

Jewish Resistance to the Nazis

Patrick Henry

When I began doing research to write about the rescue of Jews during WWII in a mainly Protestant area in south-central France, I was initially surprised by the number of Jewish people involved in this rescue mission. I had only heard about the Christian rescuers of Jews before I started my work. I was so impressed by one woman, Madeleine Dreyfus, that I contacted her children, found out everything I could about her life before and after the Occupation and her rescue work during the Holocaust in France, and consecrated the entire third chapter of my book, We Only Know Men. The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust, to her in particular and to the other Jewish rescuers of Jews in that area.

In October 1941, when her husband, Raymond, lost his job in Paris because of antisemitic legislation, Madeleine and her family settled in Lyon in the Unoccupied Zone. Immediately, Madeleine began working as a psychologist for the Jewish Children's Rescue Network (OSE). As of August 1942, however, when the Vichy police began to round up and deport Jewish children from the still unoccupied south of France, she assumed responsibility for the Lyon/Le Chambon-sur-Lignon area link in the Garel Network and sought places of refuge in this mostly Protestant countryside for her Jewish children. For the next fourteen months, during nine of which she was pregnant and five of which she was breastfeeding her daughter Annette, who was born in August 1943,

Madeleine Dreyfus, with no false papers and with the most readily identifiable Jewish name in the country, placed more than one hundred Jewish children into non-Jewish homes and institutions. On November 23, 1943, she walked into a trap and was arrested. She spent two months in the Jewish Women's Dormitory at Fort Montluc in Lyon, four months at Drancy and eleven months in Bergen-Belsen. She was liberated on April 15, 1945 and returned to Paris, to her family, and her practice as an Adlerian psychologist. She died in 1987. It is unlikely that I would be here today, if I had not encountered Madeleine Dreyfus.

Yet, Madeleine was only one of about three dozen, mostly female OSE fieldworkers doing the dangerous work of transporting Jewish children on buses and trains to the homes and farms where they were hidden. Elsewhere in France, as Nan Lefenfeld's illuminating work on rescue on the Swiss border and Lisa Gossel's brilliant film, The Children of Chabannes have shown, to choose but two examples, Jews were everywhere involved in the rescue of other Jews.

After my book was published in 2007, I read continuously about all types of Jewish resistance to the Nazis throughout Europe. When the idea occurred to me to edit a comprehensive volume about Jewish resistance to the Nazis, I investigated each of the occupied countries and tried to ascertain the best people to write about each country. Even though most of the scholars I asked didn't know me from Elijah, twenty-one of the first twenty-three people I asked agreed to write for this volume, many of whom are among the most renowned Holocaust scholars in Israel, Europe, Canada and the United

States. I knew then that this work was important and necessary. What follows is a general overview of Jewish resistance to the Nazis with occasional citations from the essays contained in our forthcoming volume—a 912-page manuscript to be published in hardback, paperback, and electronic versions by The Catholic University of America Press in the Fall/Winter of 2013.

Although the myth of Jewish passivity during the Holocaust has been thoroughly discredited in the scholarly world, it lives on in the popular mentality and is often expressed in such phrases as “the Jews were led to the slaughter like sheep.”¹ The myth still finds its way into the media and often goes unchallenged. Most recently, in the 2010 film The Debt (directed by John Madden), we hear the fictional Nazi character, Dieter Vogel, known also as the “Surgeon of Birkenau,” insidiously proclaim: “You Jews never knew how to kill, only how to die. . . . So I knew that you people had no right to live.” It is important to understand not only the role that Nazis played in the dissemination of this myth, but that, in the twisted Nazi psyche, this blaming of the victim somehow exculpated the killers from their crimes. This myth also served to justify the bystanders. If the Jews did nothing to save themselves, why should others have risked their lives to help them?

In the initial essay in our forthcoming volume, Richard Middleton-Kaplan detects the origins of the myth in stereotypes and oversimplifications later reinforced by photographs

and films of Holocaust victims lined up waiting with their children and their belongings at deportation sites and in the camps. It seems so easy NOW to wonder why they didn't do something THEN, since we now know what happened to them. Most of this footage comes from Nazi propaganda films and it continues to be shown today as background to documentaries and even fiction films dealing with the Holocaust without any explanation whatsoever. Middleton-Kaplan eruditely traces positive "sheep to slaughter" imagery back to Isaiah, Psalms (#44), the Talmud, and the Christian Scriptures and depicts its distortion into an image of Jewish passivity. He also discusses the role that Jewish intellectuals, such as Victor Frankl (suggesting that attitude mattered regarding survival), Bruno Bettelheim (speaks of millions marching to their death), Raul Hilberg (criticizes Jews for not resisting *en masse*, for complying automatically), Hannah Arendt (creating Jewish Councils), even Emmanuel Ringelblum (creating Jewish Councils), played in popularizing the idea of Jewish passivity vis-à-vis the Nazis.

