but here Applefeld abruptly stops, as if recognizing a limit to the sovereignty of words. Nothing is said or shown of what is to follow: the narra-

tive is as furtive as the history it evokes; the unspeakable is not to be named.

During. Pierre Gascar, a Frenchman, not Jewish, who was a POW during the Second World War, has written in his long story "The Seasons of the Dead" one of the very few masterpieces of Holocaust fiction. Again, no accounts of torture or portrayal of concentration camps or imaginings of the gas chambers. All is evoked obliquely, through a haze of fearfulness and disbelief. The narrator makes no effort to hide his Parisian sophistication, but what he sees as a prisoner sent to a remote camp in Poland breaks down his categories of thought and leaves him almost beyond speech.

Gascar's narrator is assigned to a detail that takes care of a little cemetery molded with pick and shovel for French soldiers who have died: "We were a team of ghosts returning every morning to a green peaceful place, we were workers in death's garden." In a small way "death's garden" is also life's, for with solemn attentiveness the men who work there preserve the civilizing rituals of burial through which mankind has traditionally tried to give some dignity to the death of its members. Gradually signs of another kind of death assault these men, death cut off from either natural process or social ritual. The French prisoners working in their little graveyard cannot help seeing imprisoned Jews of a nearby village go about their wretched tasks. One morning they find "a man lying dead by the roadside on the way to the graveyard" who has "no distinguishing mark, save the armlet with the star of David"; and as they dig new graves for their French comrades, they discover "the arm of (a) corpse...pink...like certain roots." Their cemetery, with its carefully "idealized dead," is actually in "the middle of a charnel, a heap of corpses lying side by side...." And then the trains come, with their stifled cries, "the human voice, hovering over the infinite expanse of suffering like a bird over the infinite sea." As in Claude Lanzmann's great film Shoah, the trains go back and forth, endlessly, in one direction filled with broken human creatures, and in the other empty. Death without coffins, without reasons, without rituals, without witnesses: the realization floods into the consciousness of the narrator and a few other prisoners. "Death can never appease this pain; this stream of black grief will flow forever"--so the narrator tells himself. No explanation follows, no consolation. There is only the enlarging grief of discovery, with the concluding sentence: "I went back to my dead"--both kinds, surely. And nothing else.

After. In a long story, "A Plaque on Via Mazzini," the Italian-Jewish writer Giorgio Bassani adopts as his narrative voice the amiable coarseness of a commonplace citizen of Ferrara, the north Italian town that before the war had 400 Jews, 183 of whom were deported. One of them comes back, in August 1945: Geo Josz, bloated with the fat of endema starvation, with hands "callused beyond all belief, but with white backs where a registration number, tattooed a bit over the right wrist...could be read distinctly, all five numbers, preceded by the letter J." Not unsympathetic but intent upon going about their business, the citizens of Ferrara speak through the narrator: "What did he want, now?' Ferrara does not know what to make of this survivor, unnerving in his initial quiet, with his "obsessive, ill-omened face" and his bursts of sarcasm. In his attic room Josz papers all four walls with pictures of his family, which was destroyed in Buchenwald. When he meets an uncle who had fawned upon the fascists, he lets out "a shrill cry, ridiculously, hysterically passionate, almost savage." Encountering a broken-down old count who had spied for the fascist police, he slaps him twice--it's not so much his presence that Josz finds unbearable as his whistling "Lili Marlene."

As if intent upon making everyone uncomfortable, Josz resumes "wearing the same clothes he had been wearing when he came back from Germany ... fur hat and leather jerkin included." Even the warmhearted conclude:

> It was impossible ... to converse with a man in costume! And on the other hand, if they let him do the talking, he immediately started telling about ... the end of all his relatives; and he went on like that for whole hours, until you didn't know how to get away from him.

A few years later Josz disappears, forever, "leaving not the slightest trace after him." The Ferrarese, remembering him for a little while, "would shake their heads good-naturedly," saying, "If he had only been a bit more patient." What Geo Josz thinks or feels, what he remembers or wants, what boils up within him after returning to his town, Bassani never tells. There is no need to. Bassani sees this bit of human wreckage from a cool distance, charting the gap between Josz and those who encounter him on the street or at a cafe, no doubt wishing him well, but naturally, in their self-preoccupation, unable to enter his memories or obsessions. His very presence is a reproach, and what, if anything, they can do to reply or assuage they do not know. For they are ordinary people and he.... The rest seeps up between the words.

Aftermath. On the face of it, "My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseyner," by the Yiddish writer Chaim Grade, is an ideological dialogue between a badly shaken skeptic, evidently the writer himself, and a zealous believer, Hersh Rasseyner, who belongs to the Mussarist sect, "a movement that gives special importance to ethical and ascetic elements in Judaism." But the voices of the two speakers--as they meet across a span of years from 1937 to 1948--are so charged with passion and sincerity that we come to feel close to both of them.

Like Grade himself, the narrator had been a Mussarist in his youth, only to abandon the Yeshiva for a career as a secular writer. Yet something of the Yeshiva's training in dialectic has stuck to the narrator, though Grade is shrewd enough to give the stronger voice to Hersh Rasseyner, his orthodox antagonist. What they are arguing about, presumably, are external questions of faith and skepticism--the possibility of divine benevolence in the evil of His creation, the value of clinging to faith after a Holocaust that His hand did not stop. In another setting all this might seem an intellectual exercise, but here, as these two men confront one another, their dispute signifies nothing less than the terms upon which they might justify their lives. For Hersh Rasseyner the gas chambers are the inevitable outcome of a trivialized worldliness and an enfeebled morality that lacks the foundation of faith. For the narrator, the gas chambers provoke unanswerable questions about the place of a God who has remained silent. Back and forth the argument rocks, with Hersh Rasseyner usually on the attack, for he is untroubled by doubt, while the narrator can only say: "You have a ready answer, while we have not silenced our doubts, and perhaps we will never be able to silence them." With "a cry of impotent anger against heaven"--a heaven in which he does not believe but to which he continues to speak--the narrator finally offers his hand to Hersh Rasseyner in a gesture of forlorn comradeship: "We are the remnant ..."

In its oppressive intensity and refusal to rest with any fixed "position," Grade's story makes us realize that even the most dreadful event in history has brought little change in the thought of mankind. History may spring endless

surprises, but our responses are very limited. In the years after the Holocaust there was a certain amount of speculation that human consciousness could no longer be what it had previously been. (A consoling thought--but for the likelihood that it is not true.) Exactly what it might mean to say that after the Holocaust consciousness has been transformed is very hard to say. Neither of Grade's figures--nor, to be honest, the rest of us--shows any significant sign of such a transformation. For good and bad, we remain the commonplace human stock, and whatever it is that we may do about the Holocaust we shall have to do with the worn historical consciousness received from mankind's past. In Grade's story, as in other serious fictions touching upon the Holocaust, there is neither throb of consolation nor peal of redemption, nothing but an anxious turning toward and away from what our century has left us.

VII.

The mind rebels against such conclusions. It yearns for compensations it knows cannot be found; it yearns for tokens of transcendence in the midst of torment. To suppose that some redemptive salvage can be eked out of the Holocaust is, as we like to say, only human. And that is one source of the falsity that seeps through a good many accounts of the Holocaust, whether fiction or memoir--as it seeps through the language of many high-minded commentators. "To talk of despair," writes Albert Camus, "is to conquer it." Is it now? "The destiny of the Jewish people, whom no earthly power has ever been able to defeat"--so speaks a character in Jean-Francois Steiner's novel about a revolt in Treblinka. Perhaps appropriate for someone urging fellow prisoners into a doomed action, such sentiments, if allowed to determine the moral scheme of Holocaust writing, lead to a posture of selfdelusion. The plain and bitter truth is that while Hitler did not manage to complete the "Final Solution," he did manage to destroy an entire Jewish world.

"It is foolish," writes Primo Levi, "to think that human justice can eradicate" the crimes of Auschwitz. Or that the human imagination can encompass and transfigure them. Some losses cannot be made up, neither in time nor eternity. They can only be mourned. In a poem entitled "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Freight Car," the Israeli poet Don Pagis writes:

> Here in this transport
> I Eve
> and Abel my son
> if you should see my older son
> Cain son of man
> tell him that I

Cry to heaven or cry to earth: that sentence will never be completed.

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The Threefold Covenant:

Jewish Belief After the Holocaust

Daniel Landes

Analysis of Jewish religious self-understanding after the Holocaust must begin with a consideration of Jewish belief before this event. Since the Destruction of the Temple and the subsequent Exile, Jews have existed outside the mainstream of majority history. This position resulted from persecution and the majority's lack of interest in the spiritual life of a formerly great but presently obscure and somewhat mysterious minority. As individuals, Jews continuously contributed to Western civilization, but there was an acquiescense to their communal passivity and invisibility. The lack of prominence had certain advantages: It often kept them out of harm's way; visible, they were endangered. Since they existed outside of power, they did not participate in the violent excesses of the West (even if they were often its victims). Jews did not have to compromise their ideals or distort their faith in the battle for temporal control and earthly wealth.

Even survival, often at crisis, was only seen as a necessary condition for Israel's vocation and not a goal in its own right. Jews considered themselves God's chosen people.[1] This entailed the creation of a society that believed man to be created in the Tzelem elokim (image of God; "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness" -- Genesis 1:26). To further this ideal, halakhah promoted peace, justice, equity, and congenial relations between men; it also sought to connect man in prayer, ritual, and study with the transcendent. While this was accomplshed within the Jewish covenantal community, there was an implicit albeit little proclaimed significance for mankind. Tzelem elokim, as man's inheritance and imperative, would at some date be learned from Israel. In exchange for this faithful preservation of Tzelem elokim, it was the covenantal responsibility of the non-Jew to allow the people of Israel to live. At the same time, it was the pledge of God to preserve Israel for this future destiny.[2]

The Holocaust threatened to sever the bonds tying the Jew with the rest of mankind, his own people, and God. A Jew today knows that in the twentieth century he (or his fellow Jew) stood alone, bereft of support and comfort as a strange "other" in the face of unwarranted, ruthless, and total destruction. This knowledge corrodes trust and fundamental commonality that must serve as the basis of constructive cooperation between Jews and non-Jews in the post-Holocaust world. It is not merely Israel's relationship to mankind that has been imperiled. Ideally and romantically, one expects that shared adversity would lead to complete unity among Jews. Families that suffered major trauma during the war underwent great internal stress with guilt, recrimina-

tion, and assignment of blame for the tragedy upon other family members. These intense pressures, which can destroy a family, can also wreak havoc on a people, especially if they expect little or no respite from further trials. Furthermore, the Jew who believes in a God whose providence extends over the world, cannot bear His abandonment of the chosen people during the Holocaust. The covenant that binds Israel to God appears violated by God's refusal to rescue them during their most desperate need.

