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A Mention to Those not Mentioned

Yizkor Books and Holocaust Memory 1943–2008

UPPSALA
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Dissertation presented at Uppsala University to be publicly examined in Ihresalen 21-0011, Uppsala, Thursday, 2 June 2022 at 10:15 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The examination will be conducted in English. Faculty examiner: Professor Tim Cole.

Abstract
Becker, L. 2022. A Mention to Those not Mentioned. Yizkor Books and Holocaust Memory 1943–2008. *Studia Historica Upsaliensia* 273. 343 pp. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. ISBN 978-91-513-1482-2.

Yizkor books are communal memorial books commemorating Jewish communities destroyed in the Holocaust, produced as a result of communal activity. This study analyses the production and function of Yizkor books. It answers questions regarding who produced them, why, when, where and in which languages and discusses the roles the books played, and the memory they produced in relation to Jewish, Israeli and American memory culture.

This is the largest survey of Yizkor books to date, using more than 1,500 texts by Yizkor book publishers, editors and other important figures as primary sources, as well as thirty complete books, It provides new historical knowledge on the people who initiated and took part in the publication process, the kind of Holocaust memory produced, and how the composition of the editorial and publishing groups, , the languages of publication and the memory of the Holocaust contained in the books changed over time and place. The results are further developed and contextualized using theories on collective memory.

This research demonstrates that the publishers and editors of Yizkor books were a significantly more heterogeneous group than previously claimed. Four groups of publishers are identified: landsmanschaftn, other organizations, individuals without an organization around them and schoolchildren. A wide variety of editors are distinguished, from professional Yizkor book editors, to professionals in other fields and people with no relevant background in editing, who took it on themselves to complete this difficult task. The reasons for publication vary, but included personal and familial connections, the guilt felt by survivors and the urge to tell the world what had happened.

The study also analyses the intended functions of the books according to their authors. Most notably, the books were used as "places of memory", as gravestones and memorial candles, and as a place to say the kaddish for the many victims whose time and place of death were unknown. In the context of the collective memory of the Holocaust, three main aspects are discussed: the significant place of the diaspora in the commemoration of the community, the prevalence of Zionism in the communities before the war and the idea of universal martyrdom for all victims of the Holocaust, regardless of the circumstances of their life and death.

Keywords: Israel, USA, Holocaust memory, collective memory, Yizkor books, commemoration, remembrance, memory culture

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In memoriam

For the families of my grandparents: Becker, Gelernter, Seikevitz, and Trachtenberg, and their extended families, who were murdered by starvation, gas, and fire, by willing murderers, in Auschwitz and Belzec death camps, in the ghettos of Łódź, Mátészalka, and Tomaszów Lubelski, in the villages of Ukraine, and in the labor camps and Gulags of the Soviet Union.

May we one day be truly able to make sure that this never happens again.

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Acknowledgements

One day in the mid-2000s in Tel-Aviv University, I went to listen to a talk on the Armenian genocide by Professor Yair Auron, who was in many ways the pioneer of Genocide research and education in Israel. About twenty-five people attended, a good showing overall, as the Armenian genocide was rarely discussed in those days. There was one particularly memorable moment a few minutes into the talk when a man got up from the audience and began to shout at Professor Auron, accusing him of endangering the "incredibly important relationship" with Turkey by daring to even discuss the event. Auron replied that injustice must be addressed, even at the cost of offending Turkey, and the lecture continued. A few years later, around 2011, during a discussion in a MA course in philosophy, the topic of the Holocaust somehow came up. When I mentioned to a fellow student, by all accounts a liberal and open-minded fellow, that millions of non-Jewish victims perished in the German camp system during the Holocaust years, he promptly responded that I was lying, and that the vast majority of the victims of the Nazis were Jews.

These two cases have stayed with me over the years, and are to me emblematic of the pervasiveness of Holocaust memory in Israel. Even when no "official" actor is involved, the memory is policed and maintained by eager individuals. Only after moving to Sweden in 2012 did I realize that the memory of the Holocaust does not have to be as suffocating as my experience of it. In many ways, moving to Sweden has reconnected me to my Jewish roots, and this dissertation is the result of that change in my perception of Jewish memory.

I would like to first thank my supervisors, Tomislav Dulic and Lars M Andersson, for their help, advice and support through some crazy times, not the least the tumultuous Covid-19 pandemic, which wreaked havoc with my work on this dissertation for nearly two years.

To my wife Lotta: If not for her, I would never have even found out about the MA program in Holocaust and Genocide studies at the Hugo Valentin Centre. Her love, support and consideration through a long and arduous period have allowed me to complete this work.

To Roland Kostic, who I first met as a teacher and head of the program in Holocaust and Genocide studies in 2014, a thank you for his friendly advice, support and consideration that kept me going through many issues.

My research is in many respects a child of two worlds, as it was financed jointly by the history department and the Hugo Valentin Centre. Thus, I participated in and presented at seminars in both places, met many people and received much advice. I have learned a lot from both groups, and I would like to extend my gratitude to all the staff of both units for so many helpful comments. The Swedish culture of commenting in seminars can sometimes be a bit understated, but I have learned that, unlike in Israel, relevant and impactful critique can be offered without raising one's voice. A special mention to Professor Margaret Hunt, for her extensive and enlightening comments on several chapters and on the full manuscript. To Jakob Mersch, my thanks for his assistance with the maps presented in this thesis. Finally, my thanks to the administrative staff in the history department also, for their assistance and always positive attitude.

A final word to Theresa Johnsson, who passed earlier this year. She was a brilliant scholar and my friend. She probably did not know how much her passion for her scholarship and love of the "little people" of history inspired me.

Lior Becker
Uppsala, April 2022

Chapter 1: Introduction

In Israel, on a day in the early 1950s, the surviving remnants of the Ostrovtsah Jewish community held a meeting.[1] Ostrovtsah was the Jewish name for Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, a town in today's eastern Poland, south of Radum and east of Kielce. The idea of publishing a Yizkor book for the community came up during the meeting, a publishing committee was established and the process was formally begun. The book would be published nearly twenty years later. Very little is known about the first decade of the project, except that it was filled with crises and problems. The publishing committee sent out a leaflet to their former townsfolk in the early 1960s, but the response was meagre in both donations and material. In 1965 the committee decided to bring in a professional, salaried editor to take on the project and take it to completion. The editor made significant progress with collecting material, but did not take any actual steps to bring the publication to fruition. The relationship between the publishing committee and the editor reached crisis point, as the committee members felt that the confidence of their fellow Ostrovtsah descendants in the viability of the book project was declining.

At that point, around 1969, the committee decided to take the book project on themselves. It had to pay the editor double the sum initially agreed on for possession of the material already collected, which was beyond the means of the Ostrovtsah community members in Israel. Two committee members – Yehudah Rozenberg and Yehezkel Ar'eli – travelled abroad to meet with the Ostrovtsah landsmanschaftn[2] (descendant organizations) in New York and Toronto. The emissaries managed to arouse the interest of their lansdsleit,

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[1] This section is based on: Me'ir Shim'on Geshuri and Gershon Silberberg, *Sefer Ostrovtsah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Ostrovtsah be-Yisrael, 1971), 13–14, introduction by Yehezkel Ar'eli.

[2] In this dissertation, I italicize words from Hebrew and Yiddish when they are spelled in English. Words or terms that I use with a specific meaning that commonly appear throughout the dissertation are not italicized. These include: Yizkor book. landsmanschaft(n), landsleit and landsman. This is done partly for aesthetic reasons, as these words appear often throughout the thesis. In addition, words that have become well-known in English, such as rabbi, are not italicized.

especially those who themselves were Holocaust survivors, and received considerable amounts of money. This was not enough to finish the book, but enough to pay the editor for his services and for the material he had accumulated. The landsmanschaftn of New York and Toronto established their own book committees to help the one in Israel with materials and provide financial support, thereby reinvigorating the Israeli book committee and pushing it forward. A new editor was appointed in 1970 to bring the project to its conclusion. The book was eventually published in 1971, nearly two decades after the process was initiated.

The result of this daunting effort was a 560-page book, which contains a 148-page section about the Holocaust period. In spite of the obstacles encountered during the publication process, the book is on the larger side of Yizkor books in terms of page count. It was published in roughly equal parts in Hebrew and Yiddish. The majority of the pages were dedicated to different aspects of life before the Holocaust. It contains a historical overview of the town as well as chapters dedicated to two famous religious leaders, and to the different societies and youth organizations, as well as two chapters about the people of the town – one in Hebrew and one in Yiddish. These two chapters were interestingly given the same title, Characters and Types, in the two languages,[3] even though they were not translations but quite different from each other. There are also chapters dedicated to *she'erit ha-pleta*, the surviving remnant of the community, to the landsleit of Ostrovtsah who passed away in Israel and, finally, relatively small sections contributed by the landsmanschaftn of Ostrovtsah in Toronto, New York and Buenos Aires.

The book was published through the collective efforts of three groups of Jews from Ostrovtsah in Israel, Canada and the US. Each group had at least ten members, mostly men but also several women, involved in the process of collecting material and fundraising. The townsfolk from Argentina were noted as providing contributions but did not have a committee of their own. The reason for this was not given. The organization in Israel was probably founded after the Holocaust for the explicit purpose of commemorating the victims of the community, as well as the community itself. The organizations outside of Israel were older and financially stronger, based around those townsfolk who had left Poland before the Holocaust. As noted above, the publishing group hired two professional editors to organize and bring the work to completion, but many more people born in Ostrovtsah, or whose parents were born there,

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[3] The Hebrew title: דמויות וטיפוסים The Yiddish title: געשטאלטען און טיפן.

sent in texts, photographs and financial donations, albeit at a much slower pace than the members of the publishing group had hoped for. The book was of the utmost importance to them, a holy work intended to serve as a gravestone for the destroyed town and their murdered townsfolk, and as a way to tell their children and future generations that there was once a town called Ostrovtsah, and about its people and places. It took nearly twenty years of hard work, emotional pain and countless attempts to communicate this need to their former townsfolk to bring the project to fruition. At the start of the book, there is a stylized page with a dedication. The page has two supposedly identical versions of this dedication, first in Hebrew and then in Yiddish. Between them we find a tiny drawing of a Jewish cemetery, and in the bottom right corner the image of a Sabbath candle. The text in Hebrew reads:

> This book, which was written in blood and tears, serves as a gravestone on the unmarked grave of the seventeen thousand Jews of Ostrovtsah, destroyed in the ghetto, in the labour camp, in the partisans' camp, in the death camps, and in liberated Poland, by the Nazi murderers and the Polish marauders who completed the Nazis' work.[4]

The Yiddish text has several differences, marked in bold. It reads:

> This book, which was written in blood and tears, **is** a gravestone on the unmarked grave of the seventeen thousand Jews of Ostrovtsah, destroyed in the ghetto, in the labour camp, **by partisans**, in the death camps, and in liberated Poland, by the Nazi **monstrous** murderers and **[the]** Polish marauders, who completed the Nazis work.[5]

In many ways, the Yizkor book on Ostrovtsah is representative of the overall Yizkor book phenomenon. The people who worked on it, the main reasons they give for its publication and the hardships they encountered along the way were shared by other similar publishing groups, most of which operated in Israel in roughly the same period. The content of the book is generally also quite similar, in topics and the languages used, to other Yizkor books. That said, the book on Ostrovtsah does not contain a necrology—a list of victims from the community—which is an uncommon choice for a Yizkor book, particularly one published at that time, which was sufficiently removed from the Holocaust for its publishers and editors to have had access to this kind of

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[4] Geshuri and Silberberg, *Sefer Ostrovtsah*, 12. See figure 1. All the excerpts in this dissertation are translated from Hebrew or Yiddish by the author, unless otherwise stated.

[5] Ibid. See figure 1.

Figure 1.1. *Inscription from the Ostrovtsah Yizkor Book.*

ספר זה,

שנכתב בדם ובדמעות, משמש

מ צ ב ה

על קברם האלמוני

של שבעה עשר אלף יהודי אוסטרובצה,

שהושמדו בגיטו,

במחנה העבודה,

במחנה הפרטיזנים,

במחנות ההשמדה

ובפולין המשוחררת,

על ידי הרוצחים הנאצים

והפורעים הפולנים,

אשר השלימו את מלאכת הנאציב.

דאָס בוך,

וואָס איז געשריבן מיט בלוט און טרערן, איז

א מ צ ב ה

אויף די אומבאקאנטע קברים

פון זיבען טויזנט אסטראוויצער ייד.

וואָס זענען פארניכטעט געווארן

אין געטא.

אין ארבעטס־לאגער.

ביי די פארטיזאנער.

אין די פארניכטונגס־לאגערן

און אין באפרייטן פוילן

דורך די נאצישע בעסטיאלע רוצחים

און פוילישע מערדערס,

וואָס האבן דערגענצט

די נאצישע מלאכה.

Source: Geshuri and Silberberg, *Sefer Ostrovtsah*, 12.

information. As is shown above, there were different types of publishers for Yizkor books, but the kind of memorial organization found in the Ostrovtsah Yizkor book is the most common.

The inclusion of the dedication in both Hebrew and Yiddish illustrates a common attitude in many books that Hebrew and Yiddish were both important languages, albeit for different reasons. Generally speaking, Hebrew was seen as the language of the present and the future, and Yiddish as the language of the past. The differences between the two texts, while subtle, are significant. In particular, they highlight some differences between different groups among the publishers in the understanding of who the perpetrators were and in the phrasing regarding the function of the books. The Hebrew text mentions "the partisans' camp" as one of the places Jews were killed, which could be read as the Jews being killed by the Germans as part of the resistance movement, or that the Jews were protected by the partisans. The Yiddish text, by contrast, notes that the Jews were killed *by partisans* who fought the Germans but also murdered Jews. Thus, the Hebrew text hints at Jewish resistance, in line with Zionist ideology and perceptions of the Holocaust, while the Yiddish one does not. The other noteworthy difference pertains to the book as a gravestone. The Hebrew version states that these books *serve as* a gravestone, while the Yiddish version states that the book *is* a gravestone. The idea that the books were gravestones was very common in the sources. While this difference could lead to the conclusion that the authors perceived the books differently, I argue in this dissertation that these are in fact identical ideas phrased from different perspectives.

This dissertation examines a large area of Holocaust commemoration that has gone mostly untouched by the scholarly community. Yizkor books are communal memorial books, published since 1943 that reached peak numbers in the 1960s and 1970s. They commemorate Jewish communities destroyed in the Holocaust. The Yizkor book on Ostrovtsah represents one, relatively common, type of Yizkor book, but there are several others, as I will show in this dissertation.

Aim and Research Questions

Already during the Holocaust, but especially in its aftermath, Jewish survivors[6] felt a powerful need to remember what had happened and

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[6] In this dissertation, a Holocaust victim is any Jewish person who died for any reason as a result of the Nazi attack. This includes Jews in Germany from the Nazi rise to power, and

commemorate the dead. These feelings, a natural human response to tragedy, were exacerbated by the ferocity of the Nazi attack and the totality of the ruin that was befalling European Jewry. This need has been made manifest over the years through various means, both personal and communal, and national; through popular actions alongside scholarly knowledge production from above and below; in the form of monuments, art projects, gravestones and books; and through religious and secular rituals and activities. Among these varied commemorations of the Jewish past, Yizkor books have received the least amount of scholarly attention by a wide margin. The survivors produced a collective memory of the Holocaust and of life in the diaspora, which interacts, and sometimes contradicts, the predominant collective memories of those periods in the Jews' countries of residence.

The aim of this history dissertation is to examine how groups of Holocaust survivors and descendants of communities destroyed in the Holocaust commemorated their communities in book form, the reasons for and goals of the publications, and the kind of memory of the Holocaust and the diaspora that these publications comprise. Furthermore, I examine these acts of commemoration and remembrance through the lens of collective memory and theories of historical knowledge production. Lastly, the dissertation examines some aspects of how the people, books and memory changed over time and place.

The main research questions are about the people who published Yizkor books: Who were they? What reasons did they have for publishing Yizkor books? How did they produce the books? What kind of memory of the diaspora and the Holocaust do they present to their readers? Moreover, what continuities and changes can be observed regarding the people who published and edited the books, and are these related to the place of the book's publication and the commemorated community, time of publication and type of publisher? Finally, how were all of these aspects affected by significant historical events?

On the memory of the diaspora and the Holocaust, I examine what kind of collective memory of those periods appears in Yikzor books, and how the victims and survivors the diaspora are represented in those periods, vis-à-vis the Zionist Jews who lived in Palestine/Israel (the *yishuv*).

Jews in any other country occupied by Germany or its allies, as well as Jews who died as a result of the Axis war effort, for example Polish Jews who fled to the Soviet Union in 1939 and died there during the war. A Holocaust survivor is anyone who was affected by the Nazi attack – sent to a camp or a ghetto, forced to hide, or forced to flee to another country and survived.

Yizkor Books

What are Yizkor books and how can they be distinguished from other forms of Holocaust literature? Scholars have previously employed a narrower definition than the one I use here, focused only on books formally called a Yizkor book or variations of the title, such as "Megilat…" or "Pinkas…";[7] or only on those published by a specific type of organization, namely landsmanschaftn.[8] This primarily affects evaluations of the actual number of books published.[9] Some scholars count only Yizkor books published after the end of the war. This, as is demonstrated below, is an arbitrary starting point. The books are named after the Yizkor prayer, a memorial prayer spoken in the synagogue on several occasions during the year, as well as in somewhat different versions during national holidays in Israel, such as the memorial days for Holocaust survivors and heroes, and for fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism.[10] In this dissertation, I use a wider and more inclusive definition of the term Yizkor book that emphasizes two main characteristics. First, the book is explicitly intended to function as a memorial of some kind or has an explicit commemorative purpose. Second, the book is the result of "communal commemoration", a term that has a dual meaning: (a) that the commemoration is the result of communal activities, in that a group of people took part in its production process; and (b) that the main object of commemoration is one or more communities.

This distinction between the two different meanings of "communal commemoration" is not made in the literature. In other words, there is a tendency among scholars to assume that the books are the result of communal efforts at all levels of the publication process. This is strongly connected to the assumption that the books are a form of "landsmanschaft literature". This specific kind of organization is viewed as a continuation of, or a substitute for, the lost community. Following this line of thinking, the books are seen as having been published by a community to commemorate its own former self.

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[7] Roni Kochavi-Nehab, "'Write This as a Memorial in the Book' – A Jewish Pattern for Memory", in *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry: Essays on the History and Meanings of Yizker Volumes*, ed. Rosemary Horowitz (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2011), 150–151. I expand on this in chapter 2.

[8] Michlean Amir, "Israel as the Cradle of Yizker Books", ibid., 28; Faith Jones and Gretta Siegel, "Yizkor books as Holocaust Grey Literature", *Publishing Research Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (2006): 53.

[9] See Rosemary Horowitz, *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry: Essays on the History and Meanings of Yizker Volumes.* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2011), 1–2.

[10] Elizabeth Shulman, "Yizkor," (2011).

However, I would argue that this is often not the case. Many of the books, including those considered Yizkor books by these same scholars who argue that they are "landsmanschaft literature", are often the result of the efforts of individuals who are not affiliated with any organization, and sometimes only loosely linked to the community commemorated. Others are the result of commemoration efforts by groups or organizations that have no direct connection to the community, such as schoolchildren. Moreover, many organizations, including landsmanschfm, employed external editors, usually professionals, to edit their books. This means that many editors did not have any personal connection with the communities commemorated in their Yizkor book.

Landsmanschaftn and Landsleit

"Landsleit" (singular: landsman) is the common Yiddish term for descendants from a place, or "townspeople". I use the term in this thesis as it is commonly used in Yiddish, where "landsleit" include not only people who were born in the place, but also their children and grandchildren, and sometimes even beyond that. This means that a single person can be seen as being the landsman of up to four places, one for each of their grandparents. For example I, the author of this text, am a landsman of three places—Lodz and Tomaszow Lubelski (two grandparents) in Poland, as well as Novoselica (today Novoselicja) in Ukraine. I see myself as a descendant of these places, am considered as such by other landsleit of the same locales, and am a member of two landsleit societies.

A landsmanschaft, in its traditional, common meaning is a mutual-aid organization for landsleit outside of their home country, with membership based around a common birthplace.[11] These types of organizations existed long before the Holocaust, and mutual aid was their main role, mainly from the older, more established immigrants to newer arrivals, through financial help, assistance in finding work, and the like. Landsmanschaftn have historically had nothing to do with commemoration. The tragedies that befell the home community were commemorated by that community, as it continued to exist, through the tradition of the *Pinkasim*. These were registries of names of victims (necrologies) with very few details, and a few select victims, rabbis or those who died under special circumstances,

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[11] Philip Friedman, "Landsmanshaftn Literature in the United States During the Past Ten Years", in *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry: Essays on the History and Meanings of Yizker Volumes*, ed. Rosemary Horowitz (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2011), 43.

described in a longer text. When a special book was published, it contained a description of the event, but no more information about the victims than had been customary in a *pinkas*.[12] These organizations are not necessarily linked to the publication of Yizkor books.[13] By the 1970s, even those organizations that had been mutual aid societies had ceased to function as such, mainly because material and economic conditions had improved in Israel and the US to a point where mutual aid was no longer required.[14] At the same time as landsmanschaftn were declining, Yizkor books reached their peak publication numbers.