The reality of Jewish resistance to the Nazis, however, and the diverse forms it assumed have been elucidated not only in specialized monograph studies but even in the most general works on the Holocaust.² In 1968, to choose an early example, Yuri Suhl, determined to fight "the myth that the Jews did not resist," edited, translated, and published an anthology of texts dealing with concrete examples of Jewish resistance to the Nazis.³ Entitled They Fought Back: The Story of Jewish Resistance in Nazi Europe, Suhl's collection offers stunning examples, several of them first-hand accounts, of male and female Jewish resistance in camps, ghettos, and cities such as Berlin and Paris. In the margins, Suhl militates against Raul Hilberg, whom he considers "the leading exponent

of the theory of Jewish passivity,” claiming that Hilberg found little evidence of Jewish resistance because, rather than seek out Jewish sources in Hebrew and Yiddish, he relied mainly on German sources.⁴

Almost forty years later, the Museum of Jewish Heritage published Daring to Resist: Jewish Defiance in the Holocaust which, like They Fought Back, contains many first-hand accounts written during the Shoah by courageous Jews, male and female, who, among many other forms of resistance, were fighting back in the ghettos, forests, and camps. This illuminating and beautifully edited volume also contains retrospective essays that offer cogent advice on how to approach this terrible moment in Jewish history. David Engel suggests that we “measure the Holocaust in Jewish time... [which] means identifying the stages through which Jews came to dismiss their initial sense that under Nazi rule they were reliving their past.”⁵ While some Jews immediately fled from Germany in 1933, most remained, thinking that the situation would improve. In Eastern Europe, we should recall, ghetto life was nothing new for Jews. Initially, during the Hitler years, it might well have seemed like a return to past history rather than the prelude to a totally unprecedented genocide. Reiterating David Engel’s wise suggestion, Yitzchak Mais urges us, if we wish to see things in a Jewish perspective, to “suspend our historical hindsight.”⁶ The Jews in Europe from 1933-1945 simply did not have the benefit of that retrospective viewpoint.

The Jews were victims, objects of hateful Nazi ideology, but they were also subjects, with extremely limited choices, seeking ways of survival for themselves and their

families in a situation rife with collaboration and structured overwhelmingly for their demise. For one thing, when it was still possible, Jews fled for their safety from countries such as Poland, Germany, Austria, and France: well over 400,000 German and Austrian Jews left their countries between 1933 and 1939; in Germany itself, unbelievably, 83 percent of Jews under the age of twenty-four managed to escape by 1939;⁷ among them were roughly 10,000 children who left on kindertransports to England and the Netherlands.⁸ Over 300,000 Polish Jews fled to Soviet-occupied Poland, and, after June 1940, many other Jews in France and Italy sought refuge in Spain and Switzerland. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was the major source of funding for the emigration of Jews from Europe and for subsidizing rescue operations in Nazi-occupied countries. The first major form of Jewish resistance was flight and there is nothing passive about flight.

Tens of thousands tried to emigrate after 1939 but rarely found an exit. Borders were closing rapidly, exit visas were difficult to obtain, and tickets, sponsors, and entry visas were also required. Jewish refugees were restricted from entering England and Palestine as well. Without a valid passport, one could go nowhere. Despite these restrictions, many Jews managed to get out of Europe: the ha'avara (transfer) agreement between Nazis and Zionists opened up places in Palestine for besieged Polish Jews. As a result, during the first years of Nazi rule, “the number of Jews in the yishuv [“settlement,” the organized, pre-state of Israel Jewish community in Palestine] doubled from 200,000 to 400,000.”⁹ But this escape route was soon closed by the British. In 1940, roughly 37,000 Jews managed to emigrate to the United States and some 10,000 to other countries overseas.¹⁰

This number kept dwindling and soon the United States and Cuba also closed their doors to refugee Jews. “The harsh reality,” Tony Judt notes, “is that Jews, Jewish suffering and Jewish extermination were not matters of overwhelming concern to most Europeans (Jews and Nazis aside) of that time. The centrality that we now assign to the Holocaust, both as Jews and as humanitarians, is something that only emerged decades later.”¹¹