In fact, many laymen and theologians have concluded that one or more of these bonds were severed. Some gave up hope in Israel and its God and have sought sanctuary in assimilating into other nations. Others committed to Israel felt that salvation was only to be found within, and angrily rejected spirituality as a dead-end leading to irrelevance, quietism, and death. Still others affirmed their bond with God but turned away from the world that rejected them. They are content to await a more propitious moment in history (or messianically, at the end of history). Their radical suspicion of the world extends even to fellow Jews who are active participants in contemporary society.

Jewish belief in the post-Holocaust era is based on an overwhelming choice to maintain these bonds either partly or fully. This resilient faithfulness must be explored. Those who have remained within the Jewish community accept the inescapable condition of their Jewishness, finding succor and support within their own community. The Holocaust is converted from a threat into a prod to Jewish existence. Indeed, in a strange transfiguration it has become a badge of honor: "The people of Israel lives," even if only as a saving remnant. While these feelings have, at times, dissolved into an easy and eventually empty triumphalism, they express the desire not to opt out of Israel and thereby "complete Hitler's work."[3] This essentially negative commitment is transformed when the Jew explores the significance of his peoplehood. Studying its history, he becomes aware of more than a lachrymose account of suffering and persecution: An epic of many dimensions and a rich heritage is revealed. The Jew thus hopes for a meaningful future, despite the stark and contrary evidence of the Holocaust.

Israel's bond with the rest of mankind similarly has an imposed quality. The Jewish community is inextricably connected economically, politically, and socially with the rest of the world. The nationalistic Jew who wishes the State of Israel to pursue an independent course -- for "after the Holocaust, we owe the world nothing" -- must acknowledge the web of international relationships and interdependencies that affect, shape, and often govern national policies and decision-making. Even the separatist Jew must react to the values and culture of the "outside world" which inexorably penetrates every household. The only real alternative for the Jew and his community is to participate intelligently within Western society, benefiting from and contributing to its technological and intellectual progress while exerting their own autonomous moral influence. This must be accompanied by a skepticism for the ideological roots of Western civilization, knowing the violent excesses they have either led to or condoned. The Jew recognizes, nonetheless, the greater danger that ensues when he is isolated from the rest of humanity.

Many Jews have also felt desperately compelled to remain faithful to their God. They understand Judaism to enhance life and to affirm its worth.

Clinging to Judaism is thus identical with clinging to life. The source of values and meaning within life stems from God. Only He, in His majesty transcendent to the world, is beyond the radical pessimism of the Holocaust and the moral void it has opened. Jews fear that the utter negativity, futility, and deep nihilism that this event represents and induces may engulf all that survives. Their response is to seek meaning grounded in a reality totally distinct from despair. This approach is often interpreted as escapism. Even the most mystical approach to Judaism, however, leads man back to the world, the arena where his Torah is to be fulfilled. In any event, the believer feels compelled to accept God even with the awesome question raised by Auschwitz, rather than reject Him and the basis for value within life. Jews have felt driven to renew the threefold covenant with mankind, their own community, and God, but this has not resolved the tensions resulting from the Holocaust. The strains are more evident in the affirmation of the covenant "in spite of all that happened" than by its denial. The threefold covenant cannot evade an honest (and not just professed) confrontation with the Final Solution. Refusal, in the long run, is devastating: It denies the Jew's own self-worth, dismissing his significance as a historical being. It is a religious failure, implying that the resources of Judaism are insufficient to meet the harsh challenges of threatening nature. It is dangerous, because it prevents a community from learning the lessons of the past in order to prepare intelligently for future risks. It is morally insensitive, for it closes one's heart to the suffering of the powerless and the innocent. Finally, this leads to the invalid assumption that one can understand the Jew's vocation in post-capitalist civilization without considering its major public event.

The most readily available theory to account for the Holocaust is the traditional teaching of reward and punishment,[4] whose major application until now has been to the Destruction and Exile. In this doctrine, Jews are of central interest to God. He rewards and punishes them according to the morality of their deeds and the purity of their service. The people of Israel's worldly persecutors are unknowing rods of His wrath, but they are not excused for their malicious zeal and ruthless behavior. The doctrine of reward and punishment functions as a theodicy, explaining the existence of evil, shaping events, and clearing God of any fault. The onus is upon Israel, which bears the responsibility for its own actions and thus for its own fate. Despite the harshness of this teaching, there is an implied optimism: Just as a nation can deserve punishment, it can also merit reward. The suffering of the Destruction and Exile was accompanied by prophecy, through which the people of Israel were exhorted to examine their deeds and move to a higher plane in their relationship to others and to God.

The doctrine of reward and punishment applied to the Holocaust results in bizarre and disturbing conclusions. It necessitates the search for a sin that merited the attempted extermination of an entire people. Since a sin of such magnitude is obviously not present, it would have to be manufactured. Speculation in this direction leads to paralleling the antisemitic assumption of the Nazis: The Jews deserve the cruelest of fates. Additionally, the assignment of this responsibility to Israel is inherently a crushing burden, causing inner fragmentation and mutual recrimination.[5] It is not surprising that the most vigorous exponents of this view have distanced themselves from the Jewish commuity.

This theory also fails as a defense of God, attributing actions to Him which could be ascribed to a monster. It is not adequate to respond that God's punishment of Israel is "beyond our understanding." This ascribed action runs counter to our understanding of morality, as formed and shaped by His own Torah. Finally, the application of this doctrine to the Holocaust fails to account for the fact that the Nazis were not unknowing instrumentalities but self-motivated haters whose world program had a unique intentionality directed against the Jews.

No religious doctrine can "explain" why the Holocaust happened. Prior Jewish suffering has been subsumed under the Desruction and Exile. These twin episodes, however, were accompanied by prophecy, which first warned and later determined the reason for punishment. The Holocaust, as a unique occurence, cannot be understood as a part of these other tragedies. At the same time, no heavenly voice has broken Divine silence to elucidate its meaning. We are left with an historical event which can only be analyzed in those terms. This does not suggest that the Holocaust lacks religious importance. It does mean that a religious understanding of the Holocaust cannot ignore, but must rest on, a profound historical inquiry into the complex and confusing components of the event.

A major element in this approach is the realization that, unlike the Destruction and Exile, the Holocaust was not inevitable. Things could have happened differently if participants and bystanders had made other decisions. The Holocaust as history presumes full human responsibility. It is only within this context that a contemporary meaning of the threefold covenant and Israel's vocation can be found.

An approach to this threefold covenant is suggested by a passage describing the essence of Israel in the writings of Abraham Isaac Kook, the early twentieth-century European talmudist, thinker, and later Chief Rabbi of Israel. Rabbi Kook's works are not readily accessible to many readers. The writing is allusive, evocative, and mystically charged. It posits an underlying unity to reality having been created by One God. His thought, in addition (or, in consequence), conveys an unbounded optimism. Writing before the Holocaust, Rabbi Kook held what in retrospect was a naive confidence in the progress and moral ascent of man.

Rabbi Kook's theory of Israel, nevertheless, presents a vivid depiction of its chosenness in relation to mankind. Further, Kook's mysticism does not obscure but rather heightens Israel as an immanent entity, acting out its destiny within this world. Any definition of chosenness will entail a transcendent purpose, but Rabbi Kook's formulation of this doctrine is accomplished not at the expense of history, but rather through it. With this acceptance of history, Kook's theory allows for the holocaust to be confronted. It does so at the risk of the theory itself being transformed from a spirited optimism to a sober realism redeemed by a radical belief in God and His promise.

> Knesset Israel(the people of Israel) is the microcosm of all existence. This refers, in a worldly context, to Israel's material and spiritual dimensions - both its saga and its faith. Israel's history is the ideal microcosm of universal history. There is no social fluctuation among the peoples of the world that you will not find its prototype in Israel. Its

faith is the well-sifted essence as well as the influential source of the good and ideal of all faiths. In this sense, Israel's faith serves as a resource that reviews belief systems with the goal of elevating their discourse so that all may call in the Name of the Lord; your God, "the Separate One of Israel, shall be called the God of the entire earth."

Knesset Israel is the sublime revelation of the spirit, within human existence. One does not doubt that the manifestations of life contained within the brain and the heart are not to be found to a similar degree elsewhere in the body. Identically, one cannot doubt - although a sensitive soul and a thoughtful mind will marvel at - the manifestations of life, wonders, miracles, prophecy, the highest degree of divine inspiration, eternal hope, victory over every obstacle, revealed in an exalted form within Israel. Knesset Israel is the revelation of the arm of the Lord within the world, His hand in existence, and His participation within the development of nations. It is intimately connected to all that is exalted, venerable, holy, and lofty within the entire physical and spiritual scope of reality. It is impossible to think otherwise.[6]

Underneath Rabbi Kook's extravagant language is the rejection of any absolute disjunction between Israel and mankind. Israel is not a different form of man; he is man. This is more than a state of being. Israel's vocation and destiny is to be human and to share in all that is human, both materially and spiritually. The truth of the Torah is not separate from the truths contained within our systems, nor are the latter considered to be deviant forms of Torah. Rather, it is Israel's task to engage in a critical dialogue with mankind in order to declare monotheism - man's responsibilities to one another and to God. All nations and peoples share in the tzelem elokim in that reality is a creation of God, and man the crowning jewel. The meaning of Israel's election is to be the flesh-and-blood bearer of monotheism's message: to cherish the human and the transcendent.

Israel's election does not assure an easy triumph for tzelem elokim, despite Rabbi Kook's colorful messianic expectations. The Jewish people were not incidental victims of World War II. The attempt to exterminate them went beyond political expediency and was even counterproductive to the German war effort. Nazi hatred for the people of Israel had a unique intentionality[7] and was the very basis of its ideology and purpose. Standing at the center of mankind, Israel became the target. The Nazi attack upon Israel was thus an attack upon man himself. Nazi hatred of Israel was hatred turned against the image of man. By denying humanity to the Jews, the Nazis denied their own. Ultimately, it was a self-hatred.