Another important point is that once Israel had been established, and the communities in Europe destroyed, Israel became home for these new communities of the landsleit organizations. Thus, even though these organizations were still built around a common place of origin, their home was in fact in Israel. We must also take into account that these organizations now included second- and later third-generation survivors, who were mostly born in Israel, but were still considered "landsleit". Other organizations outside of Israel continued to be commonly referred to as "landsmanschaftn".[15]

Remembrance and Commemoration

Remembrance is generally an act of reminiscence by people who experienced, at least partially, the remembered event. It is usually an inward-aiming act, intended so that the witnesses can recollect what happened, tell others and discuss the shared events.

Commemoration is the social act of a group. This group could be anything from a small group to a state. It is usually a ceremonial or ritualistic function

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[12] See *Hurbn Proskurov: tsum ondenken fun di heylige neshomes, vos zaynen umgekumen in der shreklikher shtetl, vos iz ongefirt gevoren durkh di Haydamakes = Hurban Proskurov: le-zekher nishmot ha-kedoshim she-naflu halal be-yom ha-haregah ha-nora'ah, she-ne'erkhah 'al Yehude Proskurov 'al-yede hayale ha-Haidamakim, 15, hodesh Adar 1. 679* (Nuyork: Levant pres, 1923).

[13] See Aharon Brandes, *Ketz ha-yehudim be-ma'arav Polin* (Palestine: Hakibutz ha'artzi hashomer hatzair, 1945); M. Rajak and Z. Rajak, *Hurbn Glubok, Sharkoystsene, Dunilovitsh, Postov, Droye, Kazan: dos lebn un umkum fun yidishe shtetlekh in Vaysrusland-Lite (Vilner gegnt)* (Buenos Ayres: Landslayt fareyn fun Sharkoystsene, Dunilovitsh, Postov, Glubok un umgegnt in Argentine, 1956).

[14] Friedman, "Landsmanshaftn Literature in the United States During the Past Ten Years", 43-44.

[15] See for instance in: Irgun yots'e Kaluszyn be-Yisrael, *Kehilat Kaluszyn* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Kaluszyn be-Yisrael, 1977).

that covers something that the group *as a whole* was not part of. Thus, it is an outward-aiming act focused on keeping alive the memory, or knowledge, of an event, person or community.

Witnesses can also participate in commemoration, and outsiders in a project of remembrance, although these outsiders cannot, by definition, be a part of an act of remembrance. For example, take a group of survivors from the same concentration camp who meet once a year. At their meeting, they talk about what happened to them in the camp. While they do not all have the exact same experiences, they had all personally been there. They are witnesses to what happened in that camp. When they bring up their own memories from their time in the camp, it is an act of remembrance. Someone who was not there, such as a child born to a survivor after the Holocaust, cannot take part in remembrance. That same child can, however, take part in a commemorative activity, such as a ceremony, and mention the names of family members who perished. This is an act of commemoration, as that person is raising a collective memory – they are "remembering", or invoking the memory of, something that had never happened to them personally and that they did not witness. Yizkor books make both remembrance and commemoration possible.

Chapter 2: State of the Art

This chapter reviews the existing scholarly literature based around four main areas: collective memory, Holocaust memory, research on Yizkor books and memory in the context of Yizkor books. This study transcends the fields of memory and history, which means it speaks to two separate but related areas of research. One deals with Yizkor books as a historical phenomenon and focuses on aspects such as editorship, motivations and the character of the books, while the other views the books and their content as an important part of early Holocaust memory. These distinctions are important and must be discussed as separate but intertwined phenomena when identifying the place of this study in the research field.[16]

Collective memory is seen as part of the much larger field of "memory studies".[17] This includes developments related to interactions between individuals,[18] and the social origins, function and development of collective memory.[19] The topic has also been approached from an empirical perspective, by examining its appearance at different times and places.[20] While scholars

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[16] Aleida Assmann, "Transformations between History and Memory", *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (2008): 51; Peter Carr Seixas, *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* (London;Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 5.

[17] Adam D. Brown et al., "Introduction: Is an Interdisciplinary Field of Memory Studies Possible?", *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 22, no. 2 (2009); Henry L. Roediger and James V. Wertsch, "Creating a New Discipline of Memory Studies", *Memory Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008).

[18] Assmann, "Transformations between History and Memory".

[19] Jörn Rüsen, *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005); Peter Seixas, "A History/Memory Matrix for History Education", *Public History Weekly*, no. 4 (2016) 6 (2016), https://public-history-weekly.degruyter.com/4-2016-6/a-historymemory-matrix-for-history-education/.

[20] See Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, 1 ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Carlos Jerez Farrán and Samuel Amago, *Unearthing Franco's Legacy: Mass Graves and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010); Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora, *Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology* (Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985); Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991); Hans Ruin, Being with the Dead: Burial, Ancestral Politics,

have explored a wide range of topics related to collective memory, the issues of the Holocaust and the Second World War were given an increasingly central role following the break-up of the Soviet Union and its satellite bloc around the period 1989–1992.[21] With regard to the Holocaust, general and comparative studies have explored collective memory and debates on collaboration, Holocaust revisionism and bystanders from a variety of perspectives.[22] Concurrently, with the expansion of the European Union, there was also an increased interest in how people and states began commemorating and remembering the atrocities of communism in Eastern Europe,[23] while more recently scholars have exhibited an increasing amount of interest in the colonial experience and its impact.[24] Much comparative and theoretical research has dealt with explorations of how different narratives of the past compete over access to public space.[25] However, scholars have also begun to question that perspective and instead focus on the symbiotic relationships that sometimes emerge between different narratives that coexist and borrow from each other in terms of "aesthetics".[26] The political dimension of Holocaust

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and the Roots of Historical Consciousness (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2019).

[21] For example, for both types of research, see Nicolas Argenti and Katharina Schramm, *Remembering Violence: Anthropological Perspectives on Intergenerational Transmission* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); J. M. Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[22] Michael Shafir, "Unacademic Academics: Holocaust Deniers and Trivializers in Post-Communist Romania", *Nationalities Papers* 42, no. 6 (2014); Ferenc Laczó, "Integrating Victims, Externalising Guilt? Commemorating the Holocaust in Hungary", *Südosteuropa* 64, no. 2 (2016).

[23] Małgorzata Pakier and Joanna Wawrzyniak, *Memory and Change in Europe: Eastern Perspectives*, vol. 16 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015).

[24] Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, "The Pre-History of the Holocaust? The Sonderweg and Historikerstreit Debates and the Abject Colonial Past", *Central European history* 41, no. 3 (2008); Benjamin Madley, "From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South West Africa Incubated Ideas and Methods Adopted and Developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe", *European history quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2005). See a summary of the discussion in Michael Rothberg's text in Zeit: https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2021-07/dealing-with-the-holocaust-historikerstreit-controversy-genocide-english/komplettansicht

[25] Tomislav Dulić and Roland Kostić, "Collective Memory in Transition: Bridging the Divide Between the Humanities and Social Science", in *Memories in Conflict: Historical Trauma, Collective Memory and Justice Since 1989*, ed. Tomislav Dulić (Uppsala: Opuscula Historica Upsaliensis, 2020), 27–29; Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2009), 5.

[26] *Multidirectional memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, 229, 236–245.

remembrance and its role in EU policymaking is yet another topic that has attracted a lot of interest and comparative studies.[27]

Almost every country in continental Europe was either an ally of Nazi Germany or occupied by Axis forces. Case-based studies on collective memory therefore tend to focus on country-specific aspects. In Western Europe, these have for instance highlighted issues such as popular support for Nazism and a willingness to participate in atrocities in Germany and Austria,[28] and the ongoing debates on neutrality in Sweden,[29] and collaboration in Vichy France.[30] After the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, there was a substantial increase in research interest in the Holocaust and its role in Eastern European collective memory.[31] One aspect that has been covered

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[27] See Tony Judt, "The Past Is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe", *Daedalus* 121, no. 4 (1992); Elisabeth Kuebler, "Holocaust Remembrance in the Council of Europe: Deplorable Victims and Evil Ideologies without Perpetrators", *Jewish Political Studies Review* 22, no. 3/4 (2010); Cecilie Felicia Stokholm Banke, "Holocaust and the Decline of European Values", in *Holocaust Heritage: Inquiries into European Historical Cultures*, ed. Klas-Göran Karlsson and Ulf Zander (Malmö: Sekel, 2004); Uffe Östergård, "Holocaust, Genocide and European Values", in *Genocide: cases, comparisons and contemporary debates*, ed. Steven L. B. Jensen, Gwynneth Llewellyn, and Folkedrabsstudier Dansk Center for Holocaust og (København: Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, 2003).

[28] In the German context, this has been an exceptionally wide area of research, for several reasons. See Omer Bartov, "Germany as Victim", *New German Critique*, no. 80 (2000); Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (London: Penguin, 2001); Wulf Kansteiner, *In pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics after Auschwitz*, vol. 1st (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006); Roger Frie, *Not in my Family: German Memory and Responsibility after the Holocaust* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017). From the Austrian perspective, see Oliver Rathkolb, "Austria's Reversed Holocaust Perception: The "Allied Occupation" and the Collective Memory of Austrians after 1945 ", in *Holocaust Heritage: Inquiries into European Historical Cultures*, ed. Klas-Göran Karlsson and Ulf Zander (Malmö: Sekel, 2004).

[29] See Lars M. Andersson and Karin Kvist Geverts, *En problematisk relation?: flyktingpolitik och judiska flyktingar i Sverige 1920-1950*, vol. 36 (Uppsala: Historiska institutionen, 2008); Paul A. Levine, "Whither Holocaust Studies in Sweden? Some Thoughts on Levande Historia and Other Matters Swedish", *Holocaust Studies* 11, no. 1 (2005); *From Indifference to Activism: Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust, 1938–1944*, 2., rev. and enl. ed., vol. 178 (Uppsala: Univ, 1998).

[30] Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*.

[31] See Bogdan C. Iacob, "History's Debris. The Many Pasts in the Post-1989 Present", *Südost Europa* 64, no. 2 (2016); Laczó, "Integrating Victims, Externalising Guilt? Commemorating the Holocaust in Hungary"; Joanna Wawrzyniak and Malgorzata Pakier, "Memory Studies in Eastern Europe: Key Issues and Future Perspectives", *Polish Sociological Review*, no. 183

extensively is how the Holocaust was used for propaganda purposes in the former Yugoslavia.[32] Another focus has been on the changing narratives and debates regarding collaborationist regimes and actors in Ukraine, Hungary and Croatia, and their participation in the Holocaust.[33] In Poland, research, such as Jan Gross's well-known account of the Jedwabne killings,[34] has exposed events that have been, and still are, denied by the Polish state and many Polish citizens – that Poles committed violence, including murder, against Jews during the Holocaust and in the immediate post-war period.[35] Gross's research contradicts a collective memory that is shared by different levels of society in Poland. Gross faced a hugely hostile response, and continues to do so today.[36] This memory of Poland and the Polish people as not only victims of Nazi Germany, but also perpetrators in some cases stands in stark contrast to the formal Polish state memory of the Holocaust and its view of Poland as an exclusively "victim nation".[37]

(2013); John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic, *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, ed. Himka John-Paul and Michlic Joanna Beata (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013).

[32] David Bruce MacDonald, *Balkan Holocausts?: Serbian and Croatian Victim-Centred Propaganda and the War in Yugoslavia* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 160–182.

[33] Laczó, "Integrating Victims, Externalising Guilt? Commemorating the Holocaust in Hungary"; Goran Miljan, "When the Past Scorns the Present: Memory and Meaning of Bleiburg and Jasenovac in Contemporary Croatia", in *Memories in Conflict: Historical Trauma, Collective Memory and Justice Since 1989*, ed. Tomislav Dulić (Uppsala: Opuscula Historica Upsaliensis, 2020).

[34] Jan Tomasz Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (New York, N.Y: Penguin Books, 2002).

[35] Jack Kugelmass, "Bloody Memories: Encountering the Past in Contemporary Poland", *Cultural Anthropology* 10, no. 3 (1995): 279-280; Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, "Cries of the Mob in the Pogroms in Rzeszów (June 1945), Cracow (August 1945), and Kielce (July 1946) as a Source for the State of Mind of the Participants", *East European politics and societies* 25, no. 3 (2011).

[36] Miroslaw Kofta and Patrycja Slawuta, "Thou Shall Not Kill…Your Brother: Victim−Perpetrator Cultural Closeness and Moral Disapproval of Polish Atrocities against Jews after the Holocaust", *Journal of social issues* 69, no. 1 (2013); Antony Polonsky, Joanna B. Michlic, and Inc ebrary, *The Neighbors Respond: the Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*, STU – Student ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[37] Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, "The Uses and the Abuses of Education about the Holocaust in Poland after 1989", *Holocaust Studies* 25, no. 3 (2019); Larry Ray and Sławomir Kapralski, "Introduction to the Special Issue – Disputed Holocaust Memory in Poland", ibid.; Sylwia Szymanska-Smolkin, "The Glorification of Memory: Jan Tomasz Gross and the "History Policy" in Contemporary Poland", in *Memories in Conflict: Historical Trauma, Collective Memory and Justice Since 1989*, ed. Tomislav Dulić (Uppsala: Opuscula Historica

In Israel, the focus on memory has been around the centrality of heroism, connecting the Holocaust to the idea of the eternal struggle of the Jewish people against its enemies, and the dichotomy between the perceived weakness of the diaspora and the strength of the new Zionist Jew.[38] In the US, its role as liberator and the "big winner" of the Second World War has been central, alongside inclusion of the Holocaust in the history of violations of universal human rights.[39] As Israel and the US are central to this dissertation, I expand on both cases in chapter 5.

Another aspect of collective memory is grassroots commemoration. Previous research on such cases has shown that grassroots commemoration commonly emerges in order to fill a void in the collective memory of a certain event or series of events. Grassroots commemoration can be performed by a minority or a majority group in society.[40] In the case of Israeli Holocaust memory culture, there are groups within the Jewish population, such as certain Sephardic groups, that have felt excluded from the predominant state-supported Holocaust memory culture, and have sought to have themselves included in it.[41] This dissertation examines the group that supposedly

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Upsaliensis, 2020); Malgorzata Wloszycka, "The Holocaust Memory in Mszana Dolna – Local Involvement in the Commemoration and Educational Programs", *Holocaust studies* 25, no. 3 (2019); Zofia Wóycicka, "Global Patterns, Local Interpretations: New Polish Museums Dedicated to the Rescue of Jews during the Holocaust", ibid.

[38] Mikael Tossavainen, "Heroes and victims: the Holocaust in Israeli Historical Consciousness" (Department of History, Lund University, 2006); Dalia Ofer, "We Israelis Remember, but How? The Memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli Experience", *Israel Studies* 18, no. 2 (2013).

[39] Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life (*Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

[40] Minorities for example include the Arab population in Israel commemorating the events of the 1948 *Nakba* or their relation to the Holocaust: Bashīr Bashīr and Amos Goldberg, *The Holocaust and the Nakba: a New Grammar of Trauma and History*, ed. Bashir Bashir and Goldberg Amos (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019); Edna Shoham, Neomi Shiloah, and Raya Kalisman, "Arab Teachers and Holocaust Education: Arab Teachers Study Holocaust Education in Israel", *Teaching and Teacher Education* 19, no. 6 (2003). Majorities relevant to this research would be for example Poles in Poland or Jews in Israel. Ekaterina V. Haskins, *Popular Memories: Commemoration, Participatory Culture, and Democratic Citizenship* (Columbia, South Carolina: The University of South Carolina Press, 2015); Jonathan Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland and the Politics of Commemoration, 1945-1979* (London; Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003); Liat Steir-Livny, "Remembrance in the Living Room [Zikaron ba-salon]: Grassroots Gatherings as New Forms of Holocaust Commemoration in Israel", *Holocaust Studies* (2019).

[41] Yochai Oppenheimer, "The Holocaust: A Miszrahi Perspective", *Hebrew Studies* 51 (2010). See for example this article (in Hebrew) reporting on the number of Holocaust survivors living in Israel as of January 2022, and includes among the survivors Jews born in Iraq, who

represents mainstream Holocaust memory culture—Ashkenazi Jews. Members of this group also felt that there was a gap in Holocaust commemoration, and acted to fill it. Jews are a minority within the US collective memory of the Holocaust and, as is demonstrated below, their discussions and actions around Holocaust commemoration were strongly connected to different ideas in the Jewish community about the dimensions and content of the gap between US and Jewish-American memories of the Holocaust.

In sum, a vast amount of research has been done on collective memory since Maurice Halbwachs coined the term a century ago.[42] However, what the term essentially means is still obscure, not least because it is used differently across disciplines. As Sarah Gensburger notes, Halbwachs is commonly referenced, but "…as pervasive as it may be in the institutionalization of memory studies today, this reference to Halbwachs remains formal in nature".[43] That is, that the concept of "collective memory", as coined by Halbwachs, in fact has very little to do with how it is used in the field of memory studies today. Alon Confino has also criticized the field, arguing that studies of collective memory have become homogenous, predictable and overly focused on cultural contexts in place of political ones.[44] This also means a move away from the empirical context in favour of a detached, theoretically based analysis that often tends to be based on predetermined ideas. The problem therefore is that "Many studies of memory are content to describe the representation of the past without bothering to explore the transmission, diffusion, and, ultimately, the meaning of this representation".[45] Similarly, Robert Rozett discusses the methodological problems caused by attempts to produce historical research based on non-historical methodology, most commonly reliance on theory instead of empirical data and the use of unreliable sources.[46]

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are not considered as Holocaust survivors under any common definition. https://news.walla.co.il/ item/3485063

[42] Assmann, "Transformations between History and Memory", 51; Seixas, *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 5.

[43] Sarah Gensburger, "Halbwachs' Studies in Collective Memory: A founding Text for Contemporary 'Memory Studies'?", *Journal of Classical Sociology* 16, no. 4 (2016).

[44] Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method", *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997).

[45] Ibid., 1395.

[46] Robert Rozett, *Approaching the Holocaust: Texts and Contexts* (Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005), 93–124.

Early Holocaust Memory and Documentation

Particularly important to this study are the early documentation efforts that were already in progress during the Holocaust.[47] These were the endeavours of judicial authorities,[48] but also of private persons and organizations such as Mémorial de la Shoah, the Shoah Foundation and Yad Vashem.[49] Many of the earliest efforts were initiated by different groups formed by survivors in displaced persons (DP) camps, as well as by groups of survivors in Poland and France.[50] Several scholars have claimed that there is a strong link between these collection and documentation efforts and Yizkor books.[51] Boaz Cohen sees Yizkor books as strongly related to these early efforts, although he places the focal point of such efforts chiefly on those that took place in the DP camps, immediately following the liberation of some Nazi camps, beginning before the official end of the war. These efforts were mainly made by non-historians.[52] In contrast to Cohen, Annette Wieviorka sees the collection efforts of DPs as aimed mainly inwards for their own remembrance needs, rather than outwards as commemoration to let others know what had

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[47] See for example in Boaz Cohen, "The Jewish DP Experience", in *The Routledge History of the Holocaust*, ed. Jonathan C. Friedman (Abingdon, Oxon, and New York: Routledge, 2011), 412–421; "The Difficulties of Creating a Holocaust Archive: Yad Vashem and Israel Kastner 1947–1948", *Jewish Culture and History* 15, no. 3 (2014); Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record: Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2012); "The Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris and the Writing of Holocaust History in Liberated France", in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, ed. David Cesarani and Eric J. Sundquist (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012); Martin Dean, "Local Collaboration in the Holocaust in Eastern Europe", in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[48] Congress World Jewish, *The Black Book: the Nazi Crime Against the Jewish People* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946); Tomislav Dulić, "Forging Brotherhood and Unity: War Propaganda and Transitional Justice in Yugoslavia, 1941–48", in *The Utopia of Terror* (Boydell & Brewer, 2015).

[49] See for example in Stephanie Shosh Rotem, *Constructing Memory: Architectural Narratives of Holocaust Museums*, 1 ed. (New York: Peter Lang, 2013).

[50] Johannes Heuman, *Holocaust and French Historical Culture, 1945–65* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[51] David G. Roskies, "Dividing the Ruins: Communal Memory in Yiddish and Hebrew", in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, ed. David Cesarani and Eric J. Sundquist (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 87–88; Dean, "Local Collaboration in the Holocaust in Eastern Europe"; Abraham Wein, "Memorial Books as a Source for Research into the History of Jewish Communities in Europe ", *Yad Vashem Studies on the Eastern European Catastrophe and Resistance* 9 (1973).