Jews offered armed resistance in the ghettos, the camps, the forests, and in organized resistance movements throughout occupied-Europe. Within the ghettos of Eastern Europe, where the populations were weakened by starvation and disease, there were two major uprisings. These revolts, in the Warsaw and Bialystok ghettos, were undertaken without any hope of forcing the Germans to change their plans regarding Jews. The only hope was that some of the ghetto dwellers might escape to join the partisans. Generally these heroic and futile acts of resistance against insurmountable odds were immediately crushed, although the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto held out for four months, longer than some national armies did. Timothy Snyder notes in Bloodlands. Europe Between Hitler and Stalin, that this open act of Jewish resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto “worked powerfully against the anti-Semitic stereotype, present in the Home Army and in Polish society, that Jews would not fight.”¹² Additionally, there were armed revolts in dozens of other ghettos in occupied Poland and the Soviet Union, in Cracow, Vilna, Minsk, Bedzin, and Kovno, for example.

There were also Jewish underground resistance groups in many of the concentration camps, including Maidanek, Dachau, and Buchenwald, and three major armed revolts

within the death camps. “In every instance,” notes Primo Levi, these armed uprisings “were planned and led by prisoners who were privileged in some way and, consequently, in better physical and spiritual condition than the average camp prisoner.”¹³ At Treblinka in August 1943, 750 prisoners escaped but only 70 survived the war. At Sobibor in October 1943, more than 300 prisoners escaped, many of whom were later killed. The Germans liquidated the camp after executing all the remaining prisoners. Finally, in October 1944 in Auschwitz II Birkenau, a group of Jewish sonderkommandos, prisoners assigned to work inside the gas chambers and the crematoria, aware that they were soon to be liquidated and having only explosives for weapons, blew up Crematorium 4. All participants were executed, including the women who provided the explosives. This was an act of pure rebellion with death to the participants assured in advance, an act of heroism, of choosing to die otherwise than as their captors planned, and of leaving a legacy of resistance.¹⁴ “Hanging from the gallows,” one of the women, Rosa Robotka, shouted, “‘Hazak V’ Amatz,’ [Be strong and courageous], the Biblical words that Moses had said to Joshua as he assumed leadership.”¹⁵ With one exception, these Jewish-initiated uprisings were the only uprisings against the Nazis in the camps.¹⁶

When we speak of organized armed Jewish resistance in occupied-Europe, it is important to emphasize that we are not dealing with massive numbers. Berel Lang estimates one percent and judges that to be “probably high.” But the numbers of non-Jews resisting the Nazis were also minimal and, not being held in ghettos and camps, their opportunities for resistance were far greater. In France, to choose but one example, Robert Paxton estimates that only “roughly 2 percent of the adult population” were members of the

active Resistance.¹⁷ Likewise, the fact that many attempts at resistance failed is not an argument against their having taken place. Powerlessness is not synonymous with passivity. The odds against success were insuperable in all cases, even when it involved the youngest, strongest, and best trained individuals. When asked, after the war, why he did not escape, Primo Levi spoke about the barbed wire, the electrified grills, the dogs, and the armed sentinels. Then he added: “[We were] demoralized...weakened by hunger and maltreatment; ...shaved heads, filthy clothes were immediately recognizable; wooden clogs made a swift and silent step impossible... [We were] foreigners with neither acquaintances nor viable places of refuge in the surroundings.”¹⁸ We should also note that resistance by other prisoner groups was no greater than that of the Jews. Roughly three million Russian soldiers, for example, died in German captivity during WWII and 22,000 Polish army officers, police officers, and members of the Polish intelligentsia were slaughtered in April and May of 1940 by the Soviet secret police in the Katyn Forest in Russia and elsewhere without noticeable resistance. To this should be added Primo Levi’s observation that “the gas chambers at Auschwitz were tested on a group of three hundred Russian prisoners of war, young, army-trained, politically indoctrinated, and not hampered by the presence of women and children, and even they did not revolt.”¹⁹ We are therefore compelled to ask: “To whom are the Jews being compared when the questions: “Why didn’t they resist more?” or “Why didn’t more of them resist?” are asked?

In Eastern Europe, Jews escaped from the ghettos to join guerilla outfits struggling against the Germans. Interestingly, Yehuda Bauer informs us that the much-maligned

Jewish ghetto police were part of the resistance in fourteen cases: “In Kovno, for instance,” he writes, “the police were at the heart of attempts at armed resistance and attempts to smuggle young people into the forest to participate in partisan fighting.”²⁰ In these partisan forest brigades, Jewish resistance was successful and thousands of Jewish participants survived the war. It has been estimated that roughly 30,000 Jews fought in partisan units in the forests of Belorussia and the western Ukraine alone. Jewish partisan groups also fought with the partisans in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece. All of these groups derailed trains, destroyed bridges, and committed various acts of sabotage that took the lives of thousands of Germans.