From where does this self-hatred derive? Judaism has maintained that violence perpetrated upon man is rebellion against God, in that man is God's image upon earth. The refusal to consider another as His image is the desire to cast off the yoke of His image that the hater himself bears and the manifold ethical responsibilities that he is charged with. It is a rejection of meaning and responsibility and a descent into nihilism. A religious understanding of the Final Solution yields this cursed equation: hatred of Israel = hatred of man = self-hatred = hatred of God.

The Holocaust is a paradigmatic event for all mankind. It is a microcosm of

ultimate violence and tragedy within the modern nation-states of the West.[8] The Holocaust was not a sacrificial event in which the death of six million Jews expiates the possibilities of such murder of others. It was, rather, a breakthrough event that threatens its own uniqueness by setting a genocidal pattern for other peoples in other situations. The Holocaust is a dark revelation of man's capacities for participating in (the Nazis and their followers) and acquiescing to (Allies and others) systematic and total destruction. The Holocaust of that people dedicated to bearing the human and divine image heralds the Nuclear Age, where man's self-destruction is contemplated, planned for, and even played at in wargame scenarios. It announces a technological era in which the means of dehumanization and methods of torture are mass produced, increasingly sophisticated, and generally ignored. What befell the Jews now threatens all people.

The Holocaust is revelational of man but also to man. In that sense, its religious understanding is an historical understanding. Its significance is historical in that it not only provides the background for contemporary society but also points the path where the future may lead. The exploration and teaching of the Holocaust becomes a religious obligation of Israel, who, seeking the continuation of tzelem elokim, is the exposed and vulnerable arm of God in history. Man, a morally autonomous and free agent, may reject God and His people.[10] Israel, as the servant of the Lord, has suffered the wrath of those who rebelled against its master. Grievously hurt, Israel has chosen to renew its threefold covenant. For Israel, the Holocaust has imperiled the mission of the chosen people but, paradoxically, has also confirmed it. The renewal of His service takes on a new dimension of desperate urgency in an age when man stands in mutual threat and self-alienation. Israel draws strength from the prophet who charged that he (Israel) "shall not fail nor be crushed until he has rectified the world, for the islands await his teachings." (Isaiah 42:4).

NOTES

1. Judah Halevi, Kuzari (standard edition) 3:36
2. Isaiah 54:10
3. Emil Fackenheim, God's Presence in History (New York:New York University Press, 1969), p.84
4. Eliezer Berkovits, Faith After the Holocaust (New York:Ktav, 1973), pp. 86-94.
5. Yoel Teitelbaum, Sefer Vayoel Moshe. Brooklyn: 5721.p.5.
6. Abraham Isaac Kook, Orot (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1961), pp. 138.
7. Steven T. Katz, "The Unique Intentionality of the Holocaust," Modern Judaism (September 1981): 161-183.
8. See "How Unique is the Holocaust?" by Henry L. Feingold, in Genocide: Critical Issues of the Holocaust (Simon Wiesenthal Center, Los Angeles).
9. Irving Greenburg, Voluntary Covenant (Monograph)(New York: National Jewish Resource Center, 1982), pp. 21-28.
10. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Lessons in Jewish Thought: Adapted from the Lectures of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, ed. Abraham Besdin (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1979), pp. 31-39; Berkovitz, Faith, pp. 94-113.

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Lessons of The Holocaust:

Towards An Ethical Society

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As a man of the congregation and the campus - and most of us here belong to either or both of those primary communities - I am constantly haunted by two questions:

> Put by a survivor of the Holocaust: "How can Christianity survive the discovery that after a thousand years of its being Europe's official religion, Europe remains pagan at heart?" [1]
>
> Put by a contemporary historian: "How was it possible for a modern state to carry out the systematic murder of a whole people for no reason other than that they were Jews?" [2]

The first question summarizes the credibility crisis of Christianity after Auschwitz, and it is directed to all Christendom -- not Europe alone. The second question summarizes the credibility crisis of the modern university. For only a modern state could have effected the Holocaust. More than that: only a modern state - designed, armed, made efficient and staffed by university men and women - could have conceived and executed the program the Nazis called "the Final Solution," which we call the Shoah or Holocaust. The Death Camps were not built by illiterate, superstitious, ignorant savages out in the bush. They were the accomplishment of the characteristic product of the modern university: the technically competent barbarian. And this fact is what makes any study and teaching of the lessons of the Holocaust so anxiety-producing for us academics, and it goes far to explain why even the basic textbooks on Modern German History and Contemporary European Civilization - written by professors - still virtually ignore even the brute facts of the event.[3] As for probing the deeper meanings for law schools, medical schools, journalism schools, schools of education, theological seminaries, police academies, engineering schools, etc., the first steps are just being taken now - a generation after the unique event.

What is involved for the churches is major surgery, the removal of a cancerous teaching of contempt for the Jews which has defaced centuries of Christian theological and cultural teaching and practice, and the implementation of an affirmative theory and practice of affirmation of the importance to believing Christians of Jewish survival and well-being. What is involved for the universities, if they can be salvaged at all, is major reform: the regaining of an emphasis upon the pursuit of wisdom and devotion to a style of life which is ethically and spiritually life-affirming - in place of mere proficiency in serving and servicing necrophiliac machines.

Ground Rules for Work on the Meaning of the Holocaust

In the study of the Holocaust, in teaching the brute facts about the Holocaust, and in translating the lessons of the Holocaust into various settings, there are certain ground rules which have been learned in the past twenty years of work. To be certain that we have a common understanding of our task, let me quickly review those ground rules. Interest in the topic has so mushroomed in the last two or three years that without such an underlining of what has been learned we can be trapped in any one of a dozen dead-end streets.

The first conference which explored the Holocaust was held in 1970 at Wayne State University in Detroit. This event launched a series of Annual Scholars Conferences still held - now under the auspices of the National Conference of Christians and Jews - the first weekend of each March, in New York City. This series continues to be the major meeting point for scholars and graduate students engaged in research and writing in Holocaust Studies. The first national conference on teaching the Holocaust and the lessons of the Holocaust was held here in Philadelphia in 1975. We can take pride in the fact that we are now opening the 5th teaching conference.

In both of these series - the Scholars Conference and the Teaching Conferences - we have kept certain fundamental operative principles up front:

1. Study and teaching of the Holocaust and its lessons must be an interfaith endeavor. Usually we have guaranteed this by factoring in consideration of the Nazi assault on Christianity during the Third Reich - an episode commonly referred to as "the Church Struggle." We have ample evidence of the practical worth of interfaith cooperation too: where it has been lacking, those who would deny the event and supress the evidence is far greater, whereas joint sponsorship of programs (such as we have had here from the start through the JCRC, the Metropolitan Christian Council, the Cardinal's Commission) is a major guarantor of success.
There are psychological reasons too why interfaith cooperation is essential. We have found that left alone the gentile scholars and teachers, even those Christians working on the Church Struggle, tend to drift over into abstractions about "theodicy," "man's inhumanity to man," etc. - and avoid facing the Holocaust as a discrete event. And Jews, concentrating by themselves on the trauma of the Holocaust, easily can slide into an atmosphere of morbidity and preciousness.

2. Study of the Holocaust and teaching its lessons call by their nature for an international cooperative work. The Nazi assault on Jews, upon those they designated as Untermenschen, and upon those Christians who stayed Christian, affected life in many countries. Information and perspectives on the Church Struggle and the Holocaust differ according to the developments in different areas. Important archives and study programs are found in the countries directly affected by the ideological and practical programs of the Third Reich, of course; but also the lessons are now studied by the alert in lands further removed. At the International Bonhoeffer Conference last August 24-27 in Kaiserswerth (Duesseldorf), for example, there was even a delegation of Japanese professors!

3. Study and teaching of the Holocaust is of necessity an interdisciplinary undertaking. This is in part because of the fact that Nazi tota-

litarianism, with its sweeping demands for submission, affected every aspect of human society from Architecture to Zionism. But even more, as we think of the function of the univeristy in training the many different kinds of specialists that make industrialized society work, creative attention to an event of such mass requires us to summon up all of the many vernaculars and methodologies taught today on campus.

In this requirement, the study and interpretation of the Holocaust is comparable to another pathological concentration: the study of cancer. A few years ago a writer summed up the developments in that field -

> "...perhaps for the first time in the history of experimental science have highly diverse laboratory specialists dissolved their academic barriers and united their efforts in a common cause." [4]

Holocaust studies are also an attempt to analyze and interpret a pathological phenomenon. There are those who would make of the Holocaust a subject for theologians or historians only. But it is not: by definition, the study of totalitarian ideology and system - of a total assault on the dignity, integrity, and liberty of the human person and the delicate web of relationships which provide him a preserve within the very-encroaching jungle of nature in the raw - requires the cooperation of all the teachers of the sundry specializations which the modern univeristy provides and the specialized practitioners which modern industrialized society requires to service its demands.

The planners of this conference, pointing toward the reform of higher education, have planned Workshops within the varied professions and vocations. In another year, as soon as specialists appear in additional fields, other Workshops will be added. A recovery of commitment to life and ethical standards cannot be launched by an awakened Academe alone, any more than it can be achieved by Christian and Jewish congregations alone. Still less will there be change because of altered curricular offerings. Reorientation which accomplishes fundamental change can only be successful when and where there are valid and compelling "models" of professional communities of integrity and discipline - when bar associations as well as law schools, medical societies as well as medical schools, religious communities as well as seminaries and divinity schools, engineering societies as well as schools of engineering, societies of journalists and media specialists as well as schools of communication, combine their efforts to achieve a new standard of thinking and acting appropriate to educated persons.

Meaningful work on the Holocaust and its lessons is <u>interfaith</u>, <u>international</u> and <u>inter-disciplinary</u>.

<u>Voluntary Discipline/The Need for "Models"</u>

The demand that both religious and academic communities produce new "models" of integrity and collective voluntary discipline is in the final count the only alternative to submission to massive state control. It is not anarchy that keeps true freedom alive, but voluntary discipline. No human society can long remain

free and self-governing if freedom is confused with license, and the absence of ethical teaching and practice turns the nobel specialized stewardships into self-serving bands of ruthless predators.