[52] Cohen, "The Jewish DP Experience", 412–417.

happened. According to Wieviorka, these outward-facing projects were primarily the work not of survivors, but of historians, who understood the importance of documentation in the context of wider commemoration.[53]

Yizkor book authors do not commonly reference these documentation efforts as their inspiration for the origin of their books. That is not to say that they had no impact, but there was already an older tradition of commemoration through books in place when these documentation efforts began. Contrary to what is claimed by some scholars when writing about the books today, historians were very much involved in writing the books, even in the immediate post-war years;[54] and those historians did in fact see the books as part of a wider documentation effort. While these early Holocaust historians were positive about using survivor accounts as sources, they were nonetheless discussing early on the problems associated with this kind of evidence (see chapters 8 and 9).[55]

Another connection made is to early survivor memoir publications. According to Zoe Waxman, seventy-five such memoirs by survivors recounting their own experiences had been published by 1949.[56] It is possible to find similarities between survivor memoirs and some of the texts submitted for Yizkor books.[57] Jan Schwarz sees the books as strongly rooted in Yiddish culture. According to Schwarz, they are similar to other literary publications in Yiddish, in that they were commissioned and consumed by the same people. He argues that the books – from the late 1940s – are rooted in both early documentation efforts in the DP camps and in the wider phenomenon of Yiddish-language Holocaust publications.[58] This explanation seems plausible as long as it remains focused on the early years of Yizkor books, where publications were indeed mainly in Yiddish. I expand on this point in chapter 6. A common opinion is that these early publications, and other attempts to

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[53] Annette Wieviorka, "The Witness in History", *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (2006): 386.

[54] Mark L. Smith, "No silence in Yiddish: Popular and Scholarly Writing about the Holocaust in Early Postwar Years", in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, ed. David Cesarani and Eric J. Sundquist (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 56–60.

[55] Ibid., 63.

[56] Zoe Waxman, "Testimony and Representation", in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 493.

[57] Albeit this question is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[58] Jan Schwarz, "Blood Ties: Leib Rochman's Yiddish War Diary ", in *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry: Essays on the History and Meanings of Yizker Volumes*, ed. Rosemary Horowitz (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2011); "Transnational Ashkenaz: Yiddish Culture after the Holocaust", *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis* 27 (2016); *Survivors and Exiles* (Detroit, United States: Wayne State University Press, 2015).

publicly bring attention to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust, were generally ignored by the public and by states. This is usually referred to as "The Myth of Silence".[59] It is an important part of US Holocaust memory culture, which I discuss further in this dissertation.

Eyewitness Accounts:
Memories and Memoires as Historical Evidence

The question of Yizkor books as primary sources is related to a wider ongoing discussion in Holocaust research about the validity of eyewitness accounts, which are often provided many years after the events took place.[60] Eyewitness accounts have been used for research on other aspects related to the Holocaust, such as trauma, resilience and the meaninglessness of such events.[61] According to Browning, "the use of survivor testimonies as historical evidence has been even more contested [than perpetrator testimonies and documents]".[62] Yizkor books, alongside survivor testimonies, are the main sources of information on areas of Holocaust history where documentation has been destroyed or never existed to begin with, such as, for example, the Eastern front areas[63] and the Nazi slave labour camp system.[64] Historians must therefore decide, according to Browning, how to do their historiographical work in cases where only eyewitness testimonies are available, taking into account the drawbacks of such sources.[65] Browning does not dismiss perpetrator documents as a primary source, and nor does he argue that eyewitness accounts should be used indiscriminately. Rather, he argues that eyewitness accounts can be used as primary sources for constructing history, and that they should be treated in a similar way to other sources, such as

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[59] Hasia R. Diner, "The Myth of Silence", *Chronicle of Higher Education* 55, no. 33 (2009).

[60] Rozett, *Approaching the Holocaust: Texts and Contexts*, 11–30, 93–124.

[61] Christopher R. Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison, Wis: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 38–39.

[62] Ibid.

[63] That is, more or less from Lublin county and eastward. The Belzec extermination camps and many of the ghetto of that county do not have any lists of victims. Further to the East, in the areas of the Soviet Union, Nazi extermination took place mostly with little or no documentation.

[64] Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*, 44; Rosemary Horowitz, "Authenticating the Historical Fiction of Uri Orlev", in *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry: Essays on the History and Meanings of Yizker Volumes*, ed. Rosemary Horowitz (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2011), 186–187.

[65] Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*, 39,43.

perpetrator documents. They should thus neither be dismissed outright, nor given special status resulting from emotional considerations. They should be examined and corroborated on an individual basis. In this dissertation, I echo this point when it comes to Yizkor books.

We can see the attitude of historians to Yizkor book texts as primary sources for constructing history as a continuation of the general attitude to eyewitness accounts, as described by Browning. There have however been some exceptions. In his famous book *Judenrat: the Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation*, Isaiah Trunk has used Yizkor books not only to corroborate information from other sources, but also as exclusive sources of information about events.[66] Jan Schwarz mentions the books as an example of "historical works";[67] that is, within the wider world of Yiddish-language publications that appeared after the Holocaust, the books stand out as being historically valuable. A few scholars have used Yizkor books as sources for their research on Jewish culture.[68] The biggest user of the books as historical sources is Yad Vashem. A substantial part of its victims of the Holocaust database is based exclusively on the necrologies in the books. Many entries in the database are explicitly attributed to the books as exclusive sources.[69]

Research on Yizkor Books

Yizkor books and their role in the shaping of Holocaust memory in Israel is a topic that has attracted only limited scholarly interest over the years, and this is reflected in the relatively small number of publications. This stands in stark contrast to the volume of publications in the field of Holocaust memory and commemoration, as well as the overall volume of Yizkor book publications. As Yizkor books began to appear, they gained visibility and were considered valuable in the eyes of the early generation of Holocaust historians, such as

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[66] Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: the Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 48. This is only one example from the book. Trunk clearly takes the position that they are very reliable sources, as he does not even discuss using them as part of his list of primary sources. See also his endnotes ibid., 590–648..

[67] Schwarz, "Transnational Ashkenaz: Yiddish Culture after the Holocaust", 193.

[68] Daniel Magilow, "Yizker Books and Photographic Form", in *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry: Essays on the History and Meanings of Yizker Volumes*, ed. Rosemary Horowitz (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2011); Yale Strom, "Klezmer Memories in Yizker Books", ibid.

[69] http://yvng.yadvaShem.org/index.html?language=en. Any general search would likely provide some entries marked "List of murdered Jews from Yizkor books" as the source.

Jacob Shatzky, Philip Friedman, Elias Schulman and Abraham Wein. This small group of prominent Jewish historians and scholars had mainly focused on Yiddish culture before the war. They devoted considerable attention to the books and saw them as significant from a memorial perspective and as historical sources.[70] Jacob Shatzky opens his review of books published in 1953 with the words:

> Yizker books published by individuals and compatriot associations with the goal of immortalizing the destroyed Jewish communities are an important component of Holocaust literature, which is expanding every year. The psychological or emotional moments that gave rise to such volumes may have a positive effect on our historical perspective and on the realistic approach to the past. As a matter of course, the books are more useful as source material for history than as definite monographs.[71]

Shatzky, who also wrote a review of the books published in 1955,[72] makes several interesting points about Yizkor books: he mentions that they are the product of both individuals and organizations, that is, not only landsmanschaftn; and that their goal is to "immortalize" the communities, rather than being restricted to commemoration. Shatzky also notes that the books could potentially be reliable historical sources. His interest in and appreciation of the books is obvious to anyone who reads him. However, that is not how his work has sometimes been represented in the scholarly literature, where he is described as someone who saw no value in the books as either historical documents or literary works.[73] In my view, this is a gross misrepresentation of his work.

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[70] Philip Friedman, "Di landsmanshaftn literatur in di Fareyniktn Shtatn far di letstn ten yor", *Jewish Book Annual* 10 (1951-52); Elias Schulman, "A Survey and Evaluation of Yizkor Books", ibid.25 (1967–1968); Jacob Shatzky, "Yizker bikher", *YIVO Bleter* 37 (1953); "Yizker bikher", *YIVO Bleter* 39 (1955); Wein, "Memorial Books as a Source for Research into the History of Jewish Communities in Europe ". All appear in: Horowitz, *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry: Essays on the History and Meanings of Yizker Volumes*.

[71] Jacob Shatzky, "Review of Yizker Books – 1953", in *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry: Essays on the History and Meanings of Yizker Volumes*, ed. Rosemary Horowitz (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2011), 54–55.

[72] "Review of Yizker Books – 1955", in *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry: Essays on the History and Meanings of Yizker Volumes*, ed. Rosemary Horowitz (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2011).

[73] Rita Horvath, "The Role of the Survivors in the Remembrance of the Holocaust: Memorial Monuments and Yizkor Books", in *The Routledge history of the Holocaust*, ed. Jonathan C. Friedman (Abingdon, Oxon;New York: Routledge, 2011); Amir, "Israel as the Cradle of Yizker Books".

Shatzky's sentiment was shared by other historians. Elias Schulman, for instance, writes in his survey of Yizkor books:

> It is astonishing that this immense source about Jewish life on the eve of the Holocaust and about the Holocaust has for the most part been ignored by writers, researchers, and historians who have written about it in the Western languages. Some authors have ignored it out of lack of knowledge, others out of snobbishness. Whatever the reason, the loss is theirs and that of Jewish historiography.[74]

The quote demonstrates Schulman's high regard for the books and is another example of the genuine scholarly interest in the books in the first two decades after the Holocaust. This call to use Yizkor books as historical sources is especially stark given that the field of Holocaust research was still in its infancy at the time (1967–68), although some seminal works had already been published by then.[75] Later in the same text, Schulman makes another noteworthy comment:

> Most memorial books were edited by functionaries among the community's survivors. It should be noted that in the majority of cases, they used the popular and traditional style of the genre. Nevertheless, they followed good editing practices, placed the articles in chronological order, and included suitable illustrative material.[76]

This is a strongly positive comment from Schulman, who is connecting Yizkor books to a pre-existing genre, or tradition, of book-form commemoration that was well known in the Ashkenazi Jewish community. He does not provide more details about the genre, probably on the assumption that his readers would know about it and require no further explanation. Schulman also found translation issues between Yiddish and Hebrew, and made comments on editing problems.[77]

Phillip Friedman's "Landsmanschaftn Literature in the United States during the Past Ten Years"[78] is another effort by a leading scholar at the time to thoroughly examine memorial books. It has been largely ignored by current

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[74] Elias Schulman, "A Survey and Evaluation of Yizker Books", ibid., 82–83.

[75] For instance: Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago,: Quadrangle Books, 1961).

[76] Schulman, "A Survey and Evaluation of Yizker Books", 94.

[77] Ibid., 93.

[78] Philip Friedman, "Landsmanshaftn Literature in the United States During the Past Ten Years", ibid. Originally published 1951–52.

scholars who claim that the early researchers dismissed Yizkor books. Friedman clearly views the books as important and valuable. He surveys individual publications and makes specific, detailed comments. He also notes that the books contain an "idealization of life", or a romanticization of life in the community through the omission of negative aspects.[79] I demonstrate that this persisted in later periods (see chapter seven). Abraham Wein also paid substantial attention to the books, which cannot be interpreted as anything other than a genuine show of interest.[80] The title of his article, "Memorial Books as a Source of Research", clearly suggests that he saw the books as significant, and as memorials as well as historical documents. This understanding is further supported by his argument that the Yizkor book committees were a continuation of the documentation efforts that were already taking place during the Holocaust.[81] Thus, he saw them as part of a larger effort to provide historical data for future research. Wein notes that the books are not generally historically accurate, but this was not a criticism; he says they were never meant to be historically accurate documents, but to be memorial books.

Shatzky died in 1956 and Friedman in 1960. Schulman's research focused on Yiddish culture and literature, and by the mid-1960s a large number of the books were being published in Hebrew. Wein remained active in Holocaust commemoration and research for many years, but his research turned in other directions than the books. He was part of the Yad Vashem staff for many years and the editor of the important "Pinkas ha-kehilot" project.[82] Wein's activities contradict later criticism of him for allegedly dismissing the books.[83]

From a Ruined Garden (1983), by the anthropologists Jack Kugelmass and Johnathan Boyarin, is the seminal book with regard to research on Yizkor books.[84] The book has two main parts: a historical introduction to the books, and excerpts from the books on different topics. Overall, the book contains excerpts from around sixty books. At the time of its original publication, it had

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[79] Ibid., 43.

[80] Abraham Wein, "'Memorial Books' as a Source for Research into the History of Jewish Communities in Europe", ibid., 89.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Horowitz, *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry: Essays on the History and Meanings of Yizker Volumes*, 289–290.

[83] See Rivka Parciak, "The Others in Yizker Books", in *Memorial Books of Eastern European Jewry: Essays on the History and Meanings of Yizker Volumes*, ed. Rosemary Horowitz (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2011), 222–223. I will come back to this criticism of Wein later on.

[84] Amy Burnette and Rosemary Horowitz, "A Survey of Collections", ibid., 269–274.

a special significance as, by then, most of the Yizkor books had already been published but received little attention in the English-speaking world. In this sense, the book was a forerunner of the ongoing large-scale efforts to translate Yizkor books into English.

Kugelmass and Boyarin do not include any form of source criticism, and their results are often based on empirical errors and a confusion between folk tales and historical fact. One of their most obvious mistakes, which is often echoed in current research, is their claim that the books were written exclusively by "concentration camp survivors" (their own term) who survived as a result of their physical conditioning.[85] This is not only an inaccurate characterization of the people who produced Yizkor books, but also a gross disambiguation of the term "Holocaust survivor", limiting it to a relatively narrow group. They do not discuss this definition or its ramifications and there are more such examples of inaccuracies in the text. Kugelmass and Boyarin present a homogeneous picture of Yizkor books. Their main points are:

(1) That Yizkor books belong exclusively to Ashkenazi-Jewish religious and social traditions of commemoration;
(2) That Yizkor books were, throughout the period of their publication, part of a larger framework of Yiddish-language publications that existed after World War II, and thus, written chiefly in Yiddish and distributed through Yiddish publication channels and networks; and
(3) That the books were all produced by Landsmanschaftn.

While Kugelmass and Boyarin argue that the books are the product of landsmanschaftn, and that these organizations also served as the means of distribution for the books, their own list of books contains, for example: (*a*) the book of Glubokie,[86] produced by two brothers, Michael and Zvi Rajak, on their own; (*b*) the book of Halmin-Turts,[87] an example of a book produced by schoolchildren in Israel; (*c*) the book of Ostrow Mazowiecka,[88] produced by Irgun Yotz'ey Polin as part of the *Megilat Polin* series commemorating

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[85] Jack Kugelmass et al., *From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry*, 2nd, expanded ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 15–17.

[86] Rajak and Rajak, *Hurbn Glubok, Sharkoystsene, Dunilovitsh, Postov, Droye, Kazan: dos lebn un umkum fun yidishe shtetlekh in Vaysrusland-Lite (Vilner gegnt)*.

[87] Jehudah Schwartz, *Zikhron netsakh la-kehilot ha-kedoshot Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah asher nekhrevu ba-Shoah: hantsahat kehilot ha-kodesh Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah, 1969).

[88] Yehudah Leyb Levin, *Ostrov Mazovyetsk*, Sidrat kehilot Yisrael (Yerushalayim: h. mo. l., 1965).

communities that had no memorial books; and (*d*) the book of Silesian communities Wadowice, Andrychov, Kalwarja, Myslenice and Sucha, the introduction to which includes an explicit statement by the editor that these communities had no landsmanschaft of their own.[89] Nonetheless, Kugelmass and Boyarin, and some contemporary scholars, ignore these other types of publishers in their definitions and, as a result, in their analyses of the phenomenon. In other words, while the phenomenon of Yizkor books developed and changed from its early days in the 1940s and 1950s, the analysis of the phenomenon has remained quite stagnant.

Today, the main researcher in the area is Rosemary Horowitz. She has researched the books as a phenomenon in several publications, mainly from a literary studies perspective. She also wrote her doctoral dissertation on the communal aspects of the Yizkor book publication process, where she focused on the production process of three books published in the US.[90] In addition, she has edited an anthology on the books,[91] which includes the vast majority of the articles published about Yizkor books to date. Her own introduction to the book provides general background, focusing on issues of language and translation. One of Horowitz's most interesting observations is how the ongoing translation projects of memorial books have led to an "Americanization" of Holocaust memory. These translation projects, mainly through the Jewishgen website, are mostly carried out by non-professional translators, and the results often replace many Yiddish terms with American-English ones (for example, "Shoah" or "Hurbn" replaced by "Holocaust", "She'erit Ha-pleita" replaced by "survivors"), and sometimes result in direct changes in meaning, added adjectives and so on.[92] While this might make the books more accessible for a US audience, it at the same time deprives them of some of the authenticity they are seeking to preserve and resurrect.

Michlean Amir has echoed Kugelmass and Boyarin's claim that the authors of the books were mainly young and Zionist[93] labour camp survivors, who survived because they were "chosen by the Nazis to be used as a good and cheap labor resource".[94] She has argued that this is the reason that Zionism is

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[89] David Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha* (Giv'ataim, Israel: Massada publishing, 1967), 10–11.

[90] Rosemary Horowitz, *Literacy and Cultural Transmission in the Reading, Writing and Rewriting of Jewish Memorial Books* (San Francisco [u.a.]: Austin & Winfield, 1998).

[91] Michlean J. Amir and Rosemary Horowitz, "Yizkor Books in the Twenty-First Century: A History and Guide to the Genre", *Judaica Librarianship* 14, no. 1 (2008).

[92] Horowitz, "A History of Yizker Books".

[93] Michlean Amir, "Israel as the Cradle of Yizker Books", ibid., 32–34.

[94] Ibid., 32.

so prominent in the books. While current research is fraught with criticism of earlier scholars (Shatzky, Friedman, Schulman and Wein) for being negative and disrespectful towards Yizkor books, it seems at the same time to have adopted much of the same early historians' empirical results,[95] which in turn were accurate for their time but have since become outdated as publication patterns changed.

Rivka Parciak deals with the *other* (italicized in the source) in Yizkor books. Her argument is that the books represent several marginalized groups in society, both men and women, in a negative way. I argue that this is incorrect; the books present a highly positive image of all the townsfolk and mostly support the idea of the universal martyrdom of Holocaust victims. Parciak uses sociological theories to analyse the books as works of fiction and, as a result, some of her arguments do not fit the empirical evidence on life in Jewish pre-Holocaust society.[96] She for instance lists hangmen, criers at funerals, coffin bearers, gravediggers and watchers over the dead as being considered "impure",[97] despite the fact that those roles did not exist in Jewish Ashkenazi society. Jews did not serve as hangmen and Ashkenazi Jews did not bury their dead in coffins; nor did they employ wailers.[98] People who dealt with the dead in the Ashkenazi context (*chevra Kadisha*, the burial society) were in fact highly regarded, as the author herself confirms.[99]

Other contributions to the field include Adina Cimet's study, which analyses thirty-eight Yizkor books written exclusively in Yiddish. She pinpoints 1987 as the year Yizkor books started to be published mainly in Hebrew.[100] I demonstrate in this thesis, however, that Hebrew became the main language of publication already in the 1960s. Jan Schwartz has studied Yizkor books as part of the Yiddish literary world, especially in the post-war

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[95] See Rivka Parciak, "The Others in Yizker Books", ibid.; Rosemary Horowitz, "A History of Yizker Books", ibid.; Adina Cimet, "'To Hold Our Own Against Silence'", ibid.; Michlean Amir, "Israel as the Cradle of Yizker Books", ibid.; Horvath, "The Role of the Survivors in the Remembrance of the Holocaust: Memorial Monuments and Yizkor Books"; Johannes Heuman, "Promoting Global Holocaust Memory in the Era of the Cold War: The Tomb of the Unknown Jewish Martyr in Paris", *History and Memory* 27, no. 1 (2015).

[96] This is noticeable in Parciak's discussions about the story of the *Dybbuk*, the representation of insane people in the books and her claim that some women in the books are presented as witches. Parciak, "The Others in Yizker Books", 224–225, 227–228. Parciak's examples in these cases do not support her argument.

[97] Ibid.

[98] This is chiefly a Sephardic tradition.

[99] Parciak, "The Others in Yizker Books", 225.