In Western Europe, where there were few ghettos and where the Jewish population was much smaller than in Eastern Europe, there was, proportionately speaking, a large percentage of Jews in the underground Resistance in France, Italy, Greece, and Belgium. Jews also joined the Resistance in North Africa in large numbers. They were soldiers in every army fielded by the Allies. In the Red Army, as Timothy Snyder points out, Jews were “more likely to have been decorated for bravery than Soviet citizens generally.”²¹ Finally, there were over half a million Jews in the United States armed forces during WW II and, among the Allies, Jews constituted by themselves “an army more than 1.5 million strong.”²²

When we consider, on the one hand, the extent of Jewish resistance throughout Occupied Europe (in every Nazi-occupied country, in the forests, the ghettos, and the camps) and, on the other, the hopelessness of the situation in most cases (the lack of arms, of training,

of a home country, the general indifference or hostility of the surrounding populations of non-Jews) and the vicious, stunningly disproportionate reprisals taken by the Nazis, it is much less surprising that not all Jews resisted than it is that so many did in so many different places and in so many different ways. After all, the war against the Jews was, as Elie Wiesel words it: “A war in which the enemy had at his disposal generals, soldiers, tanks, scientists, technicians, engineers, theoreticians, psychologists, and millions and millions of sympathizers—while the Jews had nothing but their bare hands.”²³ In her most recent study, Deborah Lipstadt points out that the 1961 Adolf Eichmann trial in Israel “fostered a different perception of the victims” than the prevailing one that they “had gone like sheep to the slaughter.”²⁴ There is a wonderful symmetry to the fact that Abba Kovner, a commander of a partisan unit in the Vilna Ghetto who, in December 1941, urged resistance by stating, “Let us not go like sheep to the slaughter,” would offer an anguished testimony at the Eichmann trial in which he claimed that “not resisting was the rational thing to do.” “Rather than demean the victims,” Lipstadt writes, Kovner urged contemporary generations to recognize that it was “astonishing” that “there was a revolt [in Vilna].” Gideon Hausner, chief prosecutor of Eichmann concurred: “The real wonder... was that there had been so much organized and widespread resistance.”²⁵ Given the preponderance of evidence of Jewish resistance, it is simply unconscionable to continue to speak in general terms of “Jewish passivity.” Doing so violates the historical record and plays into the hands of antisemites who claim that Jews brought their misfortunes upon themselves.

One major goal of our volume is to expand the notion of resistance to include not only violent resistance but nonviolent resistance as well. Resistance mounted by Jews against the Nazis and their collaborators included many different types of actions. While some were violent and confrontational in nature, many were nonviolent, defensive, or clandestine. In all cases of resistance, armed and nonviolent, we consider Jewish resistance to be resistance by Jewish persons in Jewish organizations and by Jewish persons working within non-Jewish organizations. In Germany, for example, as soon as Jewish artists were fired, a Jewish Cultural Association was founded to provide employment for these artists. Jewish schools were also created there when Jewish professors and students were no longer allowed to teach or study in public education. Other Jewish schools were formed for the teaching of agriculture and manual trades in the hope that these skills would give young Jewish men and women better prospects for immigration papers.²⁶

In Eastern Europe, Jews were rounded up and herded into ghettos, city blocks physically separated from surrounding areas by means of barriers. Ghettoization was employed by the Nazis as a means of facilitating forced labor, dehumanization, and physical weakening of the Jewish population; and it was a prelude to deportation and death. Life in the ghetto was characterized by severe overcrowding (several families sharing a single apartment), lack of sanitation, lack of food, and prevalence of disease. The ghettos established in Warsaw, Vilna, Lodz, Minsk, and Theresienstadt were the largest. Dozens of others existed in occupied Poland and the Soviet Union. One contributor, Dalia Ofer, studies the modes of Jewish resistance in the Eastern European ghettos and lets us hear

the voices of the ghetto inmates who resisted in the midst of death, disease, and starvation. She relates tales of bravery by armed Jewish resisters in the ghettos in Warsaw and Kraków, who fought to redeem Jewish honor. One such resister, Dolek Liebskind of Kraków, expressed the sentiments of many: “We did not want to be led like sheep to the slaughter.” This, of course, was also the case in the Warsaw Ghetto where that uprising constituted the largest mass revolt in a major city in Nazi-occupied Europe and stands as the defining symbol of Jewish resistance to Nazi oppression during WWII. It too was led by under-equipped and outnumbered Jewish warriors who, with no chance for victory against the overpowering and vicious Nazi war machine, struggled to the end to exact some revenge and to die with honor.