When professional associations of specialists sink down to the level of mere predatory bands, they lose their relationship to the needs of the society at large - a relationship which gives them their right to exist. Their charter is the stewardship of life, and the quality of that stewardship depends upon the level of discipline they maintain in their ranks.

Voluntary discipline is an imperative in societies that value freedom from government control, whether that control is reluctantly assumed or - as increasingly common in the 20th century - triumphally exercised. Yet our churches are today frequently only the sanctifiers of the enthusiasms of the general society, and our universities only engaged in turning out the products desired by the military-industrial complex. Both campus and church lack discipline, sometimes even basic integrity.

The German churches accomodated to Hitler and Nazism under pressure. There is a deeper pathos when free churches, in a free society, are divested of integrity and discipline simply by yielding to the seduction of a narcissistic culture. When churches are part of an establishment, their discipline is provided by the political authorities. It is the House of Commons that in England decides whether the Book of Common Prayer shall be updated, and the Crown that appoints the Archbishop of Canterbury. In Hitler's time it was the tradition of obedience in the churches toward the princes - the landesherrliche Kirchenregiment that obtained from 1555 on - that made resistance to the government, even a government run by criminals for criminal purposes, inconceivable to most churchmen. Even today, in the German Federal Republic, the services offered by the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches are listed in the back of the telephone book along with the Police Department, Fire Department, Social Insurance offices, etc. - in case anyone has the misfortune to need to make use of them. All these tax supported offices are there for the rites of passage or other occasional needs. In an area of Religious Liberty, an entirely different thing from toleration, the churches must depend upon internal discipline for maintaining standards of ministerial training, standards of membership, etc. A free church which has accomodated itself to the prevailing culture, which floats with the stream rather than swimming against the current, is a far more pitiable religious entity than one which has at least the standards set by the Canon Law and Church Law of a traditional Christendom.

In a significant article on the destruction of human rights in the Third Reich Otto Kircheimer emphasized the importance of sub-politcal associations in maintaining the fabric of a free society, and pointed out that totalitarian regimes deliberately set out to homogenize the society and destroy all centers of independent opinion and action.[5]

Bluntly said, relgions bodies which under Religious Liberty fail to maintain a structure of discipline, what the sociologists call a "model," are shirking their responsibility. This "model" can only be a religious community of authenticity, one within which credible lifestyle is maturing, forming - worthy of emulation by the young. The number of young people who have in recent years drifted into cults and sects is a mark of the failure of Catholics, Protestants and Jews to maintain and strengthen the loyalties of their constituents.[6]

The first fault of them German Christendom that opened the way to the triumph of Nazi ideology and practice was not defection and apostasy to the Adversary, though that came soon enough. Neither was the first fault the failure to provide strong resistance, nor was it the abandonment of the Jews by baptized Gentiles who professed to worship the same God. The first fault of the German churches was their failure to provide, through faithful leadership and a formed and disciplined church, a "model" - i.e., a Laos conscious of its calling to witness to the Truth and condemn wickedness, a Christian church capable of holding its own in stormy weather as well as in the fine. If the Christians had stayed Christian in Christendom, the Jews would never have had to bear virtually alone - except for a few thousand authentic Christian martyrs - the weight of the murderous hostility of an Ersatzreligion and system which was anti-Christian before the shooting and gassing of Jews ever began.[7]

Similarly, a fundamental responsibility of the university is to maintain the standards and disciplines of a true community of learning. Where do we find in the academic world, apart from a few ashrama and havurot, communties of learning worthy of the description of the classical center of higher education: universitas fidelium? What shall we think of academic integrity when a professional group loud in demonstrating the so-called "right" of homosexuals to be ordained takes no action against a colleague who makes a small fortune by propagandizing for antisemites to the effect that the Holocaust never occurred at all? What shall we think of a tenured professor who has made himself a millionaire by operating a large number of sub-standard housing units, repeatedly cited for violations, and is now being tried for perjury in covering up his malfeasances? - and of his colleagues who leave to the civil courts all questions of ethical conduct? How shall we assess a tenured university professor who has been convicted of bribing a government official to secure funds for his private enterprises, who has only by a hung jury escaped prison for income tax evasion? Are these incidents, and there are dozens like them, to fall under the rubric "academic freedom" only, or is there such a thing as academic responsibility and campus and community discipline?

Regardless of what it says in the euphoric phrases in the front of the school's catalog, a campus without voluntary discipline is in fact teaching the law of the jungle: that might makes right, that any action is appropriate if you can get away with it.

Of the real perversion of values on our campuses a leading educator has recently written:

> "Every student must master a mass of unstated norms - which have enormous socializing effect, often exactly the opposite of the stated goals... What the hidden curriculum teaches is competition, not communality."[8]

And beyond the "hidden curriculum," and more decisive, is what the professors and the professional and vocational leaders in fact -- regardless of their verbalization about values -- believe to be permissable behavior. What, to put it bluntly, do the professors profess and the practitioners practice?

The students get the point, by osmosis if not by ear. The university talks about "educating for democracy" - and in fact usually operates as an oligarchy.[9]

Our trade schools talk about service to the common good, and in fact turn out thousands of technically competent barbarians - who will use their advanced skills to do whatever is possible, so long as the price is right.

During the student revolts of a decade ago some of the key questions were asked, albeit unpleasantly, about the university as a "model":

> "How have we known it? As a despotism. As a 'creature of the state'. As a place where neither faculty nor students - who alone constitute the organization into a university - have control over its most general policy. As a place where administrative practices that would no longer be countenanced in business are enshrined and elaborated. As a place where P.R. in the worst sense is practiced to the limit: where, under the canopy of the highest-flown statements, commencement oratory and effusion of lofty sentiments clothed in the semi-sacerdotal, semi-medieval cloak of monastic tradition, gowns, 'degrees', scepters of office...freedom is fettered and honor suborned. It is not just the badness of these practices, but their badness in the context of virtues celebrated and claimed, that gives the protest...its burning quality, its fire and force..."[10]

So far as one can tell, there has been no general response to the earlier student protests. In fact, there seems to be a general satisfaction that, at least for the time being, students are content to be docile subjects of an unreformed higher education business.

Where then are young people to find professional leaders worthy of emulation? Where do they exerperience as novitiates the "models" which shape them as mature and wise human persons who have learned to distinguish between good and evil, true and false, decisions? - who, if worse comes to worst, have learned to say "no" to criminal acts by legitimate governments and to say "no" altogether to illegitimate governments?

The report of the Commission on the Holocaust submitted to President Carter on September 27th described the inexorable rationality of the killing program:

> "The Holocaust was not a throwback to medieval torture or archaic barbarism but a thoroughly modern expression of bureaucratic organization, industrial management, scientific achievement, and technological sophistication. The entire apparatus of the German bureaucracy was martialed in service of the extermination process. The churches and health ministries supplied birth records to define and isolate Jews; the post office delivered statements of definition, expropriation, denaturalization, and deportation; the economic ministry confiscated Jewish wealth and property; the universities denied Jewish students admission and degrees while dismissing Jewish faculty; German industry fired Jewish workers, officers, and board members and disenfranchised Jewish stockholders; and government travel bureaus coordinated schedules and billing procedures for the railroads which brought the victims to their deaths. The process of extermination itself was bureaucratically systematic.

"The location and operation of the camps reflected calculations of accessibility and cost-effectiveness, the trademarks of modern business practice."

The systems, the planning of the killing, the inventions of the death machines - all were accomplishments of the modern university. I repeat: just as the Holocaust is a credibility crisis for Christianity, so is it a credibility crisis for those with eyes to see the modern university for what it is - an institution whose product is technical competence and rationality, often without even a baseline of simple ethics. Not religion, not professional ethics, not even - with the rise of modern cartels and multi-nationals - simple patriotism has proved powerful enough to check and restrain the Eiskalt performance of specialists where the command is given, where the price is right.

There was no commitment to life, no restraint, no acquired wisdom in the education of the university people who mounted the Holocaust: whatever could be done would be done, and as efficiently as possible. The Faustian motif is unmistakable.

The Loss of the Human and the Humane

The moral imperative of man's responsibility to and for his fellow men, of Mentschlekhkayt grounded in the Torah, is based upon God's covenant with a people or peoples. The social principle of religion, of man's concern for his fellows, which results in "horizontal" convenants both religious and civic is the other face of a "vertical" covenant. Without the other, a single face is blemished and repulsive. A pretentious claim laid by man upon the divine, accompanied by insensibility or violence toward human persons, is not uncommon in the annals of religions - but it ends in wars of religion and, in the 20th century, in genocide. A heated natural community, perhaps the Aryan Volksgemeinschaft which Hitler said would be his greatest gift to posterity, accompanied by neglect of reverence for the sacred, comes to the same end.

There are deep pathological roots also in individual cases where hatred of creation leads to contempt for and avoidance of bonding with other persons. One of the deepest tragedies of this genocidal age, when so many of the hopes of youth and young adults have been betrayed by false leaders and causes, is the numer of "burnt children" in post-Third Reich Germany and post-Vietnam America. Many cannot accept or confirm relationships - whether social or private - which are binding, which require commitment, which involve the risk of getting hurt again.

We are aware of the flight of such isolates into cults and sects, of the inroads into traditional religions made by Scientology, Hari Krishna, and the "Moonies." The failure of the church or synagogue to provide a caring fellowship, a "model" of loving interpersonal relationships predictive of a better age to come, lies at the center of the religious crisis. But the university is also to provide a community of purpose and devotion. Univeristas magistrorum ac scholarium, as the new community was defined in the charters of the University of Paris (1219-1226), may be translated as "a fellowship of masters and novices." Where do we find today that institution of higher education devoted to a wise and worthy style of life, along with its special service to other structures as a concentration of animate and inanimate teaching machines?

The student revolts of ten years ago, as unpleasant as they were in many respects, focused attention upon certain fundamental deficiencies in the modern university. When they articulated something that went beyond an immediate political target, they demanded that the university live up to its commitments as a "model" for the larger society; they demanded that matters of ethics, values, Mentschlekhkayt be brought to the fore as well as the latest discoveries and inventions enhancing man's power over things and persons.