[100] Adina Cimet, "'To Hold Our Own Against Silence'", ibid., 123.

decades.[101] Faith Jones and Gretta Siegel argue that Yizkor books are a continuation of earlier commemorative traditions dating back to the middle ages.[102] These authors have not researched the books directly, but discuss them in relation to other phenomena, and are therefore only noted here. Despite the overall number of Yizkor book publications, the books are generally mentioned in passing in most publications, if at all; and this is mostly in the context of remembrance and commemoration,[103] or community building.[104]

Yizkor Books and Holocaust Memory

Despite the fact that the books have a strong and self-stated connection to memory, there has been very little research published that relates the two. Overall, the books are not often mentioned in this context in the existing scholarship and when they are, it is mostly as a side note.[105] Despite the sheer volume of publications, it seems that Yizkor books have been viewed as a marginal part of Holocaust commemoration, including in Israel where the majority of the books were published. Yehudit Baumel has shown that the books also have a ceremonial function in addition to their memorial one. The books were used during memorial ceremonies and gatherings of survivor organizations, especially on the memorial day of their own communities.[106] Excerpts from the community's Yizkor book were read aloud, in a similar way to a reading from the Bible or the prayer book. Baumel places the books in a tradition of commemoration associated with religious relics, such as the ashes of death camp victims or the remains of Torah scrolls, that were brought to

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[101] Jan Schwarz, "Blood Ties: Leib Rochman's Yiddish War Diary ", ibid.; "Transnational Ashkenaz: Yiddish Culture after the Holocaust".

[102] Jones and Siegel, "Yizkor books as Holocaust Grey Literature", 52–53.,

[103] Jockusch, *Collect and Record: Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*; Dalia Ofer, "The Strength of Remembrance: Commemorating the Holocaust during the First Decade of Israel", *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (2000): 25,46; Roskies, "Dividing the Ruins: Communal Memory in Yiddish and Hebrew"; Dan Stone, "Memory, Memorials and Museums", in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Zoe Waxman, "Testimony and Representation", ibid.

[104] Johannes Heuman, "The Quest for Recognition: the Holocaust and French Historical Culture, 1945-65" (Department of History, Stockholm University, 2014).

[105] See Waxman, "Testimony and Representation", 494; Jockusch, *Collect and Record: Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*, 140, 157. See also a dictuonary entry mentioning the relation to memory: Natalia Aleksiun-Madrzak, "Yizkor Books" (2011).

[106] This is usually the day of the ghetto liquidation. Another option is, for example, the day of the Nazi occupation of the town began. See chapter 8.

Israel for burial by different groups and individuals. Their significance was perceived to be similar to the remains of the martyrs.[107]

James E. Young[108] mentions Yizkor books (in his words, "Yizkor Bikher") as "sites of memory" and notes their significance as symbolic, replacement graves.[109] Young's comments are made in passing and do not seem to be based on any research of his own, but on the above-mentioned work by Kugelmass and Boyarin. He also states that the books are the first Holocaust memorials, predating other forms of Holocaust commemoration. While this is chronologically accurate – the first Yizkor book was published in 1943 – the idea of the books as replacement gravestones is less prevalent in the earlier books, as demonstrated by Young's own example from a book published in 1973.[110] In a similar vein, Dan Stone has noted that due to the overwhelming focus on heroism in Israeli Holocaust memory culture, very few physical memorials for the Holocaust were available in Israel, and thus Yizkor books became the only substitute.[111] As I demonstrate in chapter 7, these are only partial explanations. The books were not merely used as gravestone replacements, but had their own value as memorials and gravestones in the eyes of their producers. This point is demonstrated first and foremost by the fact that books continued to be published in record numbers after most communities had already had plaques and stone memorials put up in their honour. If the primary reason for publishing Yizkor books was indeed to replace gravestones, there would be no need to publish the books once other forms of commemoration had been erected.

Roni-Kochavi-Nehab argues that sanctification was one of the purposes of the books, alongside mourning, chronicling and memorialization. She also discusses the relation between the books and different parts of Jewish scripture. According to Kochavi-Nehab, the tradition of using books for commemoration is directly linked to the Bible, as a holy book and as a source of rules for behaviour in different situations. At least some of the books were

[107] Yehudit T. Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel", *Iyunim Bitkumat Israel*, no. 5 (1995). See also: Doron Bar, "Holocaust Commemoration in Israel during the 1950s: The Holocaust Cellar on Mount Zion", *Jewish Social Studies* 12, no. 1 (2005).

[108] James Edward Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (London;New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 7.

[109] The so-called "missing gravestone syndrome", credited by Young to: Joost Merloo, "Delayed Mourning in Victims of Extermination Camps", in *Massive Psychic Trauma*, ed. Henry Krystal (New York: 1968).

[110] Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, 7.

[111] Stone, "Memory, Memorials and Museums".

perceived as sanctified, because they are books (like the Bible) and because they fulfil certain commandments from the Bible.[112] The argument is close to the work of Christian Riegel, who compares Eli Mandel's book-long poem published in memory of an abandoned Jewish settlement in southern Saskatchewan, Canada, to Yizkor books as both are communal memorials and both are books of commemoration and mourning.[113] Here, we run into the issue of delineating Yizkor books from other works, which is important to keep in mind. Riegel uses the term "communal" in this context, as only one of its two meanings used in this dissertation, as a text that commemorates a community. Mandel's book is itself a single-author work, and is not the result of communal activity. Within the book, however, can be found similar ideas to those expressed in the editorials. The characters are collecting texts in a similar way to the process of Yizkor book publication, and the idea of the book as a place of memory and a replacement for the graveyard is discussed.[114]

In sum, my contribution to the field of research concerns two aspects: First, to provide a both comprehensive and detailed analysis of the character of Yizkor books and in that process, to provide new knowledge about the aims behind the publications, their character and how they were produced, employing both both qualitative and quantitative methods, with the editors and the publishers, as well as their motives, in focus. Second, to present the evolution of both the forms and functions of the books and to relate these to historical events, and to trace the changing role that Yizkor books had in the formation of a collective memory about the Holocaust and about life in the pre-Holocaust period. I will thus track the books as items of memory production from the early phases until the present day, especially in Israel and the US.

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[112] Kochavi-Nehab, "'Write This as a Memorial in the Book' – A Jewish Pattern for Memory".

[113] Christian Riegel, "Mourning, Memorial, and the Yizkor Books in Eli Mandel's 'Out of Place'", *Mosaic (Winnipeg)* 50, no. 2 (2017): 188–189.

[114] Ibid., 189, 191–192.

Chapter 3: Method and Sources

The primary sources for this research are the Yizkor books. They appear in three main forms. The first is a quantitative database of 613 Yizkor books, compiled by the author. The second is a collection of 1,746 pages from 565 Yizkor books, comprising forewords, letters sent to the community and articles written by those who took part in the publication process, which are referred to as "editorials". These have been used as the main sources for chapters 6–8. Finally, I analysed a sample of thirty full Yizkor books to provide an indication of how the main ideas mentioned in the editorials were presented in the books, and how those main ideas related to the contributions of individual authors and to editorial decisions. In addition, the thesis discusses other pieces from Yizkor books, such as memorial texts, necrology pages and accounts of organization meetings.

This research is based on a "grounded" approach and a qualitative content analysis. I did not search for specific concepts or phrases when examining the sources. Instead, I read through the sources using MaxQDA (a computer program for qualitative data analysis) and coded words or segments relevant to the research questions in vivo. MaxQDA was used because it marks and retrieves coded segments more efficiently than traditional methods. Other features, either qualitative or quantitative, such as automated coding, search functions or word counting, were not used on the editorials. In the grounded analysis process, I grouped the various segments into several categories, such as descriptions of the town and the community, reasons for publishing the book and notes on the publications process. This dissertation analyses the main categories brought up in the editorials, and these form the basis for the structure of chapters 6–8.

The editorials were chosen as the main primary sources for this research because it is in these that the key persons involved in the publication process discuss issues related to the research questions in this dissertation. Chief among these issues are the publication process, the problems encountered during the process, editorial decisions related to content or language, the point of view on Yizkor books as a genre or field, and memory and commemoration. Some editorials were written by notable people not involved in the publication

process or people otherwise unrelated to the publishers and authors.[115] For example, the 1967 book on Babruisk (today in Belarus) contains an introduction from landsman Kaddish Luz,[116] a famous socialist-Zionist leader and former member (MK) and chairman of the *Knesset* (the Israeli Parliament). The 1943 Lodz Yizkor book includes as part of its introductory section letters sent from the publishing organization, the United Emergency Relief Committee for the City of Lodz, to US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, dated 11 November 1940, and to Herbert H. Lehman, the then recently appointed "World Food Administrator and Rehabilitator",[117] dated 19 January 1943.[118] The 1986 book on Mariyampol, Lithuania, has letters from the office of the then President of Israel, Haim Hertzog, and from Avraham Herman, Chancellor of the Hebrew University, to the editor, among letters from several landsleit.[119]

These editorials can usually be found at the beginning of the book, and are often titled accordingly, as "foreword", "a word from the editor" or other similar titles. However, further editorials can also be found at the end of the book, hence my decision to use the term "editorial" instead of terms such as "foreword" or "preface". Many books include several editorials by different authors. Editorials range in size from one or two paragraphs to as much as ten pages, but commonly take up one or two pages each. Some books include several versions of the same editorial in different languages. Since it is impossible to know which one is the "correct" version in cases where differences are found, the default was to use the Hebrew version.

As noted above, the editorials are the main sources for chapters 6–8. They were analysed using a bottom-up, inductive approach. The main goal of this methodological approach was to examine, analyse and present the people behind the books and their reasons for producing them. The focus is on the

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[115] See letter from the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Israel Meir Lau in Josef Chrust and Yosef Frankel, *Katowice* (Tel-Aviv: ha-'amutah le-hantsahat yahadut Katowice, 1996). Introduction by MK Haike Grossman in:Ya'akov Pat, *Hayim u-mavet be-tsel ha-ya'ar* (Tel-Aviv: Y. Pat, 1991), 10–11. Excerpt from a letter by former prime minister David Ben Guryon in: David A. Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*, vol. 2 (Tel-Aviv: Ha-va'ad le-hotsa'at sefer kehilat Saloniki, 1986).

[116] Yehuda Slutsky, *Babruisk* (Tel-Aviv: Yotse Babruisk be-medinat Yisrael uve-Artsot-ha-Berit be-hotsa'at tarbut ve-hinukh, 1967), Introduction by Kaddish Luz.

[117] His correct title was "Director-general of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration".

[118] United Emergency Relief Committee for the City of Lodz, *Lodzsher yizker-bukh* (New York: Grossman, Maurice S., 1943), 6–7.

[119] Avraham Tory, *Mariyampol, Lita* (Tel-Aviv: Va'ad sefer Mariyampol, 1986), Letters at the start of the second edition.

memory they produced, and their relation to different aspects of memory and commemoration *as they saw it*. Research on Yizkor books since the 1980s has been largely based on a deductive approach. My goal is to establish the authors' positions on the matters studied here.

The main benefit of an inductive methodology is that it provides a clear view of the opinions and positions of the authors. The main drawback is that it limits the analysis to what the authors discuss and their points of view. Simply put, it prevents us from seeing what is not in the sources. Some of the gaps can be identified and covered using a comparative approach to the sources. I am of the opinion that to properly conduct a comparative analysis, one must first have performed a grounded analysis of each field or area to be compared. This is the basis for the decision to focus on a grounded approach in this dissertation.

The books included in the project are mainly from the New York Public Library (NYPL) collections in the US and Yad Vashem (YV) in Israel. Several of the books are part of Uppsala University's library collection and some are from the author's personal collection. The books in the NYPL have been digitally scanned and are available online. The NYPL Yizkor book collection in its entirety was the basis for this research. The Yizkor book database was initially compiled by mapping the entire NYPL Yizkor Book collection, excluding duplicates and books that were catalogued as part of the collection but turned out not to be Yizkor books. Additional sources were collected during several visits to the Yad Vashem library and archives between 2017 and 2019. Restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic made additional trips to Yad Vashem impossible.

Each book has been closely examined in order to collect accurate data, and to confirm that each individual book is indeed a Yizkor book. In both the NYPL and the YV collections, some books that were designated part of the collection were, as indicated above, clearly not Yizkor books. Some were for example phone books, photograph albums or memorial books published before the Holocaust.[120] At the same time, some Yizkor books were found outside of the formal collections and included as such.

The NYPL collection appears to be based mainly around Yiddish-language or Yiddish culture books.[121] The NYPL is connected to the Yiddish

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[120] For instance: First Felshteener Benevolent Association and Note Kozlowsky, *Felshtin* (New-York: Aroysgegebn fun Felshtiner fareyn, 1937); Benyamin Yaari, *Bet ha-'almin ha-yehudi be-Tomaszow-Mazovyetski* (Israel: Irgun yots'e Tomaszow-Mazovyetski be-Yiśra'el, 1996).

[121] Although not exclusively, as it includes for example several books commemorating Sephardic communities.

Book Center, which serves as the commercial extension of the library, for example by selling on-demand reprints of the books scanned by the NYPL.[122] The collection was chosen as the starting point for this research as it is sufficiently large (700 books by their own estimate),[123] and available online, which made the collection process significantly easier. After sifting through the entire collection online, 564 books were identified using the definition presented in the introduction and included in this research.[124] The Yad Vashem collection is one of the two largest collections in the world (1,300 books by their own estimate),[125] but is not available in digital form. It was mainly used to enhance this research with additional sources. Forty-eight books were added from Yad Vashem. The YV collection is more heterogeneous than the NYPL collection and includes a wider range of languages and communities, such as a larger number of books commemorating Sephardic communities and books entirely in German. One book from my personal collection was not found in either collection.[126] Adding it made the total number of books included 613.

Geographical details

When examining the locations of the commemorated communities over time (table 3.1), it is clear that Yizkor books are primarily a Polish Jewry-based phenomenon. Of the 613 books included in this research, 270 (44.04%) commemorated communities located in present-day Poland, another 140 (22.83%) in Ukraine and eighty-two (13.37%) in what is today Belarus. A study of the geographical dispersion of the commemorated communities (figure 3.3) reveals that books from Ukraine and Belarus were mostly commemorating communities in the western parts of the two countries, which are traditionally considered part of Polish Jewry or, in the case of some areas in southern and south-western Ukraine, Romanian Jewry. There is only one community east of the area of the Pale of Settlement (Zolochiv in eastern Ukraine)[127]. In any case, communities in Poland, Ukraine and Belarus were largely Yiddish-speaking. If the books commemorating communities in Lithuania (twenty-four, 3.91% of the books) are added, this

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[122] https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/

[123] Burnette and Howrowitz, "A Survey of Collections", 286.

[124] That is, they were idenitfied as books commemorating one or more communities, and include contributions from multiple people.

[125] Burnette and Howrowitz, "A Survey of Collections", 284.

[126] Brandes, *Ketz ha-yehudim be-ma'arav Polin*

[127] Commemorated in: Eliezer Boneh, Baruch Karu, and Israel Meir Lask, *Sefer kehilat Zlots'ov* (Tel-Aviv: Idit-Irgun 'ole Zlots'ov, 1967).

yields 516 books (84.17%) from traditionally Yiddish-speaking areas. We could also add some books from Romania, but there we can also find Hungarian speaking communities. I expand on the languages of Yizkor books below. The data demonstrate that the producers were rooted in Yiddish-speaking areas, a fact that was only partially reflected in their choice of publication languages.

It is also possible to examine geographical change over time. In the earlier period, 1943–1960 (figure 3.1), the commemorated communities were mostly in Poland proper, with a low number of communities in other Yiddish-speaking areas (interwar Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Romania and what is today Slovakia). In the following period, 1961–1980 (figure 3.2), which covers the peak years of publication, the phenomenon spread into new Jewries and many more communities appear in the above-mentioned areas, but also in Hungary, Austria and Germany, which are all Ashkenazi areas, as well as Sephardic communities in Greece, Yugoslavia (Macedonia) and Bulgaria. When the later period 1981–2008 (figure 3.3) is added, there is no change in the overall pattern, but instead publications are added in all areas. The areas controlled by Germany in the interwar period and around the free city of Danzig have not had any communities commemorated. Historically, there were Jewish communities in some of those areas, for example in Gdansk (then Danzig).

Overall, from the data presented in table 3.1 and in figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, it is apparent that the majority of the communities commemorated by Yizkor books were found in areas populated by mostly Yiddish speaking Jews before the Holocaust. This was especially true in the early decades. Over time, however, it seems that Yizkor books became more popular as a means of commemoration and the custom spread to other groups. I will show that Yizkor books commemorating communities in German and Sephardic areas were published by individuals who sought to mimic this Polish and Yiddish tradition, and not by organizations. This further demonstrates that the idea of book-form commemoration was not part of the traditions of those groups, but imported by individuals.

Table 3.1. Yizkor Book Publication: Place of the Community over Time.

COUNTRY	YEAR OF PUBLICATION																						TOT.
	1943-1945	1946-1948	1949-1951	1952-1954	1955-1957	1958-1960	1961-1963	1964-1966	1967-1969	1970-1972	1973-1975	1976-1978	1979-1981	1982-1984	1985-1987	1988-1990	1991-1993	1994-1996	1997-1999	2000-2002	2003-2005	2006-2008	
Austria								1		1													2
Belarus		2	4	6	8	6	5	6	11	10	11	4	4		1	1	1			1		1	82
Bulgaria									2								1						3
Croatia												1											1
Czech Republic											1												1
Germany			1														1						2
Greece									1	1					1							1	4
Hungary								1		3	5	1	1		1	1		1					14
Latvia				1							1												2
Lithuania			2	1		2		1		1	3	3	1	1	1	4	1			1		1	24
Macedonia									1														1
Moldova					1	1	2	2	2	2	5	1	1										17
Poland	4	7	11	10	16	20	27	26	35	32	27	10	7	6	5	11	8	4		1	2	1	270
Romania						1	1		5	3	1	1	3	3	2	5	3	1		2	1	2	34
Serbia										1		1											2
Slovakia									4	1	1	2				2	2	2					14
Ukraine		3	4	4	10	12	16	20	12	13	11	10	7	5	3	5	3	2	2	5	4	6	140
TOTAL	4	12	22	23	36	42	51	57	70	69	66	32	21	19	14	29	20	9	2	5	4	6	613

Source: Yizkor book database.

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Figure 3.1. *Communities Commemorated by Yizkor books, 1943–1960.*
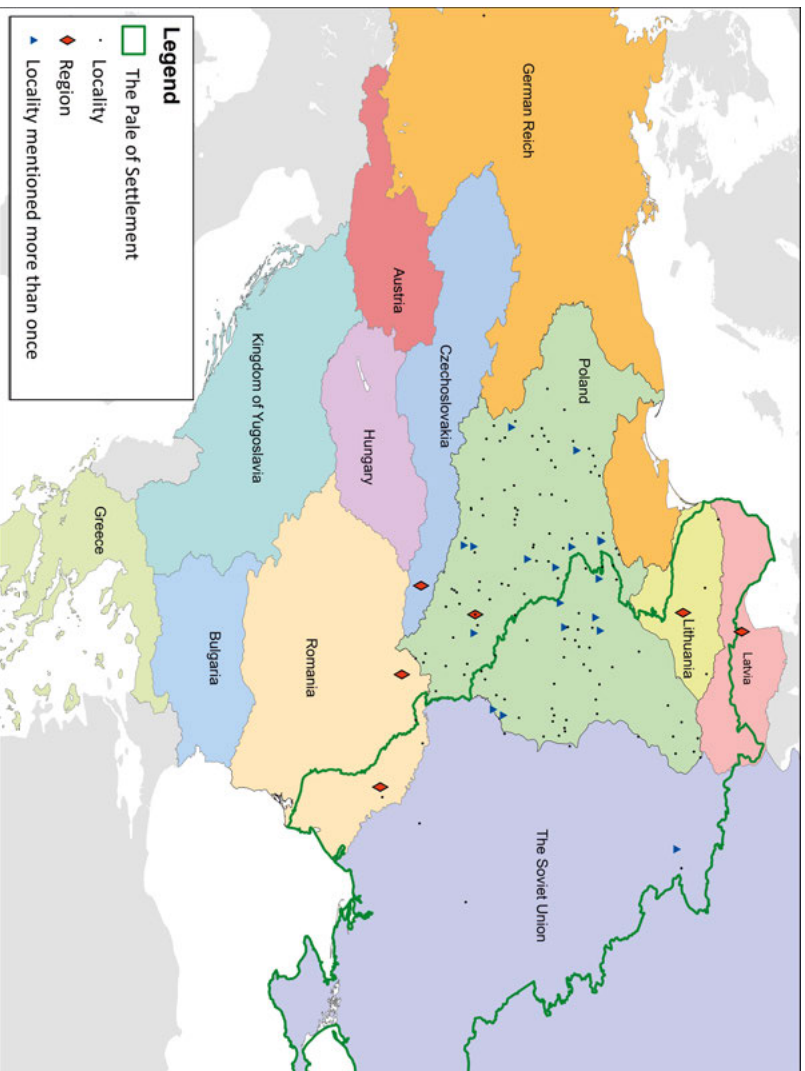
Source: Yizkor book database.

Figure 3.2. *Communities Commemorated by Yizkor books, 1943–1980.*

Source: Yizkor book database.