In these ghettos of Eastern Europe, where people were starving to death and diseases were rampant, Jewish organizations also promoted educational and cultural activities. Here, more generally, nonviolent forms of resistance would have included any life-sustaining activities or actions that fostered human dignity in the face of a cruel machine designed to extinguish it : smuggling in and sharing food, clothing, and medicine; putting on plays, poetry readings, and art exhibits; creating orchestras, orphanages, study groups, and other morale building acts of solidarity; publishing underground newspapers, founding schools, establishing religious activities, and documenting one’s experiences (in diaries, for example). In this regard, we have no greater example than Janusz Korczak, pediatrician, teacher, and radio personality in Poland who had every opportunity to escape but chose to remain with the 200 orphans he cared for in his orphanage, which was eventually moved into the Warsaw Ghetto. Korczak died in the gas chamber with his

orphans. When asked what he would do if he were to survive the war, he replied: “Take care of German orphans.”²⁷ Thinking along these richly humanitarian lines, Yehuda Bauer uses the Hebrew term amidah (“standing up against”) to define a broad range of resistance that includes both armed and unarmed resistance:

What does amidah include? It includes smuggling food into ghettos; mutual self-sacrifice within the family to avoid starvation or worse; cultural, educational, religious, and political activities taken to strengthen morale; the work of doctors, nurses, and educators to consciously maintain health and moral fiber to enable individual and group survival; and, of course, armed rebellion or the use of force (with bare hands or with “cold” weapons) against the Germans and their collaborators.²⁸

This system of accommodation and avoidance, compliance and defiance, which, because of the ghetto inmates’ refusal of total resignation, enabled them to see themselves correctly, not as passive victims, but as active fighters.

In “Music as Resistance,” another author, Nick Strimple, surveys the importance of music as a vehicle for resistance in pre-war Germany, in Eastern European ghettos, in Western transit and civilian internment camps, in forced labor and death camps and, finally, in Terezin, which housed so many of Prague’s artists and musicians. Even under horrific conditions, where people were slowly starved to death, men and women could not live on bread alone. They hungered for culture as well, and art and music often found an important place in their lives. Music provided the impetus to move beyond basic survival and challenge National Socialism. The large ghettos all had organized concerts

and cabarets; street performances were a vital part of Yiddish culture. Just before the mass deportations from Warsaw to Treblinka in June 1942, a large children's chorus performed a farewell concert in the Moriah Synagogue. Our author underscores the importance of the sixteen performances of Verdi's Requiem, given by Raphael Schachter, between September 1943 and October 1944. These performances confronted Nazi officers in attendance with the specter of a Judgment Day. Music in the camps and the ghettos provided an emotional escape as well as a defiant reaffirmation of one's humanity in the presence of those who would deny it.

In the camps too, but much more strikingly, any attempt by sick, starving human beings to stay clean, to care for the dying, to pray, to observe shabbat, to say kaddish for their fallen relatives and friends, to read, or to remain physically, intellectually, culturally, theologically, and morally alive constituted resistance to Nazi restrictions, which were designed to demolish individuals, to destroy their souls and their wills, and as Primo Levi has written, to "annihilate us first as men in order to kill us more slowly afterwards...to kill [us] first in our spirit long before our anonymous death."²⁹ It was only by fierce rebellion against the laws of life in the camps, the intractable laws of anonymity and conformity, that Jews were on occasion able to create communities of resistance.

Outside the camps, nonviolent resistance focused largely, although not exclusively, on rescue. Throughout all of Nazi-occupied Europe, Jews, particularly Jewish children, were sheltered in non-Jewish institutions, homes, and farms, and smuggled into neutral countries such as Switzerland, Spain and Sweden. It has been estimated that somewhere

between five and ten percent of the 3,000,000 Jews who survived the Shoah in Europe were rescued.³⁰ Despite all the attempts to save children, however, 1,500,000 Jewish children were slaughtered by the Nazis. Only 11 percent of European Jewish children alive in 1939 survived the war.³¹ As regards hidden children throughout occupied Europe, we can never overemphasize the fact that the first rescuers were Jewish parents. Separating oneself from one's children on the mere hope of their being rescued (and, for reasons of safety, almost always without knowing where one's children would be hidden) was at once the most courageous and anguished choice Jewish parents had to make and the ultimate act of resistance against the annihilation of European Jewry.