There are those of the Academe who are beginning to deal with the acute credibility crisis of the modern university. Our expectation is that this conference on the lessons of the Holocaust will help to strengthen colleagues who here, and in their communities of learning and lifestyle, are discussing the basic questions and deciding upon new convenants of teaching and behavior worthy of men and women of integrity.

The agony of the nuclear physicists, from which we received some brilliant writing three decades ago, is now shared by all of the university disciplines. The atomic scientist has invented and let loose upon the world an engine of destruction capable of destroying all earthly life many times over. But his colleagues in the university were already involved in making mass killing rational and efficient a decade before him, in the Holocaust. The Faustian accomplishments of the men of the Holocaust, so precisely related by Max Weinrich in Hitler's Professors (1946), was achieved by foreswearing love. They set the standard for modern technologists: whatever can be done will be done. Much of science, in the exhilaration of a false freedom, has made of all human life a "free fire zone" more portentuous, more awful by far than that made notorious by the massacre at MyLei.

A poem by Armando Valladares on the torture and slaughter of prisoners in the Boniato jail, Cuba, on 1 September 1975, concludes:

> "Everything was done with perfect order
> The dead were perfectly murdered
> The wounded were perfectly wounded
> The heads were perfectly broken
> The collar bones as well
> The ribs and the arms..."[11]

There is of course, a human touch to the atrocities in Cuba, Uganda, Brazil, Chile, Kambudscha, Equatorial Guinea, Iran and other places: anger, hatred, even sadism have a touch of animal warmth. But increasingly the engines of destruction cultivate the Eiskalt demeanor of the "objective" scientist, the quality of icy coldness urged upon the Einsatzgruppen by Himmler and almost perfectly achieved in the operations at Treblinka, Auschwitz and Birkenau. Himmler, significantly enough, was proud of the high percentage of PhD's in the officers corps of the Death's Head units.

Saturation bombing, the atom bomb, push-button warfare - all have the Faustian and Eiskalt quality we associate with the scientific mood. But in that hour when the man of the univeristy and the laboratory remembers that he was a human person before he became a technologist, he may cry out with Hamlet -

> "O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams." (Act II, scene 2, lines 255-258)

In the bad dreams of today the university man sees himself alienated from life and then he sees himself seeing himself, in an infinity of mirrors. His is the eye that peers with objectivity at the bit of life - a butterfly, a bug - pinned to the spot where the microscope is focused; and in another moment, he is himself that bit of life that, tied down and powerless, looks up the long tunnel to perceive only the Eiskalt eye of the curious, unfeeling viewer. He is the hand that creates and guides the drone plane, travelling at Mach II and carrying more destructive power than loosed by all the armies of World War II put together; and he is the man of the city who may see his wife and children, his friends and colleagues, his good dreams of a fair and just commonwealth, go up in a mushroom-shaped cloud of smoke.

The smoke of the chimneys of which Nelly Sachs wrote is a sign of universal doom, if technology - uninformed and unformed by wisdom - continues along a course undisciplined by moral concern, religious virtue, commitment to life. What is this Faustian freedom which permitted great medical faculties to produce a Dr. Mengele and his associates? - permitted great legal faculties to produce a Freisler and the other lawyers and judges who ran the death-loving machines called "People's Courts"? - permitted theological faculties of international renown to produce a Hirsch, a Kittel, and others who waffled the truth and developed a sophisticated apologetic for the Nazi Aryan decrees? What passionate curiousity, operating at absolute zero (0 degrees Kelvin, -459.7 degrees Farenheit) in human empathy, hailed horrors and the infernal world, ambitious to reign in hell rather than serve in heaven?

Of False and True Freedom

"Freedom" is a plus word today, and discipline is a minus word in the popular mind. But true freedom, as Helmut Gollwitzer - Theology professor in Berlin, and stalwart foe of both Nazi and Communist totalitarianisms - has well written, runs in another direction.

> "The form of freedom is this: to be able to decide for one's self.
> The secret of freedom is this: to be without anxiety for one's self.
> And the meaning of freedom is this: Love.
> This is the exact meaning of the beautiful old saying, upon which we cannot meditate too often: Deo servire summa Libertas - 'to serve God is the highest freedom.'"[12]

It is a false and dangerous freedom that divides science from its uses, curiousity about the nature of things from sensibility to the materia of a created order. Years ago A.D. Lindsay, Master of Balliol College and one of the great educators of this century, gave the Terry Lectures at Yale University. He said that he had once heard a man of the univeristy argue that a true scientist would be so indifferent to the consequences of his pursuit of knowledge that he would rejoice as much to discover a deadly poison, one drop of which in the water supply of a great city would kill millions, as to discover the specific cure of a deadly disease, thereby saving millions of lives. And then Professor Lindsay said that interestingly enough the academic who advanced such a notion of moral objectivity was not a laboratory scientist but an economist. The science of which he spoke, and of which I am speaking, was Wissenschaft, and the Wissenschaftler of the modern university who have concentrated upon methodologies and technical competencies to the neglect of wisdom and the responsible

stewardship of power, are just as often theologians or political scientists as they are physicists or engineers.

In Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus there is an exchange between the scientist (in this case a musician), Adrian Leverkuhn, and his purported biographer, Dr. Zeitblom. Leverkuhn asks,

> "Do you consider love the strongest emotion?"
> Zeitblom: "Do you know a stronger?"
> "Yes, interest." ("curiosity" is a better translation)
> "By which you presumably mean a love from which the animal warmth has been withdrawn."

You may recall that in Dr. Faustus' pact with the Adversary he is given an untrammeled flight beyond good and evil, an exhilarating emancipation from the human contact he personally had always feared and shunned. The price he must pay is simple but solemn:

> "Love is forbidden to you, in so far as it warms. Thy life shall be cold, therefore thou shalt love no human being...Cold we want you to be, that the fires of creation shall be hot enough to warm yourself in..." [14]

In a recent brilliant study of Hitler, Sebastian Haffner notes how the Fuhrer avoided real friendship all his life, and speculates that one of the reasons why he allowed Roehm to be murdered in the 1934 clean-up of the S.A. was because Roehm was the only old comrade left who addressed him in the intimate form - as "du" rather that "Sie" or "mein Furher." Lacking human interaction, except for the rape of massed assemblies, Hitler's character showed no personal development; he remained from 1921 unchanged, what he always was. He always had "an unusual intensity of political life and experience along with an unusual lack of the personal."[15]

We are brought to a basic lesson of the Holocaust, to that fundamental principle which good Pope John XXIII stated in Pacem in Terris (10 April 1963), the encyclical in which he gave so much attention to both the importance of professional competence and the apostolate of formed persons of conscience in professional communities: "True freedom, freedom worthy of the sons of God, is that freedom which most truly safeguards the dignity of the human person."

Religiously speaking, true freedom is synchronized with disciplined voluntary service to the common good.

Politically speaking, true freedom is possible only among persons who have been formed by the practice of voluntary discipline.

No freedom - religious, political or academic - can long survive the vertigo of a despairing individualism, of narcissism, of the abandonment of ethics which defaces the "me first!" age.

The end of false freedom is only temporarily anarchy: at the end of the slide is totalitarianism, completed and branded for all time by genocide.

Footnotes

1. Donat, Alexander, The Holocaust Kingdom (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), p. 230.

2. Dawidowicz, Lucy S., The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945 (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1975), P. xiii.

3. Cf. Friedlander, Henry, "Publications on the Holocaust," in Littell, Franklin H., and Locke, Hubert G., eds., The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974), Ch. V.

4. Zahl, Paul A., "Cancer Research: Integrator of the Sciences," XVII The American Scholar (1948) 2:178.

5. The Hoax of the Twentieth Century, by a professor at Northwestern University, where professors and students demonstrated against the dismissal of two professed homosexuals from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary. The Allied Commander in Chief foresaw the possibility of later denials of the facts and brought observers to the newly opened camps, from America and from England; Eisenhower, Dwight D., The Papers of... (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, n.d.), No. 2418

6. Cf. report by Jackson Diehl, p. 9A of The Philadelphia Inquirer, 10/17/79.

7. Cf. Associated Press report in The Philadelphia Inquirer, 10/16/79: "Man Guilty of Plot to Bribe Flood."

8. Bloy, Myron S., Jr., "Academic Values and Prophetic Discernment," XCIII The Christian Century (1976) :889-94.

9. Littell, Franklin H., "The University as Polis," XXVI The Antioch Review (1966) 3:345-55.

10. John Seeley in Adelman & Lee, eds., The University Game (Toronto: Anansi Press, 1968), p.134; cf. also Littell, Franklin H., "Students in Search of 'Soul'," VI Journal of the Division of Higher Education, the United Church of Christ (1968) 11:2-9.

11 The New York Times, 5 October 1979, p. A19.

12. From "True Freedom," in Littell, Franklin H., ed., Sermons to Intellectuals (New York: Macmillan Co., 1963), pp. 84-85.

13. Cf. Littell, Franklin H., "'Objectivity' and the Professors," IX Journal of the Division of Higher Education, the United Church of Christ (July, 1970) 1:10-15.

14. Mann, Thomas, Doctor Faustus (New York: Vintage Books, 1948), pp. 69, 249.

15. Haffner, Sebastian, Anmerkungen zu Hilter (Munich: Kindler Verlag, 1978), pp. 8, 13.

Auschwitz And The Nurturing of Conscience

Robert E. Willis

IT HAS BEEN ARGUED recently that it is not possible to ground Jewish theology legitimately in the Holocaust.[1] Whatever the significance of that event might be for Jewish life and thought, it is asserted, it cannot, in itself, provide the basis for a revitalized faith. Jacob Neusner, for example, is particularly blunt in rejecting that possibility:

> One who did not believe in God before he knew about the Holocaust is not going to be persuaded to believe in Him on its account. One who believed in the classical perception of God presented by Judaic theologians is not going to be forced to change his perception on its account....Jews find in the Holocaust no new definition of Jewish identity because we need none. Nothing has changed. The tradition endures.[2]

Thus, Neusner categorically sets aside the efforts of Emil Fackenheim and Richard Rubenstein, among others, to see in the Holocaust an utterly unique event requiring a new departure for Jewish theology. Rubenstein's suggestive metaphor of the Holocaust as a time bomb ticking within the Jewish community[3] is neutralized when placed within the salvific contours of the tradition, and Fackenheim's urging of a new and commanding word from Auschwitz - that Jews continue to exist as Jews, lest Hitler be handed a posthumous victory[4] - is silenced by the sustaining power of the original 613.