Figure 3.3. *Communities Commemorated by Yizkor books, 1943–2008.*

Source: Yizkor book database.

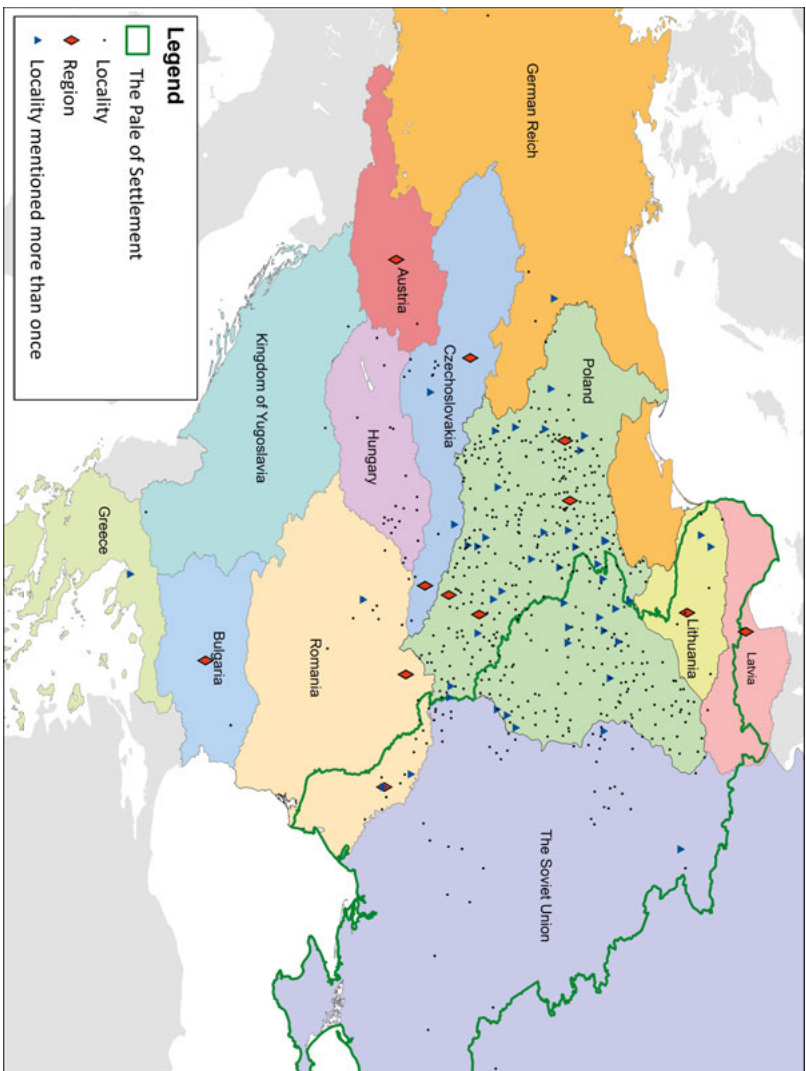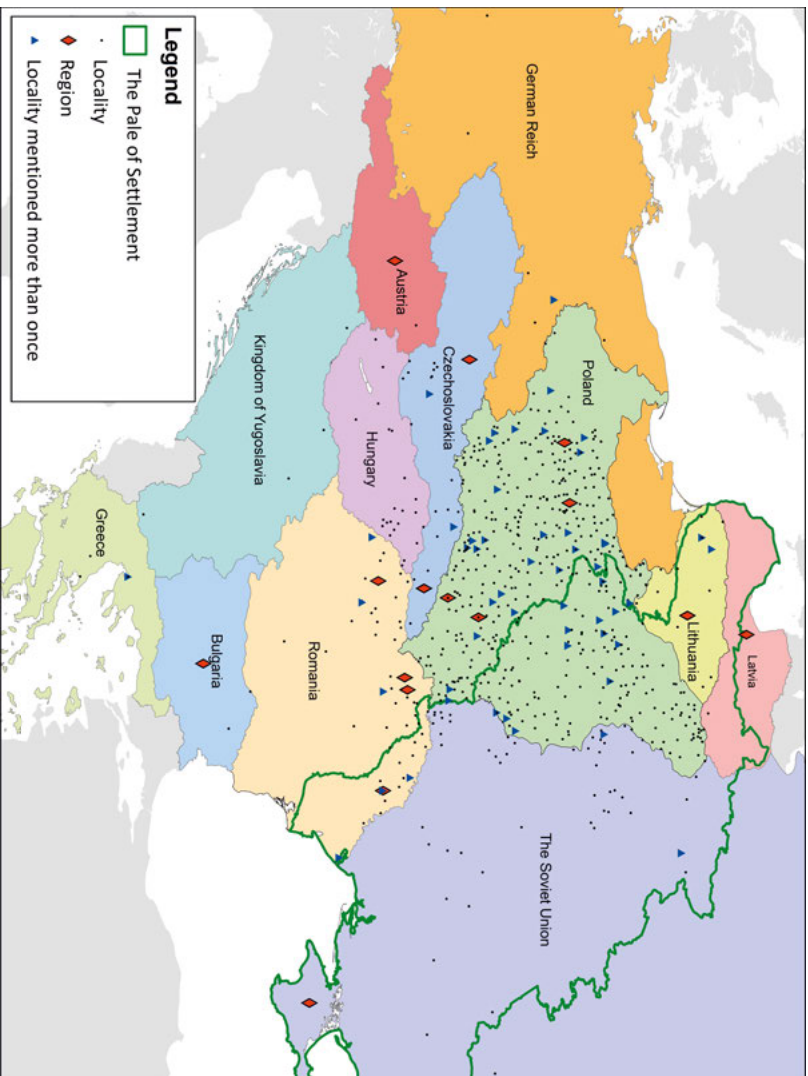# Technical process

As noted above, many Yizkor books are available in full in digital form through the NYPL. As part of the collection process, the other collected sources were also digitized. The scanned editorials were only available in image formats (such as JPG) and not as readable documents (such as PDF). The original idea was to convert all the scanned images to a readable format (RTF) to allow for a more detailed qualitative analysis through MaxQDA. However, this objective proved early on to be a bottleneck in the entire process. There are many different fonts in the sources, in a specific book and between books. There are also significant disparities in print and paper quality between the books. Many Yizkor books were printed on low-quality paper, which has degraded over the years, and in lower quality prints the ink had splurged on the paper. These issues significantly slowed the recognition process. Lastly, many scans are from the 1990s and of low quality. In many cases, proofreading the text for OCR scanning required going through the entire text, and even then the error rate was unsatisfactory. OCR scanning of the editorials therefore proved impossible so they were used in image format only. No searching or automated coding was used for the editorials. However, I show below that a fundamental assumption of conceptual history is that concepts change in name and content over time. Thus, searching for preconceived words or phrases would run the risk of yielding results that fit current language rather than the language of the authors. That said, the results of this analysis could yield words or concepts to be used in the analysis of full books.

In the case of the full books, a hybrid approach was taken that combined reading through the books searching for words and concepts that came up in the analysis of the editorials and the existing literature.[128] The books were then each scanned or downloaded in full from the NYPL website in image format (usually JPG). The images of each book were then OCR scanned and combined into a single readable PDF file using ABBYY Finereader. This solution minimized the highly time-consuming proofreading component of the process to a manageable minimum. Auto-coding was not used to analyse the books. Instead, each search result was reviewed and, if relevant, coded accordingly.

The Content of the Editorials

As noted above, the editorials are the main sources for this research. The results presented in chapters 6–8 are chiefly based on an analysis of the

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[128] The list of those words and phrases is included in Appendix I.

editorials, and they have also been used as a point of comparison and to corroborate the results of the analysis of the 30 full books presented in chapter 9.

As I discuss in chapters 6–8, the content of the editorials remained quite consistent throughout. The main topics that appear in the earlier books continue to appear in the later ones. This continuity is found despite the differences in publication place, communities and types of editors. We can therefore look at this aspect of the sources from a wider and more general perspective. Stylistically, the editorials vary greatly: some are general overviews, while others adopt a personal and emotional tone. The length of the editorials can also vary greatly, from a paragraph or two to several pages. The same type of content, such as an account of the publication process, can take up several pages in one book but only a single paragraph in another.

While I did not find any explicit mention of a template or form that should be followed, it is clear that the publishers and editors had an idea of what should and should not be included in the editorials and the books, and that these ideas were widespread. Referring to the books as a whole, some editorials make general references to the genre, or the form that is commonly used "in the memorial literature".[129] Regarding the editorials as such, there is no such discussion of a template or style in any editorial included in this research. Where a specific book contains more than one editorial, the division between the texts was decided between the authors: In some books there is a clear topical separation between different editorials, while in others the same topics are raised several times.

By far the most common topic brought up in the editorials is an overview of the publication process of that particular Yizkor book. This includes a discussion of how the book came to be, the people behind it and the process, sometimes including letters sent to the community. In some cases, the authors discuss the history of the publishing group or organization. These accounts commonly mention the hardships faced by the producers of the book, such as a poor response from the community,[130]

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[129] See Eliezer Esterin, *Sefer Devart* (Tel-Aviv Irgun yots'e Devart be-Yisrael, 1974), 8; Avner Levin, *Sefer zikaron shel kehilat Lipnishok* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Lipnishok be-Yisrael, 1968), 11; Gedaliah Shaiak, *Lovitsh* (Melborn: Lovitsher landsmanshaftn in Melborn un Sidni (Oystralye), 1966), 11; *Yahadut Bessarabia* (Jerusalem: Igud ha-'olami shel yehude Bessarabia, 1971), Editorial titled "Am ha-sefer".

[130] See Moscu Abramovici, *Ayaratenu Bivolari* (Heifa: Va'adah yozemet shel Irgun yots'e Bivolari, 1981), 5; Ya'akov Adini, *Zikaron le-kehilat Bihavah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Bihavah be-israel, 1969 (inferred)), 13; Ya'akov Alexandroni, *Kehilat Augustow* (Tel-Aviv:

financial difficulties,[131] problems with sources about the town and the community,[132] and the emotional and physical stress caused by the work.[133] There is no significant change over time in these matters. This is not a surprising result. Throughout the main period of publication of the books, archives in the Eastern Bloc remained largely inaccessible. Sources lost in the Holocaust and the war remained lost, and time made no difference. The likelihood of members wanting to participate seems to have been largely case-specific, and differed between communities and not between periods. While material conditions clearly improved from the late 1940s on, the cost of producing a book remained quite substantial, and was not something individuals could easily finance alone.

Irgun yots'e Augustow veha-sevivah be-Yisrael, 1966), 11–12; K. Aharon Bertini, *Pinkas Britshivah*, Mahad. (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Britshivah (Besarabyah) be-Yisrael, 1970), 10; Yehudah Erez, *Karpatorus* (Jerusalem: Hevrat entsiklopedyah shel galuyot, 1959), 15-16; Kal'ai. Shraga Fayvl, *Le-zekher kehilat Boberka u-venoteha* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Boberka veha-sevivah, Yisra'el-Artsot ha-Berit, 1964), 5; Hanah Pribulsky Steinberg, *Suchovola* (Jerusalem: Entsiklopedyah shel galuyot, 1957), 11; *Kehilat Shepod – kovetz zikaron* (Tel-Aviv: Va'ad yots'e Shekod, 1957-58), 5.

[131] See Aviezer Burstin and Dov Kossovsky, *Govorovah sefer zikaron – Govorovo yizkor buch* (Tel-Aviv: Irgune yots'e Govorovah, 1966), 12; Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha*, 10–11; Shmuel Nitzan, *Rachow / Annopol – pirkey edut ve-zikaron* (Haifa: Irgun yots'ey Rachow-Annopol ve-hasevivah and keren "OZ", 1978), 13–14; Shimon Oshrovits, *Sefer zikaron Ivenits veha-sevivah* (Tel-Aviv: Defus Arzi, 1973), 7; Mordechai Schutzman, *Czestochow* (Yerushalayim: Entsiklopedeyah shel galuyot, 1967), Editorial titled "Petach davar"; Avraham Shayari, *Sefer Busk* (Israel: Irgun yots'e Busk be-Yisra'el, 1965), 7.

[132] See G Bar-Tzvi, *Ayaratenu Ternovkah* (Tel-Aviv: Yotse' Ternovkah, 1972), 5; Eliezer Even and Benjamin Ravid, *Zakhor Emlékezz* (Jerusalem: E. Even, B. Ravid, 1997), 7; Mendl Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Tlushtsh* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Tlushtsh be-Yisrael, 1971), 3–4; Dan Gil'adi, *Sefer Silagi* (Tel-Aviv: Va'ad yehude Siladi be-Yisrael, 1989), 12; Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha*, 10; A. Wolf Jasny, *Sefer jadow* (Jerusalem: Entsiklopediyah shel galuyot, 1966), 15; Asher Korekh, *Kehilat Gelina, 1473–1943: toldoteha ve-hurbanah* (Jerusalem: A. Korekh, 1950), ז; A. Romano, Joseph Ben, and Nissim Levy, *Bulgaria* (Jerusalem: Hevrat entsiklopedyah shel galuyot, 1967), Editorial titled "Petach davar"; Shayari, *Sefer Busk*, 7; Dov Sobel, *Sefer yizkor li-kehilat Sarnaki* (Heifa: Irgun yots'e Sarnaki be-Yisrael, 1968), 17; *Le-zecher kedoshey Wielun* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yotse' Wielun, 1971), 14.

[133] See Nachman Blumental, *Aleksander (al yad Lodz')* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Aleksander be-Yiśra'el, 1968), 9; Shim'on Friedlander and Natan Mark, *Sefer yizkor: mukdash li-yehude ha-'ayarot she-nispu ba-Sho'ah ba-shanim 1939–44: Linsk, Istrik, Beligrod, Litovisk veha-sevivah* (Tel Aviv: Va'adat ha-sefer shel Irgun Liva'i, 1964), 466; Avraham Levita, *Sefer zikaron kehilat Breziv (Bz'ozuv)* (Israel: Yots'e Bz'ozuv veha-sevivah, 1984), 1. I expand on this in chapter 7.

The vast majority of the books were not published in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, so the problematic nature of eyewitness memories is a general one for all authors. The only substantial difference is that later texts also bring up the fact that survivors are fewer than before. Many editors included notes on editorial choices in their texts, such as those regarding chapter order, language and translation issues, or the inclusion or exclusion of certain topics, most notably the exclusion of criticism of others or interpersonal "accounting". The publishers and editors are discussed in chapter 6. Most editorials also include a mention of the purpose of the book and the reasons for publishing it. All Yizkor books are depicted as items of commemoration, most notably as a gravestone, and often specifically as a book-form gravestone. Other commemorative functions include a place to say *Kaddish* and a memorial candle. There are several other reasons mentioned in some editorials. Some authors also discuss the wider traditions of Ashkenazi commemoration and of Yizkor books, and some discuss communal, or collective, commemoration as well (see chapter 7).

Other common topics in the editorials include a short account or overview of the history of the community, and some mention of the fate of the community during the Holocaust, as well as a section crediting the benefactors of the project, mentioning people who took part in the process and external helpers – both people and institutions. The section dedicated to the Holocaust is usually quite brief (see chapters 7 and 8). Many editorials also include quotes from the Bible or from the Passover *Haggadah,* related to memory or to Amalek, as well as from Jewish prayers related to memory – the *Kaddish*, *Yizkor* and *Shema-Israel*. These prayers are sometimes altered to include the town instead of a specific person.[134] A small number of editorials include other points, such as discussions around the popular topic of "who is a Jew?"[135] These are exceptions to the common topics and are therefore not included in this dissertation.

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[134] See Perets Alufi and Shaul Barkali, *Eshishok – koroteha ve-hurbanah* (Jerusalem: ha-va'ad le-nitsole Eshishok bi-medinat Yiśra'el, 1949–1950), Yizkor prayer; Moshe Bilavski, *Sefer yizkor li-kedoshe 'ir Pashyatsh: korbanot ha-sho'ah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e 'ir Pshedets ba-arets uva-tefutsot, 1974), 8; Israel Fleischmann, *"Nitzotzot" me-kehilat Siksa ve-machoz Abauj Torna she-nadamu* (Bney-Brak: Fleischmann, 1971), ‏י-ו‎; M. Gelbart, *Sefer kehilat yehude Dombrovah Gurnits'eh ve-hurbanah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Dombrovah Gurnits'eh be-Yisrael, 1971), 3; Tibor Grünwald and Moshe Etz-Chaim, *Megilat ha-Sho'ah shel kehilat kodesh Cakovec, h.y.d* (Tel-Aviv: Moshe Etz-Chaim, 1977); Abraham Samuel Stein, *Pinkas Bendin* (Tel-Aviv: Hotsa'at irgun yots'e Bendin be-Yisrael, 1959), 6.

[135] L. Losh, *Pinkas Belitsah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgune yots'e Belitsah be-Yiśra'el uve-Amerikah, 1968 (inferred)), 12–13; David Sofer, *Mazkeret Paks*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Jerusalem: h. mo. l., 1962), ‏ו‎.

The Content of Yizkor Books

Generally, Yizkor books have an introductory section that contains different kinds of editorials, as well as a section on historical background; original documents such as texts, photographs and maps; and articles about the community, important leaders and rabbis, as well as other people, institutions, societies and events. The contributions from the community usually constitute the largest section of a given book. Not all the books contain all sections; some books, for example, do not have any editorials, while others lack a necrology. The necrology, together with other types of commemorative texts, such as obituaries, are the heart of many books, as these are the sections where as many victims as possible from the community are mentioned. Necrology sections can sometimes be very large. For example, the necrology section in the Yizkor book on Baia Mare and its surroundings[136] (figure 3.4) comprises 136 of the book's 591 pages. While having a necrology is considered important by the vast majority of publishers and editors, the format in which necrologies are presented varies greatly: The above-mentioned Baia Mare necrology is designed to look like Jewish gravestones, and each includes a family, husband, wife and (probably) unmarried children, regardless of their age. Married children would have their own entry with their own family. The Baia Mare necrology also lists important titles ("doctor" and "rabbi" are noted in the illustration), and names are written in both Hebrew and Hungarian. No information is provided on the circumstances of death; nor do we learn about who provided the details of the commemorated.

The Akkerman (Bilhorod-Dnistrovs'kyi in southern Ukraine) Yizkor book (figure 3.5) offers a different format altogether. The necrology takes the form of obituary notices, and includes obituaries, entirely in Hebrew, for two families. The details have apparently been provided by two relatives of the deceased, one in Israel and one in the US. These obituaries contain much more personal detail about the family, as well as a photograph. The texts are personalized. They provide detailed information, including the circumstances of death for many of the commemorated. As in most cases with the necrologies, these details were often provided from memory, and thus partial and possibly inaccurate.

A third format is found in the book on Tluste and its surroundings (figure 3.6), where the information about the people from the area is provided in the form of lists. Some entries are for women, some for men. At the end of the

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[136] Yitshak Yosef Cohen, *Gal-ed le-yahadut Nagybanya (Baia-Mareh) veha-sevivah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yos'e Baia Mare (Nagybanya) be-Yisrael, 1996).

page, which is entirely in Yiddish, there are sections on the victims from smaller villages from the town's surroundings. In the first line, a man named Yosel ("little Joseph") Schneider is commemorated "with his two sisters". The sisters are not mentioned by name, probably because the people making the lists could not remember them. It is, however, mentioned that all three were the children of a man named Yankel Mal'ach. In the fifth entry, a woman named Golde Schechter is mentioned first, followed by her husband and their daughter Gizia. From the way the entry is written, it is possible that the husband did not die in the Holocaust but is mentioned for reference. This necrology does not contain any details about the circumstances of death, or even the age at the time of death; nor does it include any details about the contributors.

The necrology from the Korets book (figure 3.7) is written entirely Hebrew and is organized by family. Of the three families listed in the page, the first is a nuclear family, with married daughters noted to have been included in their own respective families as well. The second family is a man and his two sons, while the rest are listed as "their families". In the third entry, we find an extended family with several cousins listed individually. Once again, these differences are probably the result of a lack of information about some victims. The place of death, if known, is provided for each victim, but not the date, circumstances or their age at the time of death. The necrology of the 1974 Lodz Yizkor book (figure 3.8), written in Yiddish and English, includes the names of the victims and the names of those who commemorated them, without any other details. The necrology from the Skala book (figure 3.9) is written entirely in English and ordered by family name. It includes the month and year of death of each victim (in cases where these were known) and their age at the time of death. This necrology does not include any details on the familial relations of the victims or on the circumstances of their death.