Here in the realm of rescue, particularly when compared to the acclaim granted non-Jewish rescuers, the tremendous role played by Jews in the rescue of other Jewish persons, often working in Jewish organizations and in conjunction with non-Jews, has not received sufficient academic study and appropriate public recognition.³² We highlight the fact that rescue was another form of resistance, that Jews played an active and significant role throughout occupied Europe in the rescue of other Jews, and that, like collaboration, rescue had many faces: hiding in one's home country, in adjacent forests, or crossing borders to safety. Even armed resisters recognized the importance of rescue and other forms of unarmed humanitarian resistance which, in the final analysis, saved more Jews than armed resistance. Take, for example, the case of Tuvia Bielski who, with his brothers Asael and Zus, saved 1,200 Jews of all ages in the forests of Belorussia in what became known as "Bielski's Shtetl." When asked about his activities, he clearly expressed his preference for rescue over combat against the Nazis: "So few of us are left,

we have to save lives. To save a Jew is much more important than to kill Germans.”³³ In addition to the depiction of the Ghetto Fighters and the Forest Warriors, perhaps future iconography of Jewish resistance to the Nazis will include images of Jewish couples entrusting their children to Jewish humanitarian workers in the internment camps and ghettos throughout Europe, workers who risked their lives to find shelter for those children, as well as images of Jewish men and women, crossing borders and leading other Jewish people to safety in places such as Switzerland, Spain, Sweden and Turkey.

Our goal is not only to demonstrate that Jews resisted everywhere, but to indicate that how they resisted was contingent upon many factors, including temporal ones, internal politics, geography, and shifting Nazi policies. As they move from country to country, readers of our volume can make significant comparisons and understand: Why “only” 25% of France’s Jews perished when it had the government that collaborated the most readily with its Nazi occupiers; Why some countries like Hungary and Romania had no armed Jewish resistance; Why such a high percentage of Jews were murdered in Holland (78%) and Hungary (50%); Why so many more Jews in France joined the non-Jewish resistance than Jews in Belgium; Why so many more Jews in Belgium were murdered than Jews in Italy; Why in Italy and Greece no separate Jewish resistance developed during the war; Why in countries such as Italy, France, and Greece so many Jews resisted at least initially as citizens rather than as representatives of a minority.

If we take the situation in France as an example, we see that things changed radically in August 1942, when Vichy police started rounding up Jewish children in the still

Unoccupied Zone and then, even more so when, in November of the same year, after the Allies had landed in North Africa, the Germans descended to occupy the entire country. It was no longer possible to leave large numbers of Jewish children in homes set up for them in places like Chabannes, by Jewish charitable organizations such as OSE. Thanks to funding from the American Joint Distribution Committee, OSE had set up eight homes for children in the Unoccupied Zone.³⁴ These homes now had to be dismantled and the children dispersed for their own safety. That it was prudent to disassemble these homes was tragically confirmed by what happened on April 6, 1944, at Izieu, in a home then being dismantled. Led by Klaus Barbie, a Gestapo raid captured 44 children and the staff. Only one staff member returned from the camps. Once the option of the OSE homes was no longer viable, the two other options became even more crucial. The first, the placing of children in non-Jewish families and religious institutions, had always been operational but now increased significantly. Non-Jewish groups such as the Quakers, the Red Cross, the YMCA, and the Unitarians helped Jewish groups accomplish this work. The second option, smuggling children into Switzerland, was extremely dangerous. Consequently, it was limited while children were relatively safe in the Unoccupied Zone. After August 1942, smuggling children became a good alternative. Between May 1943 and June 1944, more than 1,500 children and adolescents were smuggled into Switzerland and, as Nancy Lefenfeld's insightful contribution makes clear, this rescue mission, like so many others described in our volume, was ecumenically executed.

Our volume is nothing if not a collaborative effort. It contains twenty-three essays that investigate the myth of Jewish passivity and the reality of Jewish resistance to the Nazis

in France, Belgium, Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, the Yishuv, Germany, Austria, Croatia, Poland, Romania, the Ukraine, Belarus, Slovakia, and Hungary. We have tried to cover almost all the occupied countries with as little repetition as possible, to look carefully at the ghettos, forests, and camps, and to consider the special status of children of the Holocaust and various forms of artistic resistance to Nazi oppression. Our collective task was not only to put to rest the myth of “Jewish passivity” during the Holocaust but to elucidate and enumerate the various forms of Jewish resistance, violent and nonviolent, during the Shoah, indicating that how the Jews resisted was in large part contingent upon where they were located, how the war was advancing, and how indigenous non-Jewish populations were disposed towards them. In each particular country and within each locale, Jewish resistance was shaped by political, military, social, economic, geographic, and legal realities. Types of actions feasible in one area were not feasible in another. Similarly, what was necessary and achievable at one point in time was judged not to be so at another point in time. Jewish resistance did not occur in a vacuum; the attitudes, actions, and support of the non-Jewish population could render certain forms of resistance possible or impossible. The fact that reliable information was generally unavailable to the persecuted also must be kept in mind.