Whether or not Neusner is ultimately proved correct in his view of the insignificance of Auschwitz for the Jewish story and its accompanying metaphors, and of the enduring sufficiency of tradition, no such appeal will suffice when the focus shifts to the implications of that event for the Christian story. What then becomes clear is that the tradition that has informed and shaped the sensibility of the Christian community through time has itself contributed to the development of anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic attitudes and actions. Rosemary Ruether has attempted to describe the form of that contribution in her suggestion that "anti-Judaism in Christian theology stands as the left hand of Christology."[5] Moreover, she continues,

> the stance of church leadership toward the results of theological anti-Judaism has been one which might be described as "the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing," and that continues to be the attitude of the Christian history up to our own time, despite the Holocaust.[6]

Ruether's analysis of the ambiguity present within the Christian tradition raises what is surely the most difficult and agonizing question of all: the degree to which the church is to be held accountable for the Holocaust. Did Christian theology-the developing (and developed) explication of the Christian story, which began with the New Testament writings-prepare the way, wittingly or unwittingly, for that horror? For A. Roy Eckardt, at least, the answer is unequivocal:

> The Holocaust remains merely the final act of a uniquely unique drama. It is simply the hour that succeeds the drawing up of all the doctrinal formulations. It is the attaining of the "right time" (kairos) following upon all those practice sessions of crusade, inquisition, and the like. The Holocaust is no more than this consummation. Yet in that very simplicity, in that very absence of originality, there is contained all the insane complexity. Only in these latter years could we fully and finally ready ourselves for the eschatological deed (Endlosung). Only the final destruction was left to be carried out....The Nazis were nothings. They could only provide concrete, practical implementation of the dominant theological and moral conclusions of the Church, with the aid of technological devices not previously available to Christendom.[7]

And, with regard to the impact wrought by the Holocaust on the subsequent thinking of the church, Eckardt finds no basis for optimism. "Very largely," he asserts, "the churches continue to live in the midst of the Endlosung."

It is impossible to conceive a more massive or absolute indictment of the Christian conscience and the story framework within which it is set. Indeed, if it is really the case that the Holocaust-the acting out of the "final solution"-can be seen as no more than necessary expression of what was present implicitly in the story from the beginning, then it is hard to see what hope remains for any sort of fundamental reorientation or reshaping of it. The only possible conclusion would have to be that the Christian tradition, despite its ostensibly positive intent, and the contributions it may have made to human well-being, is in its very essence evil, the final embodiment of the Antichrist. Moreover, both the claims advanced on behalf of the capacity of the Christian conscience to respond in a morally fitting way, and the presumed ability of the Christian community to give it appropriate shape and direction, would have to be rejected.

Understandably, one shrinks from embracing so stark a conclusion. Not even Richard Rubenstein, in his analysis of the fateful relationship that has existed between Judaism and Christianity, found it necessary (or possible) to see in the death camps a necessary, and therefore unavoidable, consequence of the Christian outlook.[8]

Even so, we must not move too quickly to neutralize Eckardt's judgment, for it represents a profound cri de coeur, a resounding mea culpa spoken on behalf of the Christian community as a whole. At the very least, it serves as a dramatic reminder of the burden of guilt and responsibility which must be shouldered for the contribution which the church's theology did, in fact, make to the Endlosung of the Nazis. The fact that that event cannot fairly be seen

as a direct entailment of the Christian story does not lessen the evil consequences it helped to produce.

It seems clear, at any rate, that the response of the Christian community to the moral crisis represented by the Nazis and their policies was at best ambiguous, and at worst the most explicit embodiment to date of the limited power of the Christian story to shape conscience and behavior in a morally appropriate fashion. Indeed, what emerges from that piece of history is a precise indication of the ambiguity and the complexity of the relationship between moral agency (in both its corporate and individual forms) and the story, or stories, by which it is shaped and directed.[9] To put it differently, we can say that it exposes dramatically the gap between the ideal and the actuality of the church, a gap which gains specific embodiment in the tension between what, from a moral point of view, is required and what in fact is done.

What is required now is the effort of attempting to expand the content and the dynamics of the Christian conscience through an absorption of the lessons conveyed to it by Auschwitz. To put it diffently, the church must allow its conscience and those of its members to be nurtured by the Holocaust to a new embodiment of the relationship between story and moral agency. The urgent need for such an exploration has been expressed forthrightly by Friedrich Heer: "For the Church to assume her share of permanent co-responsibility for the whole Jewish community presupposes an illumination of the Christian conscience which is only just beginning. To put it into practice, a complete revision of Christian theology is needed."[10]

It has been proposed-by Stanley Hauerwas and Michael Novak, among others-that a theory of the moral life which seeks to do justice to the intentionality of moral agency must take seriously the particular story that has come to be embodied in the life of the self. It is only in relation to the complex story that is lived by the self, and the ways in which that informs and shapes the overall direction of its life, that moral assessment and action can occur.

To stress the relationship between story, intentionality, and action is not to reject the place of principles and rules in the moral life. It is, rather, to focus attention on what may be called the aesthetic component of morality-that larger and richer background which comprises its ethos, and which enables the specific actions of the self to be displayed as part of an ongoing character pattern rather than merely a discrete series of actions. As Hauerwas puts it:

> Our moral lives are not simply made up of the addition of our separate responses to particular situations. Rather we exhibit an orientation that gives our life a theme through which the variety of what we do and do not do can be scored. To be agents at all requires a directionality that involves the development of character and virtue. Our character is the result of our sustained attention to the world that gives a coherence to our intentionality.[11]

The story that we come to embody and make our own is not, however, self-generated. The formation of character and the shaping of intentionality occur within a social context, or, more accurately, within the several communities-

family, nation, church-with which we have to do. The moral biography of the self is thus to be understood in relation to the stories, symbols, and metaphors generated by those communities, and appropriated as one's own.

It goes without saying that the process of appropriation will be complex rather than simple, for although there may well be points at which the various stories presented will mesh, there will also certainly be others where conflict and tension will arise-the claims of the family against those of the nation, those of nation and family against those of the religious community, and so forth.

It is in relation to this welter of potentially conflicting claims, loyalties, and obligations that the self must attempt to forge a coherent and durable pattern of moral response. That necessity points to the cruciality of a story which both transcends our undertakings and grounds us in them, providing an outlook whereby we are enabled to resist the tendency to identify completely (and immorally) with partial stories, and the roles and demands they present to us.

For the Christian moral self, such a transcending story is unfolded within the Christian community, which provides a setting within which moral awareness can be nutured to a potential, albeit always provisional, embodiment of maturity.[12] It is within such a setting that the moral self in its wholeness can be specified in terms of the category of conscience. "Conscience" then serves as a shorthand designation for the complex of factors that impinge on the moral identity of the self, and points to the possibilty of actions that exemplify continuity between character (virtue) and obligation. As James Nelson has remarked: "If we think of conscience with its several interrelated and social dimensions, then it is obvious that we are pointing not only to one particular element or faculty but to the entire moral self in all its richness and complexity.[13]

The understanding of conscience suggested above has certain obvious affinities with the views of such thinkers as Lehmann, Tillich, H. R. Niebuhr, and Bonhoeffer. In each, though not in precisely the same way, there is a concern to view the moral identity of the self- the totality of which I have designated by the term "conscience"-in relation to the social reality of the Christian community, and the meaning-complex of symbol, metaphor, and story by means of which it carries on the process of reflection, self-criticism, and action. The theonomous or transmoral image of the self as moral agent that emerges here points to the transcendent ground of the moral life in the sovereignty of God (or God-in Christ), and to that final level of accountability which must be exhibited faithfully throughout its duration.

One way of expressing the force of that accountability is to say that the understanding of the moral agency of the self that is projected within the Christian story entails the concept of deputy-ship. James Gustafson has indicated in a precise way the connection that holds therein between conviction and accountability.

> Our convictions are that God, made known through his deeds in Israel's perceptions of them, and in the face of Jesus Christ as the apostles have depicted it to us, is the sovereign Lord of

> all things. To be deputized by him is to be particularly responsible to him for the things over which he is Lord. No person, no event can be arbitrarily left out of our concern. And certainly the particular events and persons in our particular spheres of life give location to our deputyship. To fulfill this is to think carefully about God's will and way, to be perceptive with reference to our world, to be sensitized and directed by our faith and conviction, and to shape our intentions and actions with clarity. It is also to acknowledge that we are only deputies, and subject to the limitations and perversions of agency. God remains sovereign, and we live in hope as well as in solemn moral obligation.[14]

The nurturing context provided by the Christian community and its story is thus possessed, in principle, of the power to affect the dispositions and characters of its members. Within that setting, the universal and the personal dimensions of moral responsibility and accountability can be maintained and brought to the level of conscious reflection and enactment. Therein we find a perspective inclusive enough to relativize, without submerging, our lesser, though unavoidable, loyalties, so that our tendency to settle into some form of either moral polytheism or moral henotheism is transformed.

It is obvious, however, that we are dealing here with an ideal view. The requirements of deputyship are beset, as Gustafson notes, by our "limitations and perversions," and by our persistent tendency to fall into self-deception with respect to the implications of Christian moral identity and the way in which it ought to penetrate the various roles we inhabit, and define the limits of their claims upon us.

Nor is the possibility of self-deception an eradicable element in our lives. Despite the nurturing efficacy of the religious community, it remains a potent force in the very being of the moral agent. As David Burrell and Stanley Hauerwas have noted, "to be is to be rooted in self-deception." Given that fact, it becomes clear that "the moral task involves a constant vigilance: to note those areas where the tendency has taken root. This task is made more difficult by the illusions of the past which we have unsuspectingly inherited."[15]

Coming to an awareness of those aspects of our lives which contain the seeds of self-deception involves more than mere self-examination. It must encompass, as well, an insight into the ways in which the basic story by which persons are nurtured within the Christian community has itself contributed to the development of a deficient conscience, so that the venture of deputyship becomes fundamentally distorted.