These examples demonstrate that the necrologies can be visually very different from one another. There are also variations when it comes to content. Some types of information and contributions only appear in a limited number of books and are thus quite uncommon. Yizkor books would, for instance, sometimes be used to establish or strengthen the connection between community members. Some books therefore include a contact sheet for community members all over the world. Some books might also include a necrology of landsleit who died in the wars of Israel. Such a section would for obvious reasons be more likely to appear in later books, after other wars or other similar events had taken place. The idea of including a necrology for those who fell in Israel's wars and not just Holocaust victims is related to two

points discussed in this thesis. First, this inclusion of a list of fallen Israelis connects Israel's wars to the history of suffering of the Jewish people, turning Israel's neighbouring countries into Amalek, Israel's mythical enemy. The second point is that Israel came to be seen as the result, and sometimes the answer, to the Holocaust (see chapters 7–9).

Figure 3.4. *Necrology in the Form of Jewish Gravestones,*
From the Baia Mare Yizkor Book.
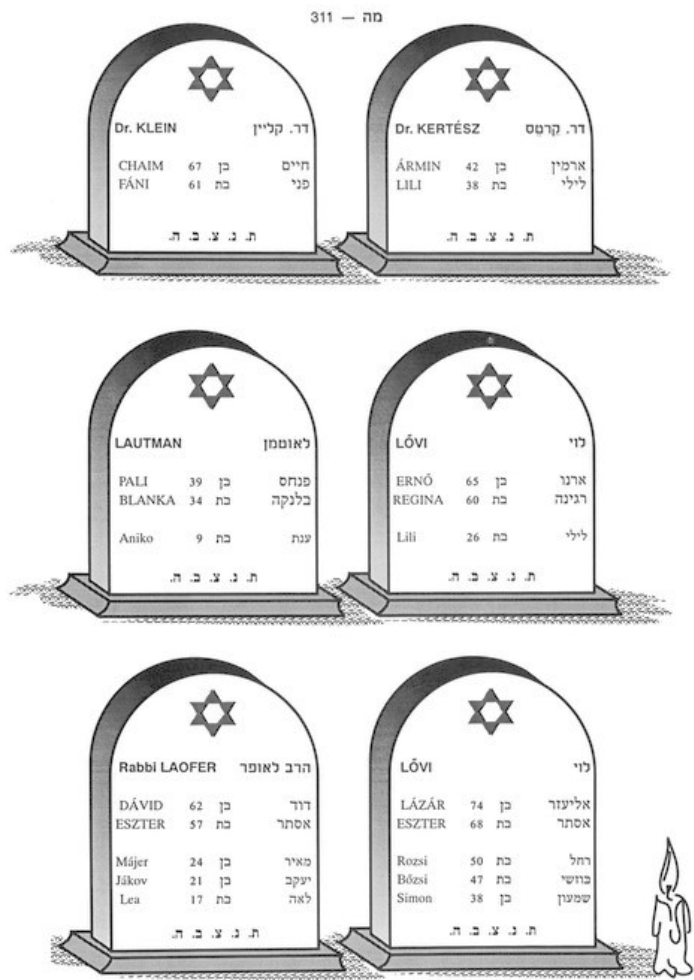
Source: Cohen, *Gal-ed le-yahadut Baia-Mare* (1996), 311.

Figure 3.5. *An obituary for a Family, Commemorated by their Relatives,*
from the Akerman Yizkor book.

שלמה (סיומה) בטושנסקי ז"ל   חיה (קלרה) בטושנסקי ז"ל   שמואל בן שלמה
נולד באקרמן 1886   נולדה בטרוטינו 1884   בטושנסקי ז"ל
נספה בשואה 1942   נספתה בשואה 1942   נולד באקרמן 1923
   נספה בשואה 1942

הורינו היקרים שלמה (סיומה) וחיה (קלרה)
ואחינו היקר שאול בוטושנסקי
שנספו בשואה הגדולה
זכרם לא יסוף מלבנו

נזכור תמיד!
* את המורשת והערכים שהנחלתם לנו;
* את האווירה החמה בבית בימי חולין ובימי חג;
* את ניגוניו של אבא שהשתלבו והתחרו באלה של אמא;

* את זמירות ערבי ששי וימי שבת שהקרינו אור וחום;
* את סעודות פורים שהיו רווחות שירה של כל בני המשפחה לרבות אורחים שבאו להתבשם ממנה;
* את ה"סדרים" של פסח שנמשכו עד אור הבוקר;
* את חיקוייו של ה"מוזניק" שאול שהרנינו לב ונפש;

את כל אלה, והרבה יותר מאלה
נזכור ולא נשכח לעולם

נר זכרון ויד לקרובינו – יקירנו שנספו בימי השואה

רבקה, שלמה, מניה, שולים (שלום), בוניה, משה, ליזה, רוזה, דוליה
לבית משפחת פליקוב מאקרמן

לבית משפחת גרזון מאקרמן   סויבה, אברהם, נלי שרה
אקרמן   רוזה ובן-ציון וסילבסקי
לבית משפחת פרידמן – אימס- טרוטינא   חנה, דוד, ישעיהו, נינה, סויה, אליעזר
לבית משפחת גנסין - טרוטינא   יוסף, פולה, ישראל, פניה, משה

יהי זכרם ברוך

המנציחים:
מאיר (מירה) בטושנסקי בנם, ארה"ב
אסתר בטושנסקי, בתם, ישראל

Source: Amitai, *Akerman ve-ayarot ha-machoz* (1983), 393.

Figure 3.6. *A Necrology Page from the Tluste Yizkor Book.*

שנײַדער יאָסל און זײנע צװײ שװעסטער (די קינדער פון
יענקל מלאך).

שנײַצער ישראל (דער שוחט) און זײן פרוי שײנדל (בת
פּײביש שוחט).

שעכטער אַרטור, זײן פרוי בײלע-לאה (בת יוסף שטערנליב)
און זײער טאָכטער.

שעכטער בנימין (דער שוחט) זײן פרוי מירקע און זײערע
קינדער מאַנצעע און חיה.

שעכטער גאלדע, געב. װאַבעשטײן (אשת יוסף שעכטער) מיט
איר טאָכטער גיזיא.

שעכטער יוסף (דער אײדעם פון משה-ישראל לאַנג) מיט זײן
פרוי מעבלע און דרײַ קינדער.

שעכטער ישעיה-לײב, זײן פרוי אסתר און זײערע קינדער
סאַלקא, אידא און דוד.

שעכטער צפורה, די פרוי פון שלמה-הערש שוחט.

שעכטער זלמן (בן שלמה-הערש), זײן פרוי רחל און זײער
טאָכטער רײזיע.

שעכנער הערש װאָלף און זײן פרוי לײציע.

שעכנער אברהם (בן הערש-װאָלף) מיט זײן משפחה.

שעכנער אברהם, זײן פרוי מינציע (בת רױזע פײַבאַר) און
זײערע קינדער.

שעכנער אברהם (בן אַנטיל), זײן פרוי יעטקא און זײערע
קינדער דאָסיע און אַנטשל.

שעכנער איסר מיט זײן פרוי יהדה, געב. שטײניג.

שטײניג הערשמאַן, בן איסר שעכנער.

שעכנער אליעזר און זײן מוטער.

שעכנער בערל, זײן פרוי לאה (בת אריה קימעלמאַן) און
זײערע קינדער מינציע, רבקה און אליעזר.

שעכנער װיסל, אשת קלמן שעכנער.

שעכנער חנא.

שעכנער יוסף, זײן פרוי שרה און זײערע קינדער שמואל און
בעני.

שעכנער יצחק (יצחק פיניעס) און זײן פרוי אסתר-גיטל.

שעכנער יעקל, זײן פרוי רחל און זײער טאָכטער בײלע.

שעכנער ישראל, זײן פרוי שײנדל און זײער זון.

שעכנער מאיר און זײן פרוי צילא.

שעכנער משה, זײן פרוי מעניע און זײער טאָכטער רבקה.

שעכנער נתן (בן משה), זײן פרוי זלאטע און זײער זון יאסל.

שעכנער משה, זײן פרוי פרומע (געב. הערטסמאַן) און זײערע
טעכטער יוניע און רוחציע.

שעכנער רײװיע און אירע קינדער: װאַװע, אהרון, ברכה,
צביה און פעפי.

שעכנער שמואל-איציק, זײן פרוי פרומע און זײער טאָכטער
פרידא אדלער מיט איר טעכטערל.

שעכנער הערצל (בן שמואל-איציק) מיט זײן משפחה.

שערל יעקב און זײן פרוי ציפּע.

שערל פינחס (בן יעקב) מיט זײן פרוי און קינד.

שערל מינא (בת יעקב) מיט איר מאַן.

שפּאצינער חײם, זײן פרוי טשאַרנע און זײערע קינדער.

שפּאַרן אברהם און זײן פרוי שפּרינציע.

שפּאַרן חײם (מתיע, בן אברהם) מיט זײן משפחה.

שפּאַרן זישע (בן אברהם) מיט זײן פרוי פרוי, אַ זון און טאָכטער.

שפּאַרן הערש (בן אברהם) זײן פרוי און זײערע קינדער.

שפּאַרן נטע (בן אברהם) מיט זײן פרוי און קינדער.

שפּאַרן סיאמא מיט זײן פרוי און צװײ קינדער.

שפּאַרן דודיע, זײן פרוי חנה און זײער זון שמואל.

שפּאַרן הערש (בן שלמה), זײן פרוי פיגע און זײערע קינדער.

שפּאַרן רײזיע און איר זון משה.

שפּאַרן פרידזיע.

שפּאַרן יוכבד (אשת שמואל שפּאַרן) און אירע קינדער:
לוטשע, יוניע, טשאַרנע נתן און הערש.

שפּיגעלגלאַס מאַרעק (דיר שפּיגעלגלאַס) מיט פרוי און
טאָכטער.

שפּיצער הערש מיט זײן פרוי דבורה.

שפּיצער יעקב, זײן פרוי גאָלדע און זײערע זין הערש און
אברהם.

שפּיצער מרים, די פרוי פון יצחק שפּיצער.

שפּיצער קאָפל, זײן פרוי רחל און זײערע קינדער משה און
פעפציע.

שפּירא חײציע און איר טאָכטער ליבע.

שפּירא ישראל, זײן פרוי ברײניציע און זײערע קינדער.

שפּירא פעסיע (בת שמאי נויפעלד) און אירע קינדער קלמן
און חנוך.

שפּירא ריטע (ריסיעל).

שפּערבער חײם, זײן פרוי העניע און זײערע קינדער מרים,
חיה, מוציע, און שמואל.

בני העיירה אוסציעטשקאָ (אוסטיטשקי)

אַלבין רײזיע און איר זון דוד; איר טאָכטער שבע מיט איר
מאַן שמואל.

ברעננער מעכל מיט זײנע זין און טעכטער.

גוטמאַן שמערל, זײן פרוי פיגע-רחל (געב. מילנער) און
זײער טאָכטער זלאטע.

גינצבורג װאָלף מיט זײן פרוי און צװײ קינדער.

װאָלאך בערל און זײן פרוי אסתר, געב. מילנער.

װאָלאך משה.

װאָלאך חיה.

זיסמאַן משה.

זיסמאַן קלאַרא.

כץ זלאַטע-אײגע, געב. העלפער.

נאָדלער אליעזר, זײן פרוי צפורה און זײער טאָכטער חנה.

סענדער דער פישער, מיט זײן משפחה.

קאַף רחל און אירע קינדער: מאיר, אסתר, חײציע (קלאַרא),
יום-טוב און מאַטל.

בני הכפר אוהרינקאָװצע

פעלדמאַן זעליג (בן יונה).

כעלדמאַן דאַניא.

פעלדמאַן ראָזא.

פעלדמאַן גדליה.

Source: Lindenberg, *Sefer Tluste* (1965), 287.

Figure 3.7. *A Necrology Page from the Korets Yizkor Book.*

<div dir="rtl">

א

משפחת אַברם צפורה (ישראל)

אברט רבקה	.	.	.	.	.	.	אם	—	נהרגה בקוריץ
יעקב	.	.	.	.	.	.	אח	—	" "
אייזיק	.	.	.	.	.	בנו	—	" "
רחל (ראה פיינר)	.	.	.	.	אחות	—	" "
דבורה (ראה קרס)	.	.	.	.	אחות	—	" "

אדלר יהושע-לייב (סבא של אתרוג בוריס) — נהרג ברובנה
מיכאל ומשפחתו — נהרג בקוריץ
ישראל ומשפחתו — " "

משפחת אוברשטרן מנדל ושלמה (ישראל)

אוברשטרן לאה (למשפחת קייזרמן)	.	.	.	אם	—	נהרגה בקוסטופול
רבקה (ראה פיבין רבקה)	.	.	.	אחות	—	בהושצ'ה
שמואל עם אשתו ובנו	.	.	.	אח	—	בקוסטופול
מיכאל	.	.	.	.	.	.	בן-דוד	—	בקוריץ
מייטה	.	.	.	.	.	.	בת-דודה	—	" "
גולדה	.	.	.	.	.	.	בת-דודה	—	" "
ינסה	.	.	.	.	.	.	בת-דודה	—	" "
חנה	.	.	.	.	.	.	בת-דודה	—	" "
קיילה	.	.	.	.	.	.	בת-דודה	—	" "

משפחת מנחם-מניס שמש (ישראל)

אויסטור חיה	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	אשה	—	נהרגה בקוריץ
דב-בער (סופר סת"ם)	.	.	.	חותן	—	" "
בייילה	.	.	.	.	.	.	חותנת	—	" "
בתיה	.	.	.	.	.	.	גיסה	—	" "
אברהם	.	.	.	.	.	.	גים	—	" "
משה ואשתו	.	.	.	.	.	גים	—	" "
קלמן ואשתו	.	.	.	.	.	גים	—	" "

</div>

Source: Leoni, *Korits (Vohlin): sefer zikaron li-kehilatenu
she-alah ale'a ha-koret* (1959), 553.

Figure 3.8. *A Necrology Page from the Lodz Yizkor Book.*

Inserted by—	To perpetuate the memory of	פאראייביקטע	פאראייביקער
Bornstein, Chaim and Genia (nee Badower)	Bornstein, Aron (father)	באָרנשטיין אהרן (פֿאָטער)	באָרנשטיין חיים און געניע
	Bornstein, Sarah-Bajla (mother)	באָרנשטיין שרה-בײלע (מוטער)	(געב. באַדאָווער)
Taft, Bela (nee Badower)	Bornstein, Shloma (brother) and family	באָרנשטיין שלמה (ברודער) און פֿאַמיליע	טאַפֿט בעלאַ (געב. באַדאָווער)
Badower, Fred and Zenek	Bornstein, David (brother) and family	באָרנשטיין דוד (ברודער) און פֿאַמיליע	באַדאָווער פֿרעד (אמעריקען)
	Bornstein, Wolf (brother) and family	באָרנשטיין וואָלף (ברודער) און פֿאַמיליע	און זענעק באַדאָווער
Melbourne, Aust.	Bornstein, Shmul-Jacob (brother) and family	באָרנשטיין שמואל-יעקב (ברודער) און פֿאַמיליע	מעלבורן, אויסטראַליע
	Bornstein, Elaezer (brother) and family	באָרנשטיין אליעזר (ברודער) און פֿאַמיליע	
	Opatowski, Bayla (sister), Moshe-David and family	אפּאַטאָווסקי בײלע (שוועסטער) און משה-דוד און פֿאַמיליע	
	Fuks, Rayzl (sister), Abraham, Moshe, Toba	פֿוקס רייזל (שוועסטער), אברהם, משה און טאָבע	
	Erlich, Josef (brother), Dina and Moshe	ערליך יוסף (ברודער), דינה און משה	
	The familys: Urbach, Abramowicz, Kuperwasser, Erlich, Chernolewski	די פֿאַמיליעם: אורבאך, אבראמאָוויטש, קופּערוואַסער, ערליך און טשערנאָלעוואָוסקי.	
	Badower, Wolf-Mayer (father)	באַדאָווער וואָלף-מאיר (פֿאָטער)	
	Badower, Chaya (mother)	באַדאָווער חיה (מוטער)	
	Badower, Gedalia-Riwen and Manes (brothers)	באַדאָווער גדליה-ראובן און מאַנעס (ברידער)	
	Badower, Lodzia (sister)	באַדאָווער לאה'לע (שוועסטער)	
	Badower, Sala, Luba and Godele (sisters-in-law)	באַדאָווער סאַלאַ, לובאַ און גאָדעלע (שוועגערינעם)	
	Michowski, Chana-Blima (sister), Moshe-Yosl, Lilka	מיכאָווסקי חנה-בלימע (שוועסטער), משה-יאָסל און לילקע	
	Rausz, Rozia (sister) Abraham, Beniek	ראַוש רוזשע (שוועסטער), אברהם און בעניעק,	
	Badower family	פעטערס, מומעס און קוזינען	
	Sztyferman family	באַדאָווער פֿאַמיליע	
	Solarz family	שטיפֿערמאַן פֿאַמיליע	
	Yankowerner family	סאָלאַש פֿאַמיליע	
	Rausz family	יאַנקאָווערנער פֿאַמיליע	
	Michowski family	ראַוש פֿאַמיליע	
	Frydman family	מיכאָווסקי פֿאַמיליע	
	Man family	פֿרידמאַן פֿאַמיליע	
	Markowicz family	מאַן פֿאַמיליע	
		מאַרקאָוויטש פֿאַמיליע	

Source: The Lodzer Centre, *Yiddish Lodz – a yiskor book* (1974), 212.

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Figure 3.9. *A Necrology Page from the Skala Yizkor Book.*

Name	Age	Place and Time of Death	
1123. Schechter, Samuel	28	Skala	1943
1124. Schechter, Pearl	38	Skala	1943
1125. Schechter, Hudel	2	Skala	1943
1126. Scheffer, Chaya-Sara	72	Skala	Sep. 1942
1127. Scheffer, Salomon	75	Skala	Sep. 1942
1128. Scheiderman, Wolf	45	Skala	Sep. 1942
1129. Scheinberg, Abraham	74	Skala	Sep. 1942
1130. Scheinberg, Bronia	72	Skala	Sep. 1942
1131. Schenkerman, Nachum	54	Borki c.c.	1942
1132. Schenkerman, Cyrel	53	Skala	Sep. 1942
1133. Schenkerman, Chana	25	Skala	Sep. 1942
1134. Schenkerman, Szeive	18	Skala	1943
1135. Schenkerman, Pepe	23	U.S.S.R.	Unkn.
1136. Scher, Salomon	35	Borszczow	1943
1137. Scher, Sosia	31	Skala	Sep. 1942
1138. Scher, Ephraim	11	Skala	Sep. 1942
1139. Scher, Berl	8	Skala	Sep. 1942
1140. Scher, Chaya	4	Skala	Sep. 1942
1141. Scher, Eta	61	Skala	Sep. 1942
1142. Scher, Sara	28	Skala	Sep. 1942
1143. Scher, Mirel	4	Skala	Sep. 1942
1144. Scher, Mina	32	Skala	Sep. 1942
1145. Scher, Chaim-Leib	36	Lublin p.o.w.	Unkn.
1146. Schiff, Pesia	74	Skala	Sep. 1942
1147. Schifman, Gusta	21	Skala	1943
1148. Schindler, Salomon	59	Borszczow	1943
1149. Schindler, Hinda	58	Borszczow	1943
1150. Schindler, Hersh	31	Borki c.c.	1943
1151. Schindler, Ronia	26	Borszczow	1943
1152. Schindler, Lea	21	Borszczow	1943
1153. Schindler, Roza	27	Skala	Sep. 1942
1154. Schitzer, Zeide	54	Borszczow	1943
1155. Schitzer, Sosia	55	Borszczow	1943
1156. Schitzer, Todres	19	Borszczow	1943
1157. Schitzer, Sara	74	Borszczow	1943
1158. Schitzer, Samuel	68	Skala	Sep. 1942
1159. Schitzer, Brana	52	Skala	Sep. 1942

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Source: Widenfeld, *Sefer Skala* (1978), 87.

Yizkor Books as Conceptual History

Conceptual history is used in this dissertation to better understand the people who produced the books and through them the books. How did they conceptualize what they were doing? Why did they use some concepts and not others? Conceptual History (*Begriffsgeschichte*) is a historical sub-discipline, based on the thinking of Reinhart Koselleck and others.[137] It is rooted in the idea that language and experience (i.e. "the world") are not one and the same but, although ontologically separate, nonetheless influence each other and cannot be analysed separately. Their similarity lies in their inequality, in that both sides partially affect each other but also contain a part independent of the other. "Holocaust" in this thinking is a basic concept (*Grundbegriff*) – a concept that is "more than words". Conceptual history examines the semantic transformations of "basic concepts"…"that have shaped the epistemological framework of the modern period":[138] diachronically, through time, and synchronically, in a specific place. Language and historical reality cannot be examined separately,[139] which means that in order to understand the past we must also understand its language. Because people's experiences are examined through their language, misunderstanding the language would be likely to result in a misinterpretation of the object of the language, that is, of what the person is actually speaking about. According to D. Timothy Goering, this is because "[t]he meaning of a concept is constituted by the rules of its use" in a particular historical context.[140] That is to say that concepts are first and foremost social phenomena. Concepts, according to Koselleck, do not have a life of their own, and so the basic idea behind conceptual history contradicts the classic history of ideas,[141] in which concepts can be tracked through history without the need to understand the language of each period. Thus, a diachronic analysis can be done separately from a synchronic one. In conceptual history, there is always a certain level of incompatibility between ideas and language. Ideas as linguistic concepts do not mirror the experiences

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[137] Reinhart Koselleck and Todd Samuel Presner, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2002).