Our ultimate goal was to produce a reasonably comprehensive handbook on Jewish resistance to the Nazis, an indispensable guide for Holocaust scholars as well as general readers. Our volume enters a world where the idea of Jewish passivity, as Richard Middleton-Kaplan notes, has “hardened into received wisdom.” Despite the failure of

earlier attempts to dislodge this myth from the popular mentality, we hope somehow to offset its tenacious persistence.

First of all, as they move from country to country, from ghettos to forests to camps, our contributors have compiled the most convincing, complete, and authoritative mass of evidence ever advanced in one volume in opposition to the myth of Jewish passivity during the Holocaust. Secondly, our volume enters a world where, roughly seventy years after the liberation of the camps, Christian apologies to the Jews and burgeoning examples of interfaith reconciliation offer a ray of hope that whatever residue of anti-Judaism and antisemitism still embedded at the heart of this myth might be eliminated.³⁵

It is into this world of interfaith dialogue, reconciliation, and peace building that we send our volume to be read, studied, and discussed by entire communities, to educate, not simply clerics and scholars, but students of all belief systems and all ages.

¹ See, for example, the continuously updated Jewish Resistance: A Working Bibliography on-line at The Miles Lerman Center for the Study of Jewish Resistance at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (www.ushmm.org).

² This information is readily available in the standard histories, dictionaries, and encyclopedias of the Holocaust. I have profited from four such texts: Abraham J. Edelheit and Hershel Edelheit, History of the Holocaust: A Handbook and Dictionary (San Francisco, Calif.: Westview Press, 1994); Jack R. Fischel, Historical Dictionary of the Holocaust (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1999); Donald Niewyk and Francis Nicosia, The Columbia Guide to the Holocaust (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); and, above all, the four-volume Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, Israel Gutman, editor in chief (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990). Bob Moore's recent Survivors. Jewish Self-help and Rescue in Nazi-Occupied Western Europe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) includes sections on Jewish "self-help" in the rescue process in several Nazi-occupied countries in Western Europe.

³ Yuri Suhl, editor, They Fought Back: The Story of Jewish Resistance in Nazi Europe (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1968), 15. One of the most interesting people Suhl writes about (214-221) is David Szmulewski, a Polish Jew and member of the Auschwitz underground, who survived the war. Szmulewski took photographs of naked women being led to the gas chambers and of the sonderkommandos dragging gassed corpses to open pits for burning. These photographs, both of which appear in Suhl's book, were smuggled out of Auschwitz and were the first ones demonstrating Nazi atrocities inside Auschwitz to be seen by the outside world. In Hitch 22: A Memoir (New York: Twelve, 2010), Christopher Hitchens claims that Szmulewski was "my ancestor-in-law...a sort

of great uncle” of whom he was obviously proud. Hitchens describes Szmulewski’s life before and after Auschwitz (368-372) and, citing David’s memoirs, Resistance in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Death Camp (written in Yiddish but read by Hitchens in English translation), he describes a Yom Kippur service that Szmulewski helped organize in Auschwitz.

⁴ Ibid., 73, 74, 265-66. Hilberg’s views can be found in The Destruction of the European Jews (Chicago, Ill.: Quadrangle Books, 1961).

⁵ David Engel, “Resisting in Jewish Time,” in Daring to Resist. Jewish Defiance in the Holocaust, ed. Yitzchak Mais, Bonnie Gurewitsch, Barbara Lovenheim (New York: Museum of Jewish Heritage, 2007), 11, 13.

⁶ Yitzchak Mais, “Jewish Life in the Shadow of Destruction,” in Daring to Resist, ed. Yitzchak Mais, Bonnie Gurewitsch, Barbara Lovenheim, 19.

⁷ Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, Flight From The Reich. Refugee Jews, 1933-1946 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 127-128.

⁸ Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, Holocaust: A History (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 2002), 128-129.

⁹ Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, Flight From The Reich, 36.

¹⁰ Ibid., 196.

¹¹ Tony Judt (with Timothy Snyder), Thinking The Twentieth Century (New York: The Penguin Press, 2012), 22.

¹² Timothy Snyder, Bloodlands. Europe Between Hitler and Stalin (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 286.

¹³ Primo Levi, “Afterword,” in The Reawakening, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1965), 217.