That point applies with especial force to Auschwitz, for, as Burrell and Hauerwas have noted,

> the complicity of Christians with Auschwitz did not begin with their failure to object to the first slightly anti-semitic laws and actions. It rather began when Christians assumed that they could be the heirs and carriers of the symbols of the faith without sacrifice and suffering. It began when the very language of revelation became an expression of status rather

> than an instrument for bringing our lives gradually under the sway of "the love that moves the sun and the stars." Persons had come to call themselves Christians and yet live as though they could avoid suffering and death. So Christians allowed their language to idle without turning the engines of the soul, and in response, their lives were seized by powers that they no longer had the ability to know, much less to combat.[16]

The perversion of language into a story exposed to the risk of being interpreted as an indication and guarantee of status-the triumphalist posture contained, implicitly if not explicitly, within much Christian theology-brings again into view the other side of that image. A story which evokes the motif of triumph requires the counter-motif of defeat and rejection. In short, it requires what became an increasingly prevalent component of Christian theology after A.D. 70: the assertion of the covenant unfaithfulness of Judaism and the Jewish people, and their subsequent rejection and replacement by Christianity.

What seemed a development with the power to counteract that pattern, the rejection by the church of Marcion's position in the second century, in fact proved to be an ironic certification of it. Marcion was judged heretical by the emerging orthodox consensus, the Jewish scriptures were affirmed as part of the Christian canon, but Judaism, viewed subsequently, was granted no continuing validity or worth. The only avenue of escape from the crime of deicide and a perverted story lay in conversion. The refusal to turn down that road provided additional proof, if any were needed, of Jewish hardness of heart, and made possible the emergence of a conscience within the church which could entertain, with only an occasional loss of equanimity, the spectacle of Jewish persecution and suffering.

Nor have the anticipation of the eventual conversion of the Jewish community, and the withering away of Judaism which it presupposes, yet been laid to rest, as Franklin Littell has noted: "Both during the conflict and in church gatherings after the war, even the best and most courageous churchmen continued to define the Jew's place in history for him, refusing to recognize Judaism as a religion in it own right, stressing a provisional tolerance based on expectation of the Jews conversion to Christ."[17]

And the most recent effort on the part of the Vatican, announced in January of this year, to develop a more cordial atmosphere for Jewish and Christian relations, remains captive, despite its positive aspects, to that model. Marc Tannenbaum's comment is apt: "The assertion of a conversionary intention within the framework of guidelines for the improvement of Catholic-Jewish relations cannot but cast doubts about the motivations of the entire program."[18]

If, after Auschwitz, it is still possible for Christians to cling to the pretension that their story undergrids a responsibility for the conversion of Jews, then it is questionable whether we can learn anything from the events of history. For unless the consciences of those who profess to live out the Christian story can be reawakened by a consideration of these events-and the Holocaust in particular-then it would appear that there is a fated quality to the outlook the Christian story engenders which prohibts significant revision. If that is the case, however, we are doomed to achieve not only an ambiguous, but a perverted and evil embodiment of the deputyship entailed by that story.

The range of responsible, conscientious caring is foreshortened to exclude fellow humans who happen to be Jews, and the silence of Pius XII becomes, as Arthur Cochrane suggests, the symbol of collective disobedience and failure.[19]

We are faced, at this point, with the alternative posed earlier by Paul Lehmann: either to dispose of the conscience altogether, or to transform it. Lehamann's solution was to present a vision of the theonomous conscience, grounded in the life of the Koinonia, and responsive to the humanizing action of God in the world. In that setting, faith (i.e.,response to the story) provides the basis for human actions in conformity with the directionality of the divine movement toward humanization, in an atmosphere set free from the demands of prescriptive legalism and from strict dependence on the guidance afforded by moral principles and rules. However, Lehmann's prospectus for a refashioned conscience does not avoid the danger of "forgetting the difference between the ideal church and the real church," as Alan Davies has pointed out.[20]

The possibility of overcoming that difference is, at best, limited. If self-deception is part of the given nature of human existence, then it follows that any story elaborated by a community and embodied in the lives of its members will suffer from partial insight and wisdom, and will run the risk of producing evil effects as well as good. Given that fact, it is perhaps understandable that historians like J. H. Plumb have tended to view the category of story in strongly pessimistic terms, arguing that it serves only the process of self-aggrandizement, thereby leading inevitably to over-simplification and distortion. The only reasonable course of action, then, is to reject story entirely, and to replace it with history, which (as Plumb sees it) can provide a true and impartial recounting of the facts.[21]

In view of the relationship that exists between story and conscience in the religious community, however, such a move would be both inadmissible and disastrous to the enterprise of moral agency. Whatever its distorting capacities-and they are both real and persistent-it is hard to see what sense could be attached to the concept of Christian moral action (or any other, for that matter) apart from the storied context within which it is set. It is doubtless true that "a person who habitually thinks in terms of parable and fable, most of all a fable of the highly organized sort which we call a religion, has difficulty about altering an individual moral judgment, which is not experienced by the follower of principles."[22] That difficulty applies a fortiori to the sorts of moral assessments Christians have been led to make about Judaism and the Jewish people under the tutelage of their dominant story. What is required, then, is that the pattern laid down within it become "open to moral claims from without," so that it is empowered to "admit its own inadequacy."[23]

The approach taken by H. Richard Niebuhr provides a useful way of coming to grips with the problem. In The Meaning of Revelation, he underscores the importance of the inner history of the Christian community (its own story), and indicates also the significance, potentially, of outer, external views of it for limiting the tendency toward self-deception and for heightening moral awareness:

> Every external history of ourselves, communicated to us, becomes an event in the inner history...The church has had to respond to them. Though it knew that such stories were not the truth about it, it willingly or unwillingly, sooner or later,

> recognized a truth about it in each one. In so far as it apprehended these events in its history, these descriptions and criticisms of itself, with the aid of faith in the God of Jesus Christ it discerned God's judgment in them and made them occasions for active repentance. Such external histories have helped to keep the church from exalting itself as though its inner life rather than the God of that inner life were the center of its attention and the ground of its faith. They have reminded the church of the earthen nature of the vessel in which the treasure of faith existed. In this practical way external history has not been incompatible with inner life but directly contributory to it.[24]

There is a difference, of course, between what Niebuhr means by outer history and the event of Auschwitz. It is a difference, however, which serves to heighten the tragedy of that occurrence. For although the Holocaust was not, in any intentional sense, an "external history of ourselves, communicated to us," it ought to become such, for what is presented there is the dreadful irony of a community, long accused of the crime of deicide, embodying totally the image of crucifixion claimed by the church as the most potent symbol of God's love and the meaning of discipleship.

That judgment must be followed immediately by the recognition that the image of the crucifixion can be applied to Auschwitz only imperfectly, as something imposed, not chosen. The possibility of the Christian story and conscience receiving instruction from that event depends on seeing it properly. Only if it is seen for what it was and is-a radical calling into question of the credibility of Christianity-can its significance begin to be unpacked. When it is so seen, however, when Christians allow the horror of Auschwitz to penetrate their consciousnesses steadily and without flinching, then they are enabled to receive a new training in Christianity.

That training must begin with the shock of recognition, the willingness to accept guilt and admit complicity. Does this imply a concept of collective guilt? I believe that it does, but at the level of shared memory and participation in the ongoing life of a community rather than at the level of interpersonal assessment and judgment of the actions of others. It is obviously true that none of us here were directly involved in the policies that led to the death camps. Nevertheless, the effects of the Christian story through time in creating a potent seedbed for contemporary anti-Semitism, and the actions of those who professed allegiance to it during that crisis, can become, through intentional appropriation, part of my (and our) history as well. Theodore R. Weber has expressed the point: "The self's memory...provides a track on which the guilt of other persons in other ages can run into the present, and the identification of the self with selected or given historical antecedents provides the coupling mechanism by which their guilt becomes my guilt."[25]

The acceptance of one's complicity in Auschwitz provides no basis for assessing the intentions and actions of others. It is an action that each of us must perform for herself or himself, but it is done in the name of, and on behalf of, our participation in the community as a whole. Nevertheless, it is not a merely religious action devoid of moral import. Rather, it is,

following Karl Barth's analysis, the primary moral deed-repentance, metanoia-which must precede and inform all subsequent thinking and doing.

Once that act has been performed, there are further implications that follow from the training in awareness afforded by Auschwitz. To begin with, we are forced to a radical reopening of the question of the relationship between God and evil. It is ironic, in that respect, that the emergence of Christian theologies of the death of God took their departure, not from that event, but rather from various assumptions about the state of contemporary consciousness in a secularized world. That fact, surely, provides a stunning indication of the degree to which Auschwitz has failed to penetrate the minds of Christian thinkers.

Franklin Sherman and A. Roy Eckardt have grappled recently with the problem of belief in God after Auschwitz, with stikingly different proposals.

Sherman's approach is to stress the participation of God in human sufferings and the moral imperative that follows, viz., that women and men are called upon to become active participants in that suffering. Nor is he unaware of the moral ambiguity involved in appealing to that symbol, centering, as it does, in the cross: "It is tragic that this symbol should have become a symbol of division between Jews and Christians, for the reality to which it points is a Jewish reality as well, the reality of suffering and martyrdom." Nevertheless, an emphasis on voluntary suffering, divine and human, can, Sherman believes, cut through the pretentiousness of a triumphalist outlook, and recall us to a remembrance of our shared humanity under God: "A God who suffers is the opposite of a God of triumphalism. We can speak of God after Auschwitz only as the one who calls us to a new unity as beloved brothers-not only between Jews and Christians, but especialy between Jews and Christians."[26]

It is clear that Sherman's proposal assumes the continuing validity of traditional covenant theology, now corrected and chastened by an acknowledgment of the ambiguities latent within it and the need for continual repentance for the evils they have produced.

Eckardt, by contrast, maps out a position which stresses God's voluntary abrogation of the covenant as the only (morally) proper act of repentance for his complicity in the evil of involuntary suffering to which it has led. That must mean, however, that "the myth of the Jew as 'suffering servant' can surrender its horrible power only as the erstwhile Covenant is given a decent and moral burial."[27] Following Emil Fackenheim, Eckardt argues for a new understanding of Jewish existence in which the primary motif is that of survival rather than suffering, and in which the categories of traditional theology give way to the process of moralization and secularization.