[138] D. Timothy Goering, "Concepts, History and the Game of Giving and Asking for Reasons: A Defense of Conceptual History", *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 7, no. 3 (2013): 427.

[139] Ibid., 428.

[140] Ibid., 430.

[141] Reinhart Koselleck, "A Response to Comments on the Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe", in *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts: New Studies on Begriffsgeschichte*, ed. Melvin Richter and Hartmut Lehmann (Washington, D.C.: German historical inst, 1996), 61–62.

of the individual – and nor do concepts produce experiences on their own.[142] In Koselleck's words:

> To the extent that it records how component parts of older concepts continue to be reapplied, *Begriffsgeschichte* resembles the history of ideas. However, these components cannot be said to continue to exist in senses derived from either metaphysical or Platonic theories that claim to transcend experience. Rather, any assertion about continuities in the use of concepts must be supported by evidence based upon concrete, iterative usages of the vocabulary.[143]

The problem lies in the fact that the concepts of a speech community do not offer accurate, empirical vocabulary, perfectly tailored to an individual's experiences. According to Koselleck, "spoken language is always more or less than actual history".[144] In other words, concepts cannot perfectly convey the experiences of an individual, as they are the result of group activity alongside individual circumstances. As Goering explains:

> Koselleck himself felt a much greater affinity to social history than to hermeneutics. He was not interested in "re-enacting the past" (Collingwood) or fusing the horizons between present and past (Gadamer). Rather, he aimed at giving a detailed historical account of past social action in terms of concepts. To summarize, Conceptual History is committed to the Kantian notion that concepts are tools with which we can interpret, but not create, reality. The limits of one's language do not mark the limits of one's world, they mark the limits of one's conceptual awareness of the world.[145]

Thus, concepts do not exist independently of human existence. Concepts do not create reality, but represent a limited human perception of it. The research of a concept is therefore a tool by which to understand the people using it, not to understand or explain the concept in itself. This point is the basis for the methodology of this dissertation – to synchronically and diachronically examine concepts such as "Holocaust memory" or "Diaspora memory" and the processes related to these concepts in order to examine the people who

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[142] Goering, "Concepts, History and the Game of Giving and Asking for Reasons: A Defense of Conceptual History", 431.

[143] Koselleck, "A Response to Comments on the Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe", 63.

[144] Goering, "Concepts, History and the Game of Giving and Asking for Reasons: A Defense of Conceptual History", 431.

[145] Ibid., 434. Also see J. Zammito, "Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History", *History and Theory* 43, no. 1 (2004).

produced or used these concepts, and the relation between those people and other parts of reality.

When applying a diachronic approach, I analyse how the phenomenon of Yizkor books developed and changed – or, potentially, did not change – over time in relation to a larger state-level Holocaust memory culture. When analysing the sources synchronically, I examine what the books published over the period in different locations and languages, and by different groups had in common and how they differed. I thus examine several historical processes, moving at a different pace and through different places. Koselleck describes the relationships between the two forms of analysis:

> This brings me to the much discussed subject of the relationship between diachronic and synchronic analyses. Strictly speaking, these modes are inseparable. In any synchronic exegesis of a text, the analyst must keep in mind those criteria of selection that lead a writer to use concepts in one way and not otherwise, and to do so through a new rather than an older formulation.[146]

According to Koselleck, a synchronic approach cannot be employed without a diachronic one.[147] This means that as part of this research, the phenomenon must be placed in a historical context. We should not just track changes over time during the period of publication, but also trace the memorial traditions that preceded the post-Holocaust period, the history of Jewish catastrophe commemoration, prayers (the *Yizkor* and *Kaddish* prayers), the history of the Jews in Europe and in pre-Israel Palestine, and the collection and documentation efforts that took place during and immediately after the Holocaust.

One of the main challenges when studying the history of concepts is that their meanings change over time. This is also the reason for scholars to analyse concepts to begin with. In some cases meaning could change to such a degree that we might suddenly find ourselves tracking the wrong concept. Another aspect of this issue is that the sources use completely different terms and concepts to those used in today's language. This is the case, for example, with

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[146] Melvin Richter and Hartmut Lehmann, *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts: New Studies on Gegriffsgeschichte*, vol. 15 (Washington, D.C: German Historical Inst, 1996), 63.

[147] See also: J. G. A. Pocock, "Concepts and Discourses: A Difference in Culture? Comment on a Paper by Melvin Richter", in *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts: New Studies on Gegriffsgeschichte*, ed. Melvin Richter and Hartmut Lehmann (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Inst., 1996), 49–50; Zammito, "Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History", 133–135.

the word "Holocaust", which is today the common word in English for the Nazi attack on the Jews. In Hebrew, the modern word is "Shoah". In Yiddish, however, as well as in Hebrew in the first decades following the Holocaust, the common terms were *hurbn* (in modern Hebrew *hurban*, meaning "Ruin") and "Pogrom", or *ha-shchita* ("the slaughter" or "the butchering"). "Holocaust" has an inherently religious meaning that implies sacrifice and purpose. *Hurbn*, on the other hand, has a much more existential meaning, testifying to the state of the survivors' world after the Holocaust and the complete ruin the survivors faced, often with no sign of hope or purpose. Beyond the very different meanings of the words, they represent potentially different concepts. Tracking the more commonly known term "Holocaust" might lead a researcher to think that survivors had no term for what happened until much later on, or that they did not discuss what had happened at all. Taking this further into the empirical analysis, this could for example contribute to the idea that survivors did not speak about the Holocaust in the years immediately after 1945,[148] which we know today to be false.

From the methodological point of view, these linguistic issues are the primary reason behind my choice of a grounded approach and for my focus on content rather than language per se. A grounded approach allows the researcher to observe the language people actually use, and the terms and concepts they employ, and to track changes in those over time and place. Conceptual history is a methodology that circumvents the problems that language poses and allows the researcher to maintain a focus on the people who produced the memory, rather than memory itself or later interpretations of it.

Notes on Language

Given the strong emphasis in conceptual history on language and its changes over time, it is important also to take account of the specificities of the main languages used – in this case Yiddish and Hebrew – when analysing Yizkor books.

Yiddish is a Germanic language that developed from Middle German and is a sister language to Modern German (and not "German in Hebrew letters", as it is sometimes called). Yiddish uses the Hebrew alphabet but unlike Hebrew, which uses very few vowels, contains both vowels alongside Hebrew diacritical signs. Before World War II and the Holocaust, Yiddish had four

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[148] The "Myth of Silence", which I expand on in the historical background chapter.

main dialects – Western, Polish, Lithuanian and Ukrainian – and many sub-dialects within these. The dialects differ from each other in several ways. For example, in the number of genders they include (Ukrainian Yiddish has two while the others have three) and in the pronunciation of certain sounds. For example, the word וואס (what) is pronounced as "voos" in the Polish dialect and as "vos" in the Lithuanian.

Yiddish has three main parts, or "components": Germanic, Hebrew and Slavic. There are also a small number of words from other languages, most commonly Latin. Some words, mostly holy or sanctified, but not exclusively, belong generally to the Hebrew component. They are spelled as if they were in Hebrew (without vowels) but are pronounced differently. For example, the word for family is משפחה, pronounced as "mishpacha" in Hebrew and "Mishpuche" in Yiddish. The word for wedding is חתונה, pronounced as "khatuna" or "chatuna" in Hebrew and "Hasene" in Yiddish. Words associated with everyday life can, depending on the dialect, the region or the town of the speaker, come from any of the components. For example, the word for "potatoes" is usually "kartofel", from the Germanic component, in Polish Yiddish, and "Bulbes", from the Slavic component, in Lithuanian Yiddish, although specific speakers might use either word or even the Hebrew word (tapuach-adama, תפוח-אדמה) instead.

Yiddish has never been formalized; and nor has it ever been the first language of a state. There have been linguistic publications, including dictionaries, most notably by linguist Uriel Weinreich.[149] However, in the absence of any systematic, wide support from a state, Yiddish has remained fractured along the lines of these different dialects and groups. Weinreich's Yiddish teaching book and dictionary were used in this dissertation to translate texts from Yiddish to English.[150] However, it is based on Lithuanian Yiddish and is therefore not representative of the Yiddish spoken in other dialects. No Polish Yiddish speaker, for example, would accept Lithuanian Yiddish as "correct".

As a result of the non-formalized state of the language, individual Yiddish speakers can sometimes use words from other components in places where

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[149] Uriel Weinreich and Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, *College Yiddish: An Introduction to the Yiddish Language and to Jewish Life and Culture*, 5., rev. ed. (New York: YIVO Inst. for Jewish Research, 1971); Max Weinreich, *History of the Yiddish Language: Concepts, Facts, Methods.* 4 Vols.

[150] Uriel Weinreich, *Modern English-Yiddish, Yiddish-English Dictionary* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977); Weinreich and Research, *College Yiddish: an introduction to the Yiddish language and to Jewish life and culture*.

they would be expected to use a different one according to their own dialect. For example, most of the Yiddish texts use the word "areinfir" (אריינפיר), from the Germanic component, for "introduction". However, there are authors who instead use the Hebrew word "hakdama" (הקדמה), which they would probably have pronounced somewhat differently, even though it does not formally belong to the Hebrew component of any of the dialects. This means that any language-based or linguistic analysis of texts written in Yiddish, such as the one presented in this dissertation and discussed in chapter 6, that seeks to estimate the ratio of languages in the books must be undertaken very carefully and cannot be completely accurate. For example, we find in previous research the idea that the word "seyfer" (ספר) refers to a holy book and "buch" (בוך) to a secular book. This in turn has been used to argue that when a particular book includes the word "seyfer" in its title, its authors regarded it as holy, and when it includes "buch", they did not. On the other hand, it has also been claimed that Yizkor books were generally seen as sanctified.[151] These kinds of differentiations between Hebrew and Yiddish texts, based on a pre-existing perception of the internal relation between the components of Yiddish, were not consistently used by the producers and authors of Yizkor books. For example, some authors used the word "buch" but nonetheless perceived their books as sanctified.[152]

Translation and Transliteration Technicalities

All the translations in this dissertation, unless noted otherwise, have been done by the author. The majority of the quotes from the Yizkor books included in this dissertation are translated from Hebrew or Yiddish. Quotes from Yizkor books originally in English are noted as such. Idiomatic phrases are usually transliterated into the English alphabet. When such a phrase or word appears for the first time, a translation and its original form in Yiddish or Hebrew are given. These phrases are also included in the glossary.

There are significant variations in the transliteration of Hebrew and Yiddish into English between different sources, such as those in the New York Public Library, as well as within the same source. As a result, and in order to provide

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[151] Kochavi-Nehab, "'Write This as a Memorial in the Book' – A Jewish Pattern for Memory".

[152] See Julius Cohen and Alter Trus, *Braynsk sefer ha-zikaron* (New York: Aroysgegeben fun Braynsker relif komite in Nyu York, 1948), 9–11; Shimon Kanc, *Yizker-bukh nokh der horev-gevorener Yidisher kehile Tshizsheve* (Tel-Aviv: Tshizshever landsmanshaftn in Yisroel un Amerike, 1961), 45–47; *Belchatow yizkor-buch* (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-farband fun Poylishe Yidn in Argentine tsuzamen mit di Belkhatover landslayt-fareynen in Argentine, Brazil un Tsofen-Amerike, 1951), 9–10.

an easier reading experience, as many names as possible appear in their English or Latin form. Furthermore, abbreviations are a very common part of religious or commemorative aspects of Hebrew, and in turn of the Hebrew component of Yiddish. Abbreviations might be a shortened version of a single word or the initials of several, and are especially problematic to translate. Some have a straightforward meaning and can thus be translated like any other phrase, for example the common abbreviation H.Y.D. (הי"ד – השם יקום דמם), which appears after many references to victims, both individuals and groups, and means "may God avenge their blood". This phrase does not have any significant added meaning beyond the obvious. Many abbreviated phrases, however, are idiomatic and nearly impossible to translate without a lengthy explanation. For example, the abbreviation I.M.S. (ימ"ש – יימח שמו [וזכרו]) is a curse, literally translated as "let his (her/their) name [and memory] be erased",[153] that commonly appears after a mention of Nazis as group or as individuals, or of others seen as evil. In short, it means that this person or group should be erased from the list of those who will rise at the end of days, and not even be remembered. It connects to Jewish theology and cultural traditions, so a true understanding of it would be difficult for outsiders. At the same time, it is used automatically by speakers, as many religious phrases are employed, without the speaker himself necessary understanding the term's deeper meanings.

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[153] When said aloud, this phrase can be used in the shorter version (name only) or the longer one (and their memory as well), but the abbreviation stays the same.

Chapter 4: Theory

This chapter discusses the theory around collective memory. Theory is used as a heuristic device rather than an explanatory instrument. To illustrate this point, we can take, for example, the different reasons for producing Yizkor books, which is discussed in chapter 7. A deductive approach could, for example, use trauma theory to explain why the publishers chose to produce Yizkor books or why authors decided to participate. The reasons the authors raise would then be analysed as different instances of coping with trauma. Another example of a deductive approach from a different research field is the above-mentioned "missing grave syndrome". In that case, the reasons the authors present are analysed as all resulting from the same place – their feelings of distress over the lack of a grave for their loved ones. In both cases, the differences in reasons that the authors perceived or revealed are set aside in favour of a wider reason, based on the researcher's choice of theoretical explanation. By contrast, I have chosen to use an inductive approach, which observes and analyses the authors' ideas from their perspective. For example, when an author writes that they published a Yizkor book because they had a debt to pay to God for their survival, I have categorized this as a different reason than, for instance, an author who writes that his work is to pay a debt to his fellow prisoners who died and swore him to remember. The researcher's ethical position or theoretical disposition regarding, for example, the existence and nature of God, or any other metaphysical idea, are irrelevant. Theory then becomes a way to connect those reasons, ideas and memories to broader fields of study.

Collective Memory

The idea of memory beyond individuals has been the topic of many debates. It has been generally accepted that "memory" cannot exist in groups in the same way as it does in individuals.[154] Moreover, collective memory has often

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[154] Assmann, "Transformations between History and Memory", 49–52.

been connected with ideology, or the mystification of memory and its abuse for political purposes in racist and nationalist discourses.[155] While groups cannot remember as such – or in other words have a single, shared recollection of the past – they do have a history, and that history is at least to some extent made up of the memories of its individual members, shared and circulated among themselves and others.[156] In other words, collective memory is connected to, but also separate from, individual memory. How strong the connection between the levels is differs between cases.[157] According to sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, widely considered the father of the concept and its related field of studies,[158] group members do not share an identical recollection of a specific event. Memories are neither shared nor remembered by different persons. Instead, the group keeps a collective memory alive through speech, rituals and symbols, meaning that while memory is an internal, introspective process, collective memory is an external, perceptive process.[159] Halbwachs writes:

> But how can we imagine that our recollections, whether individual images or an assembly of concrete images, can result from a combination of schemes or frameworks? If collective representations are empty forms, how can we obtain the colorful and sensible matter of our individual recollections by bringing them into harmony? How can the container reproduce the content?[160]

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[155] Ibid., 51–53.

[156] See for example the Annales School. The group was defined not only by its overarching goals, but very much through the history and experiences of its individual members. In: Colin Lucas, "Introduction", in *Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora (Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985).

[157] Two concepts commonly used in the scholarly literature in close relation with collective memory are cultural memory and heritage. I will not go into a discussion of these concepts here, but they are nonetheless important to note. On cultural memory, see Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, 1. English ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Ruin, *Being with the Dead: Burial, Ancestral Politics, and the Roots of Historical Consciousness*. For heritage, see Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, 1. ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994); Lars-Eric Jönsson et al., *Kanon och kulturarv: historia och samtid i Danmark och Sverige*, vol. 19 (Göteborg och Stockholm: Makadam i samarbete med Centrum för Danmarksstudier, 2008).

[158] Assmann, "Transformations between History and Memory", 51; Seixas, *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 5; Jeffrey K. Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures", *Sociological theory* 17, no. 3 (1999).

[159] Maurice Halbwachs and Lewis A. Coser, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 167–189.

[160] Ibid., 173. This connects directly to the above-mentioned ongoing debates in Sociology.

The main point here is that "true", "real" or "authentic" memories are always individual. They can be communicated to others, but that does not change the inherently individual nature of the memory. Through the act of sharing, others can receive a transformed version of the memory. This version can then be preserved or conveyed further through different means, for example oral or written communication, rituals, objects and traditions. More effectively, objects or symbols can be used to convey this new memory to a wider audience. According to Aleida Assmann, this process necessarily involves an increasing effect on the memory by society:

> In stressing the experiential solipsism of individual memory, however, we disregard two important dimensions of memory: interaction with other individuals and interaction with external signs and symbols. Autobiographical memories cannot be embodied by another person, but they can be shared with others. Once they are verbalized in the form of a narrative or represented by a visual image, the individual's memories become part of an intersubjective symbolic system and are, strictly speaking, no longer a purely exclusive and unalienable property. By encoding them in the common medium of language, they can be exchanged, shared, corroborated, confirmed, corrected, disputed, and even appropriated.[161]

Collective memory is often changed or manipulated by states for different reasons. This changed memory has to a large extent replaced ideology.[162] "Ideology" in this context is not necessarily a negative term, as history is regularly used by states for different reasons and purposes. Manipulation of the past is not something that only totalitarian regimes dabble in. Every state, including democracies,[163] and in fact every group – from a small family to a large empire – uses and manipulates history in one way or another, or in other words produces, maintains and develops a collective memory. The difference between totalitarian and democratic regimes is not whether they use history for their own ends, but rather how much freedom they afford their citizens to diverge from this official, applied history. Israel and the US are two examples of states that have maintained strong collective memories of the Holocaust, but at the same time have allowed groups and individuals to maintain, at least to a certain degree, their own collective memories – similar, alternative,

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[161] Assmann, "Transformations between History and Memory", 50.

[162] Ibid., 54.

[163] Ibid., 54, 64–66. Ronald J. Berger, *The Holocaust, Religion, and the Politics of Collective Memory: Beyond Sociology* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2012), 147–212.

competing or even contradictory – in relation to the common or predominant collective memory.

Once a personal memory becomes part of a collective memory, it necessarily becomes a shared group experience. The act of conveying memories uses common symbols and necessarily creates a different image to the one in the mind of the witness, mitigated by a myriad of factors such as social norms and ideas, language, context, personal history, the passage of time, external effects, and so on. Thus, collective memory is an idea, created and maintained in a specific social context, and not a "real" recollection of past events. In Yizkor books, memories are conveyed to the readers chiefly by witnesses. These memories are conveyed through language, which includes for example common words or terminology. When a witness tells us about the synagogue and the cantor of their town, these terms already have images in our mind, and by using the word "synagogue" the unique, specific synagogue remembered by the witness becomes part of the collective memory of "synagogues" that we, the readers, are already a part of. The witness is also already a part of a collective memory regarding synagogues, and that already affects the narrative. Moreover, the witness is recollecting the synagogue from memory, and memory is affected by time, stories heard from others, the expectations of the audience, the witness's storytelling and linguistic skills, and so on. Consequently, written words convey an image of the synagogue that is different from the one in the mind of the witness. In some cases, we find stories that were told to the author of the text by someone else, such as a parent, in which case the effect is multiplied. Returning to the methodology for this research, conceptual history provides us with a way to reach the social historical aspect of the people and their environment through a contextualized analysis of the language of those people.

Collective memory can be maintained essentially through anything – any physical object, place, poem or story, idea or even memory itself. In his grand publication series "Rethinking France",[164] editor Pierre Nora presents several examples of how a national collective memory is maintained. This happens primarily through the state apparatus, for example the education system,[165] but

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[164] Pierre Nora, David P. Jordan, and Mary Trouille, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: The State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Pierre Nora and David P. Jordan, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: Legacies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: Histories and Memories* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

[165] Nora, Jordan, and Trouille, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: The State*, 1, XIV. Also demonstrated in: Peter N. Stearns, Peter C. Seixas, and Samuel S. Wineburg, *Knowing,*

also by other means from the idea of the state itself and its purpose,[166] through a specific historical figure such as Charlemagne,[167] the more vague concept of the King,[168] as well as a generic geographical unit such as the French forest,[169] or the café.[170] It can even be seen as a more ambiguous, general concept related to entire areas of national culture.[171] For Nora, collective memory is closely connected to national memory and identity. Like many others, he makes a distinction between collective memory and history. According to Nora, memory is "social and unviolated" while history "is how our hopelessly forgetful modern societies, propelled by change, organize the past".[172] Collective memory does need history, however, while at the same time becoming increasingly disconnected from it; a process strongly connected to nationalism and the linking of states to "the undifferentiated time of heroes, origins, and myth".[173] Thus, in Nora's terminology, "collective memory" is authentic and natural, while history is necessarily manipulated. Collective memory is group memory, for example, the culture of a specific group, such as the peasants or, in the context of this research, Jews in the form of a local or national group, or as a larger "people". In modern society, according to Nora, there is no more memory as such. The state, through its unifying apparatus and effort to create the nation, has eliminated memory in its "natural" form. We can find sites of memory ("lieux de memoir"), which are "locations" in geography and the cultural "space" that serve as repositories for the remains of original memories.[174]

The Group in Collective Memory

The fact that collective memories are social products makes the group, and understanding its different iterations, important, not least when, as in this

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Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

[166] Alain Guery, "The State: The Tool of the Common Good", in *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: The State*, ed. Pierre Nora (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[167] Robert Morrissey, "Charlemagne", in *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: The State*, ed. Pierre Nora (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[168] Alain Boureau, "The King", ibid.