¹⁴ Tim Blake Nelson’s film, The Grey Zone, suggests that the revolt of the *sonderkommandos* was intended, at least by some of the participants, to halt the slaughter of the recently arrived Hungarian Jews. Tim Blake Nelson, The Grey Zone (Vancouver, Canada: Lions Gate Films, 2001).

¹⁵ Michael Berenbaum and Yitzhak Mais, Memory and Legacy: The Shoah Narrative of the Illinois Holocaust Museum (Skokie, Ill.: Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, 2009), 109.

¹⁶ Yehuda Bauer points out that of the seven prisoner rebellions in concentration and death camps, six were by Jews (Krszyna, Krychow, Kopernik, Sobibor, Treblinka and Auschwitz); the exception was led by “Soviet prisoners of war at Ebensee at the end of the war.” See Yehuda Bauer, “Forms of Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust,” in Holocaust: Religious and Philosophical Implications, ed. John K. Roth and Michael Berenbaum (St. Paul, Minn.: Paragon House, 1989), 143.

¹⁷ Robert O. Paxton, Vichy France. Old Guard and New Order (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 294-95.

¹⁸ Primo Levi, The Drowned and the Saved, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 153.

¹⁹ Primo Levi, “Afterword,” in The Reawakening, 219.

²⁰ Yehuda Bauer, Rethinking the Holocaust (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), 144.

²¹ Timothy Snyder, Bloodlands, 342.

- ²² Abraham J. Edelheit and Hershel Edelheit, History of the Holocaust, 107. See too Deborah Dash Moore, GI/Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).
- ²³ Elie Wiesel, “A Plea for the Survivors,” in A Jew Today (New York: Random House, Inc., 1978), 243.
- ²⁴ Deborah E. Lipstadt, The Eichmann Trial (New York: Schocken, 2011), 195.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 84, 82.
- ²⁶ Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, Holocaust: A History, 83-85.
- ²⁷ See Korczak, the 1990 Polish film (with English subtitles) directed by Andrzej Wajda, and more generally, Betty Jean Lifton, The King of Children. The Life and Death of Janusz Korczak (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988).
- ²⁸ Yehuda Bauer, Rethinking the Holocaust, 120.
- ²⁹ Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 51, 55.
- ³⁰ Peter Hayes, “The Shoah and Its Legacies,” in The Cambridge Guide to Jewish History, Religion and Culture, ed. Judith R. Baskin and Kenneth Seeskin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 250.
- ³¹ Debórah Dwork, Children With A Star. Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991), XI. Child here means from one day old through sixteen years of age.
- ³² There is, for example, no program in place at Yad Vashem for the recognition of Jewish rescuers. In this regard, see Patrick Henry, “Righteous Jews,” Shalom. The Jewish

Peace Fellowship Newsletter 39 (February 2010): 10-11 and, more recently, Mordecai Paldiel's insightful, informed, and guardedly hopeful, "Righteous Gentiles and Courageous Jews: Acknowledging and Honoring Rescuers of Jews," French Politics, Culture & Society 30 (Summer 2012): 134-149.

³³ Nechama Tec, Defiance (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 112.

³⁴ On the situation in Chabannes, see Lisa Gossels' outstanding 2000 documentary, The Children of Chabannes, which studies in depth the excellent care that the 400 children lodged there received from Jewish social workers from OSE. On the general situation in the south of France in August 1942 and the months following, consult Patrick Henry, We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 90-93.

³⁵ *Dabru Emet* ("Speak the Truth"; New York Times, September 10, 2000, 23), without negating the history of Christian anti-Judaism nor the fact that "without the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and Christian violence against Jews, Nazi ideology could not have taken hold nor could it have been carried out," urges Jewish people to relinquish their fears of Christianity and to acknowledge Church efforts since the Holocaust to amend Christian teaching about Judaism. On this point, see Patrick Henry, "The Art of Christian Apology: Comparing the French Catholic Church's Apology to the Jews and the Vatican's 'We Remember'," Shofar 26 (Spring 2008): 87-104. As regards post-9/11 efforts at Jewish, Christian, and Muslim solidarity, consult the following documents: "A Common Word Between Us and You" (October 11, 2007) at "www.Acommonword.com"; "Loving God and Neighbor Together. A Christian Response to 'A Common Word Between Us and You'" in "Week in Review" (New York Times, November 18, 2007, 4);

“A Call to Peace, Dialogue and Understanding Between Muslims and Jews” (February 25, 2008) at www.mujca.com/MuslimsandJews.htm. and “Seek Peace and Pursue It” (March 3, 2008) at www.wfn.org/2008/03/msg00012.html.