There are problems in both Sherman's and Eckardt's approaches. The former must confront the challenge of making credible, after the Holocaust, any appeal on the part of Christians to the efficacy of the cross, and the image of sacrifical, voluntary suffering it presents. At the very least, it is an image which must, for the time being, be embodied in the life of the Christian community, rather than merely proclaimed.

The latter must wrestle with the implications for Christians of a Jewish identity set free from the storied framework of the covenant, in view of the continuing reality of secular anti-Semitism. In short, it is possible, in this case, to do the wrong thing for the right reasons. If the first Holocaust occurred, secular sponsorship must be taken seriously. Thus, the judgment that the symbol of covenant can be accorded neither credibility nor place in Christian language about Judaism and Jewish existence must be weighed with care, lest it provide the basis for an indifferent, rather than an informed, conscience.

Perhaps the safest, and most obvious, point to be made at this time is that the Holocaust looms, unavoidably and consumingly, as a mystery for the Christian thinker, and that the first response must be a respectful silence. When the effort is undertaken of bringing that event into conjunction with the God professed to be the center of value within the Christian story, then the process of exorcising those elements within it which contribute to and sustain, however subtly, either a presumed superiority or anti-Semitism, presents itself as the first task for a renewed conscience.

Auschwitz can also be seen as the final exposure to the dangers that attend the privatization of religion, a development that must be judged an important contributing factor to the inability of the church to respond properly to the threat posed by Hitler and his policies. To put it differently, the Holocaust presents a stark reminder of the consequence of making the Christian story one's own without at the same time appropriating a consciousness of its grounding in community and its universally inclusive potency.

There is at present a good deal of interest in various approaches to the spiritual life which stress individual effort, concentration, or meditation; and the task of "getting one's head together" has achieved the status of moral obligation for the young, and perhaps, for the not-so-young as well. If Peter Berger is correct, we are witnessing the flowering of impulses set in motion at the time of the Reformation.[28]

In short, the privatization of religion emerges, albeit ironically, out of the Protestant emphasis on the sole sovereignty of God's grace and the corresponding need to search diligently in scripture in order to discover the access routes that enable one to experience a sense of contact and relationship with it. The contemporary secular view of the religious life as essentially an affair between the isolated individual and whatever sources of transcendence he or she can discover may well be a perversion of the Protestant outlook, but it is at any rate, a perversion from which the church is not free.

This side of Auschwitz, there is a pressing need to recover a sense of the importance of the institutionalization of the Christian story, that is, an awareness of the ways in which it shapes persons into a community of nurture, and provides a sense of identity which cuts across their various offices and roles, thereby informing moral agency at every point in their lives.

The consciences of Christians can receive further instruction from Auschwitz when it is seen as the parable par excellence of human vulnerability. As Rubenstein has pointed out, the Holocaust represented the bringing together of the concept of superfluous persons with heightened technological efficiency and power.[29]

Thus, it was not only the question of Jewish survival that was posed at Auschwitz. The death camp points to the question mark hanging over the collective future of us all, for they expose our penchant for falling back on various kinds of "final solutions" to the problems that confront us, with their attendant evils. The process remains the same, whether it takes the form of the continued insanity of believing that the best road to peace is through arms, through bombing the Vietnamese back to the Stone Age, through adopting policies of "benign neglect" toward black people and "termination" toward Native Americans, or through a calculated indifference to the sanctity of the environment and the legitimate needs of others in order to satisfy the consumption level of the United States and other presumably "developed" countries.

Moreover, it is sobering to consider that just now, when death education and the process of dying have found a receptive audience in the schools and churches of our society, we are witnessing a growing tendency to expand the limits of permissible death. Regardless of one's position on the issue of the morality of abortion, it should at least be conceded that it raises profound and complex issues about the meaning and status of developing life, and that those are not even seriously broached, much less engaged, by talk about "fetal tissue," the risk factor in various surgical procedures, and the like.

Equally profound and complex issues are now surfacing as the result of new discoveries and techniques in the biological and medical professions: the appropriateness and limits of experimentation on human beings; the proper range to be allowed to genetic planning and control; the guidelines, surgical and moral that must be observed in relation to organ transplantation; and the moral appropriateness of employing procedures of direct euthanasia.[30]

To view these developments from the perspective of human vulnerability bodied forth at Auschwitz is not to reduce their complexity or to provide ready-made solutions. What can happen is that conscience informed by that image will remain more sensitive to the potentially serious threats they pose to our capacity to endure as morally sensitive persons. The lure of technological efficiency that made Auschwitz a reality has not, certainly, departed from our midst.

Nor need one be an alarmist to make that point. That one may be accused of falling into that posture by the simple act of asserting that there are perhaps some actions that ought to be (even if they are not for all) both unthinkable and undo-able, is surely a mark of the times, and of a growing tendency to embrace the notion that some lives are indeed superfluous (provided only that they are not our own), and thus expendable.

Finally, in the light of the restoration of Israel, Auschwitz can instruct the consciences of Christians of a fact which has, often enough, been denied: the ongoing durability and existence of Judaism and the Jewish people. It is tempting to view the relationship between the Holocaust and restored Israel in terms of the model of crucifixion and resurrection. It is, I am convinced, a model, which should be approached with extreme caution. At the very least, it is not something which Christians are in any sense permitted to say to Jews, for it manages simultaneously to both deepen and to make innocuous the horrors of Auschwitz, by making them a condition for eventual rebirth and liberation. It is additionally offensive, moreover, in that it attempts to make sense of, and

perhaps to justify, events which simply cannot be fitted into any tidy conceptual scheme. Elie Wiesel's comment is apt:

> Israel, an answer to the holocaust? It is too convenient, too scandalous a solution. First, because it would impose a burden, an unwarranted guilt-feeling, on our children. To pretend that without Auschwitz there would be no Israel is to endow the latter with a share of responsibility for the former. And second, Israel cannot be an answer to the holocaust, because the holocaust, by its very magnitude, by its essence too, negates all answers. For me, therefore, these are two distinct events, both inexplicable, unexplained, mysterious, both staggering to the mind and a challenge to the imagination. We shall never understand how Auschwitz was possible. Nor how Israel, scarcely a few years later, was able to draw from itself the strength and vision to rebuild its home in a world adrift and in ruins.[31]

The challenge posed for the Christian conscience by the restoration of Israel is, quite simply, whether we have the capacity to learn, in however limited a fashion, from the past, or whether we are, as Eckardt asserts, still living in the Endlosung, the time of the "final solution." For the simple fact of the matter is that the difficulties occasioned for Christian consciousness by a Judaism and a people who refused to cease existing in conformity with the story informing that consciousness are, if anything, intensified by their continuation-despite the time and effort expended during the Holocaust - and as a definite and (potentially) enduring political and geographical reality.

I am not suggesting that Israel as a nation is exempt, or to be exempted, from the sorts of factual, empirical analyses and judgments ordinarily applied to nation states. A recognition of the symbolic import for the Christian conscience of Israel's reappearance among the nations need not, and should not, entail automatic acceptance of every policy decision made by its government. Nor on the other side, should it mean that Israel is judged by standards of conduct which are not expected of others. The right of a nation and its people to exist cannot justifiably be tied to the condition that their behavior should exhibit moral superiority to others at every point.

The crucial question, then, is whether Christians can endorse, wholeheartedly and without reservation, the right of the Jewish people to exist in that particular, definite form. For the image of the Jew presented by Israel represents the incarnation of a potential and a dream (within the Jewish story) which has simply has no place in the traditional Christian outlook: Jewish identity and existence despite Christianity; the land restored and made fruitful despite the destruction of the temple; the possibility of hope beyond despair; the burden of precariousness removed, to a degree, by the freedom to be; and the having of a place within which being can receive form and extension through time.

If that dream and its fulfillment can become a part of the consciousness of the Christian community, then it will be possible to understand from within, as it were, why there is continued anxiety in Israel today over the possibility of a Holocaust, and why it is possible for someone like Golda Meir to express the unimaginable dread aroused by that vision in terms of a "Masada complex." It is doubtless true, as Robert Alter has argued that Masada, with its image of mass

suicide, comes into sharp conflict with the value placed on life within the Jewish tradition.[32] It is also important, however, to see in that image a symbol of the final rejection of passivity. In short, if there is to be a second destruction of the Jewish people, it will at least occur, this time, by their own hands, not by those of others.

In the end, the degree to which the Christian story and conscience are informed by the reality of Israel will provide a measure of what has been learned from the Holocaust. The moral imperative that ought to result from the latter has been put succinctly by Franklin Sherman: "In a world in which human freedom and human perversity are both very real, we cannot say that it could not happen. We say that it must not happen."[33]

This article represents at best a beginning in what must become an ongoing process of appropriation and reflection. For the God who summons us to community and obedience in the Christian story is envisioned as the universal center of value whose valuing knows neither partiality nor limit. To make that story one's own while continuing to exclude from consciousness the implications it carries for us as moral agents who bear a special burden and responsibility for Judaism and the Jewish people, and thereby for all persons, signifies only that we have, to our shame, missed the point.

NOTES

1. See, e.g., Michael Wyschogrod, "Faith and the Holocaust," Judaism, XX, 286-94; and Jacob Neusner, "The Implications of the Holocaust," Journal of Religion, LIII (1973), 293-308.
2. Neusner, "The Implications of the Holocaust," p. 308.
3. Richard Rubenstein, After Auschwitz (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merril, 1966), p. 223.
4. Emil L. Fackenheim, Quest for Past and Future (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p.20.
5. Rosemary R. Ruether, "Anti-Semitism in Christian Theology," Theology Today, XXX (1974), 365.
6. Ibid., p. 380.
7. A. Roy Eckardt, "Is the Holocaust Unique?" Worldview, XVII (1974), 33-34.
8. Ibid., p. 34.
9. Rubenstein, After Auschwitz, pp. 20-21.
10. See Stanley Hauerwas, "The Self as Story: Religion and Morality from the Agent's Perspective," Journal of Religious Ethics, I (1973), 71-86.
11. Friedrich Heer, "The Catholic Church and the Jews Today," Midstream, XVIII (1971), 27.
12. See Paul Lehmann, Ethics in a Christian Context (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).
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