[169] Andree Corvol, "The Forest", in *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: Space*, ed. Pierre Nora (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[170] Benoit Lecoq, "The Cafe", in *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: Legacies*, ed. Pierre Nora (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[171] Nora, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: Legacies*, 3, VII-X.

[172] "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire", *Representations* 26, no. 26 (1989): 8.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Ibid.

dissertation, it transcends national and other boundaries. A group can be anything from a nuclear family to a nation, or an even larger, international network or organization. In our times, technological advances have allowed even more efficient dissemination of collective memory within very large groups, although Halbwachs himself based his ideas on smaller groups at the family and local levels. As a result of their size, large communities must also be imagined communities.[175] The modern nation state, such as Israel, is at its core built on a collective memory – its national history, ethos and heritage as they relate to that particular state. The potential for any group to produce and maintain a collective memory has certainly increased with the advancement of technology. A group is thus a "social framework" with implicit or explicit shared concerns, values and history. Members of this framework would generally refer to their particular framework as "we".[176]

A group's reason for existence can be completely independent from the collective memory, for example a family. Another kind of group might have been established around the collective memory itself. (Many of the groups that published Yizkor books fall into this category.) Some groups can belong to both types. I discuss schoolchildren below, for instance, as groups that took it on themselves to publish a memorial book because they saw themselves as taking part in a specific collective memory of their own, while at the same time they took part in a larger, national collective memory.[177] Thus, even though these schoolchildren were born after the Holocaust, they placed themselves, through their books, as part of a 'we' that included the Jewish victims of the Holocaust and other catastrophes throughout history, that is, *the Jewish People* in a meta-historical sense.

People can also see themselves as part of more than one group, at different levels, and take part in the collective memories of all of their immediate groups, as well as of larger groups that contain them, possibly on several levels. For example, a Holocaust survivor from a town in Poland using the term "we" could mean his or her family, Jewish community, shtetl or town, the county of the town, the State of Poland, Polish Jewry, Eastern European Jewry, Ashkenazi Jewry and, finally, the "Jewish people". Moreover, the

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[175] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso Books, 2016), 13–14.

[176] Assmann, "Transformations between History and Memory", 51–52.

[177] Possibly more than one, as there is a Jewish collective memory, and an Israeli (in this case) collective memory. Some parts are connected between the two, but some are wholly different and separate. Masada, for example, is not so much a part of the Jewish collective memory, but is a unique component of the Israeli collective memory.

community people see themselves as part of may change over time in size, breadth or between geographic locations. The term can then be used alternatively to mark one, several or all of these affiliations at the same time, and could change over time, place and circumstances. For example, in the aftermath of the overwhelming catastrophe that was the Holocaust, previously existing and serious regionally based tensions between Polish and Lithuanian Jews were set aside in favour of a geographically more expansive "Eastern European Jewish we".

The Myth in Collective Memory

In essence, a myth is a collective memory that is only loosely or not at all based on real events. Myths nonetheless can have a life of their own and great significance in certain contexts. The common opinion among scholars, according to Aleida Assmann, is that myths have been seen as false memories.[178] Recently, however, she writes, this concept has changed to mean that myths could also be based on real historical events. I would argue that, at least de facto, this has always been the case. Myths, both in their common usage and in some philosophical traditions (such as the Frankfurt School),[179] have always been seen as *potentially* based on real events. The definition of a myth as such had nothing to do with the actual origins of a specific myth, but rather with its symbolic value and transformation into an applied memory in the present. A good example of this would be the myth of Masada in Israeli memory culture.[180] While it is widely seen as a myth, it is also based on a real historical event. Moreover, the myth itself was widely used and strengthened by another real life event – the near occupation of Palestine by Axis forces, led by German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel during World War II. In this case, the myth came to life as symbolically similar events were unfolding. The intentions of the members of the *Yishuv* (the Jewish community in Palestine) to take similar actions to the rebels in Masada – to fortify the peak of a mountain and commit suicide rather than surrender – further empowered a pre-existing myth, as well as other myths and ideas regarding the differences between the *Yishuv* and the Diaspora, which already existed within the *Yishuv*.[181]

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[178] Assmann, "Transformations between History and Memory", 49–52. Assmann is primarily discussing Susan Sontag, but we can also add Pierre Nora to that position.

[179] Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 1997).

[180] I expand on this in chapter 5.

[181] Idith Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood*, Cambridge Middle East studies (Cambridge, UK and New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Yizkor books had several uses according to their producers. One of the most significant ones, and the basic function of every single Yizkor book, is commemoration. In this sense, Yizkor books function as instruments for collective memory *par excellence*: They include many sections and contributions that are intended not only to remember a person or place, but also to create a sense of belonging in the reader – to strengthen the relationship of those who were not there; in most cases, descendants of survivors and people who emigrated before the Holocaust – with the community. These then are members of the community not only through historical and geographical factors (i.e. coming from the same town or region), but also by sharing a very detailed, vivid and positive communal memory – a memory of the community, shared by the members of that community. This is done, for example, by sharing an enormous amount of detail about life in the community, including things that would seem superfluous in other contexts.

The book on Akkerman, for example, contains a blank high school diploma from the Jewish high school and two receipts for payments made to the kindergarten and the high school in 1919 and 1929, respectively.[182] These documents represent minuscule details, not necessarily worthy of commemoration on their own, but were nonetheless included and contribute to the vividness of the collective memory. Through these kinds of details, the readers become part of the "we" that is the Jewish community of Akkerman, transcending time and joining the community even though the original Jewish community of Akkerman had been physically destroyed decades before.

The Meta-History of Collective Memory

As discussed above, a collective memory does not appear out of nowhere: it is created and maintained, and changes over time. From an analytical perspective, we can attempt to isolate and trace one collective memory diachronically, that is, through time. This section discusses several models that explain how historical knowledge is produced, used, maintained and changed in society. In this context, historical knowledge is, at least to some degree, an example of collective memory. "Historical knowledge" refers here neither to the product of the work of historians, nor to a general concept of "events that happened in the past". The term includes both meanings, as well as the more popular meaning of "the everyday needs of people". As Peter Seixas explains it:

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[182] Nisan Amitai, *Akerman ve-ayarot ha-machoz* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Akerman veha-sevivah, 1983), 156–157.

Historians address questions that arise from these needs, mobilizing theories and employing methodologies that have been developed within the discipline. In turn, the products of historians work, their representations of the past, feed back into the larger culture's understandings and orientations.[183]

History is thus seen as dialogically and dialectically connected with society as a whole, as well as with different groups within society, and not only as the product of the work of historians. This position is partially in agreement with and partially contradicts Nora. As discussed above, Nora distinguishes between memory and history. In his thinking, before modernity and the modern nation state, "collective memory" was an unviolated social phenomenon, while "history" by its very nature has always been manipulated. In the modern period, this has changed as states manipulate memory as well, through different means and institutions, such as the education system, army service, and so on. For Seixas, collective memory is always subject to external effects. This is in line with Halbwachs's view.

Figure 4.1. *Jörn Rüsen's Model*.
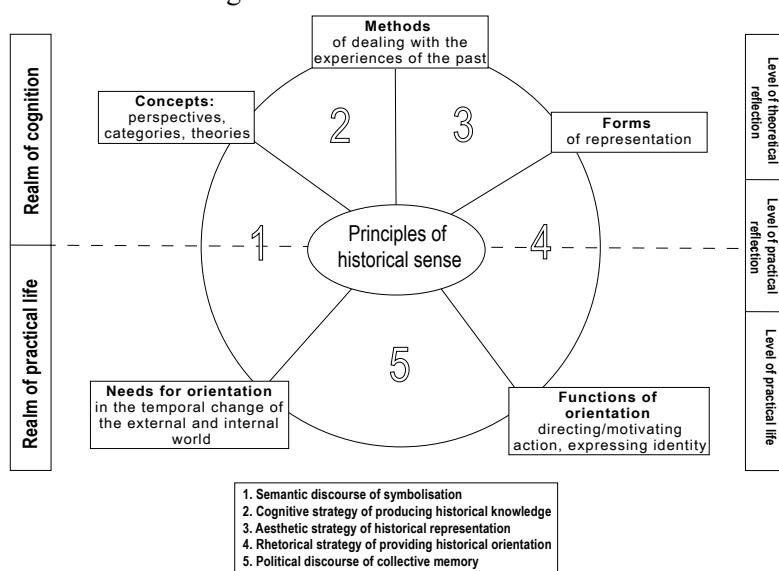
Source: Jörn Rüsen, Diane Kerns, and Katie Digan, *Evidence and Meaning: A Theory of Historical Studies, Making Sense of History* (New York, Berghahn, 2017), 43.

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[183] Seixas, "A History/Memory Matrix for History Education".

The relationship between history as a cognitive process and its effect on practical life in the context of political change has been developed in Jörn Rüsen's classic work, in which memory and the human experience are strongly linked and affect each other. The idea is to show how the needs of society (the bottom half below the dotted line, "the realm of practical life") affect and are affected by the discipline of history and the work of historians (the realm of cognition). The two realms are connected to each other through the level of practical reflection. Historians are part of general society and are only separated by their specific function as historians who deal with history using theoretical perspectives that the general population does not.[184]

Table 4.1. *Three Types of Crises*.

Type of Crisis	Reaction
Normal	Application of established patterns of interpretation
Critical	Change of established patterns of interpretation
Catastrophic	Destruction of established patterns of interpretation

Source: Jörn Rüsen, Diane Kerns, and Katie Digan, *Evidence and Meaning: A Theory of Historical Studies*, 29.

A key element in Rüsen's theory relates to the important role of change, which happens as a result of various crises that are in turn caused by historical events. These crises are an integral part of human society and happen constantly. Rüsen has divided them into "normal crises", which do not require a change in existing patterns of interpretation; "critical crises", which require a change in existing patterns of interpretation; and "catastrophic crises", which force the abandonment of existing patterns of interpretation.[185] A political crisis or change thus results in "temporal change of the present world", which in turn creates a need for reorientation. In other words, political crises or other major events cause people to re-evaluate their

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[184] Jörn Rüsen, Diane Kerns, and Katie Digan, *Evidence and Meaning: A Theory of Historical Studies*, English-language edition. ed., Making sense of history (New York: Berghahn, 2017), 42–45.

[185] Dulić and Kostić, "Collective Memory in Transition: Bridging the Divide Between the Humanities and Social Science", 24–25.

view of the world – or, more likely, part of it. This creates a need in society for new knowledge about the past that can provide orientation, since established patterns of interpretation no longer seem valid. At the cognitive level, new ideas start forming that place the past in new perspectives and can result in new concepts, theories and methodologies being used to study history. In Rüsen's terms, these are new forms of representation, which might eventually affect the "realm of everyday life". The forms of representation are presented to society in the form of a narrative. This new narrative becomes part of the current functions of cultural orientation, that is, it is incorporated into society as a new or developed historical identity – a collective memory – and the process begins anew with the next crisis. According to Rüsen, "Each of these five factors is necessary, and all of them together are sufficient in constituting historical thinking as a rationally elaborated form of historical memory".[186] The factors are, in order of temporal advancement: interests in cognition, concepts of significance, methodological rules, forms of representation and functions of cultural orientation.[187] One must keep in mind that most crises and similar major events are normal and do not result in the type of political change or re-evaluation discussed by Rüsen. For example, when Rommel was approaching Palestine from North Africa, this event was incorporated into the pre-existing collective memory of the *Yishuv* as heroic. The decision to fortify Mount Carmel and resist strengthened the orientation of the *Yishuv* in the world as strong, and as representing a "new Jew".[188] Some events, such as the Eichmann trial, caused a critical crisis for the established patterns of interpretation of Israeli history, even though it was not a threat to society or anything similar. Nonetheless, the trial caused a society-wide change in the perception of the survivors and victims of the Holocaust and their experiences. This created new forms of representation – a greater focus on the victims, to name one – and also specifically affected Yizkor books, as is demonstrated in this dissertation. The result was a significant change in the *Yishuv*/diaspora dichotomy and in the way Jews in Israel viewed the Holocaust period and life before it in Europe. Catastrophic crises are rare, and they lead to systemic shifts that require the creation of completely new patterns of interpretation. As the most prominent example of a catastrophic crisis, Rüsen says the Holocaust:

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[186] Rüsen, *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation*, 132.
[187] Ibid.
[188] I expand on this chapter 5.

…is the most radical experience of crisis in history. It is unique in its genocidal character and its radical negation and destruction of the basic values of modern civilization. As such it negates and destroys even the principles of its historical interpretation. [189]

To enhance the dimension of time in the model, it is useful to imagine it as a spiral. There is no clear beginning or end because historians continually influence society and vice versa – historians are always affected by society. As Rüsen writes:

Before historians construct the past they themselves are already constructed by the present outcome of past developments in the world. Thus tradition is always at work in historical thinking before the past is thematized as history.[190]

That is to say that, according to Rüsen, memory is the meaning that is applied to the past, and that meaning has nothing to do with the past itself, only with the needs of the present. History is a reconstruction of the past, but historians are already affected by the past, as they are part of society.[191] The idea is that the public's knowledge of the world, be it in the form of historical knowledge or collective memory, has always been affected, and has never been 'pure', in contrast to what Nora has argued.

For example, in the case of Masada, the myth of Masada would fall in the bottom half of the matrix. The archaeological excavations in Masada in 1963–1965 produced historical knowledge that did not support the myth, but still affected the myth – and in fact was nonetheless used to reaffirm the myth. The archaeological excavations were at least in part initiated because of the already existing myth of Masada as a significant location, as part of the tradition of Jewish heroism, which in turn was based on historical knowledge produced, going back to the original history by contemporary historian Flavius Josephus. However, that work had already been affected by the historical practice of the time, by the needs of the society in which it was written, and so on, and so forth. The historical knowledge produced by historians became in itself part of the tradition of Jewish heroism, which is part of the identity of the Jews, and helps them find their place in history and in the current world, through the history of suffering and the story of Amalek.

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[189] Rüsen, *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation*, 189.
[190] Jörn Rüsen, "Tradition: A Principle of Historical Sense-Generation and its Logic and Effect in Historical Culture", *History and Theory* 51, no. 4 (2012): 45.
[191] Ibid.

Rüsen discusses the different perceptions of history and of its ontological status in modern and postmodern ways of thinking.[192] In essence, in postmodernism, memory (or dreams) substitute for "the history",[193] as Rüsen calls it. The relationship between historians and the public has generally become increasingly postmodern, with the former being mostly modernist and the latter more postmodernist, according to Rüsen. Thus, the position of historians as experts relative to society has eroded. This relativization of the position of the expert is in itself not unique to history. The introduction of postmodern thinking nonetheless poses significant challenges for historians. Rüsen discusses the issues of the context and perception of historical knowledge and imagery, seeking to find a middle way between modernist "truth-seeking" and the risk of complete relativization of the historical experience, which postmodernism in its most extreme forms risks.[194] In the context of meta-historical processes then, it is important to note that currently historical knowledge is not only produced and changed, but also changes its truth value – or perhaps, more accurately, its *perceived* truth value – back and forth throughout the process, as it passes between levels of society. Memory can be a tool for societal improvement, but it is also constantly used for other, often detrimental, or at best neutral, ends. Rüsen's model remains a useful tool for understanding meta-historical processes, as long as one accounts for the impact of memory and perception when using it as an analytical tool.

When discussing his model, Rüsen says about historical thinking that it "…originated as a fundamental strategy of symbolizing time by relating it to human activity and suffering in a meaningful and sense bearing way…".[195] This function of historical thinking is broad and also includes negative, manipulative uses of history. The focus here is on the use of historical knowledge by its recipients (the public), and this separation from the origin and possible points of manipulation of historical knowledge is important for my point here. The uses of history generally remain the same for the public: granting meaning and sense through orientation in the world. This need, however, has been answered by scholars and others in different ways over time, and also manipulated to varying degrees and for different ends by a myriad of interested parties, such as elites (political, but also others) and governments. Rüsen also relates to the ongoing manipulation of the past,

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[192] Rüsen, *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation*, 136–142.

[193] Ibid., 136.

[194] Rüsen, Kerns, and Digan, *Evidence and Meaning: A Theory of Historical Studies*, 2–4, 8–9,55–56, 170–177.

[195] Rüsen, *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation*, 134.

noting that "knowledge of the past gets the features of present-day life and becomes furnished with its forces to move the human mind", while "… in the relationship between interests and functions historical studies is committed to a political strategy of collective memory".[196]

Collected Memories

With regard to a collective memory as an object of research, historians can take one of two basic scholarly approaches: they can either make the collective memory itself the object of research or use the collective memory to find out more about the event to which the memory is related. Pierre Nora has called this the "…gap between lived historical experience and the intellectual experience of the historian".[197] There are other variations on this binary demarcation. This dissertation examines collective memory as a means for learning about the people behind it, and not the events it relates to. Both approaches can be used in the same research, although largely separate from each other. From the point of view of the historian, this is a critical difference. Examining collective memory as the object of research allows us as scholars to accept a great deal of evidentiary contradiction. Different, even contradictory, versions of the same historical event can coexist in the same collective memory. This is not the case when the goal of the research is to reveal specific empirical data about the event itself, instead of learning from witnesses about their impressions or experiences. For example, if a group of concentration camp prisoners witnessed one of their comrades being executed by a guard, they may, several decades later, have different versions of what happened, of the identity of the guard in question, the reasons behind the execution, the time and date of the event, and so on. If as historians we examine their memories of the event as a group, how they remember the execution, bring it up, commemorate life in the camp, and so on, we can accommodate the discrepancies between their versions. In fact, the multiplicity of recollections would be part of our account of the collective memory. However, if we want to look at the event itself – the execution, who did what to whom and when, we would find it difficult accommodate the discrepancies as we try to reach an accurate account, at least as far as possible, of the details of the event. This does not mean that any event has a single explanation or one "truth". It simply means that as scholars, there are details

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[196] Ibid.
[197] Nora, Jordan, and Trouille, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: The State*, 1.

of events, such as time, place and people present, that we try to describe as accurately as possible.

Yizkor books are an example of communal commemoration. In the context of a definition of the phenomenon, the double meaning of this phrase, as discussed above, is that the books commemorate a community and are also the result of a communal activity or action. While many of the books were initiated and published by individuals, and not organizations, the books were nonetheless compiled from pieces sent in or contributed by at least several other people. Connecting Yizkor books to the wider discussion here, the books can be examined as two different kinds of objects: as a commemoration, as a way for people to remember what happened as *collective* memories; or as historical sources, as a witness account or a recollection of what actually happened as *collected* memories. In this context, the former approach, of examining the way history is perceived, is similar to projects such as Nora's. The latter is connected to the work of many other scholars,[198] such as that of Holocaust historian Christopher Browning who writes:

> …I am looking at memory not in the collective singular but rather in the individual plural, not collective memory but rather collected memories. How may a historian of the Holocaust use a variety of different, often conflicting and contradictory, in some cases clearly mistaken, memories and testimonies of individual survivors as evidence to construct a history that otherwise, for lack of evidence, would not exist?[199]

When trying to determine what happened during a particular historical event, a collective memory is problematic as an object of research. It is by definition at least partly empirically false and at the same time potentially contains contradictory individual memories or variations on the same event. Both points are not always compatible with historiography and, more specifically for the case here, with historical research on the Holocaust such as Browning's.

In this context, one should be cautious about trying to identify a single idea or focus in a specific book or group of books. The analytical approach employed by a scholar researching Yizkor books should not be to assume that some necessary commonality lies somewhere waiting to be found. Instead, the scholar should embrace the pluralism of the content, and the variety of styles and reasons; and not insist on homogeneity, but accept heterogeneity. As I

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[198] Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures", 337–345.
[199] Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*, 39.

discuss in chapter 7, not everything written in the books has a reason. The need to commemorate is explicitly mentioned but beyond this overarching motivation, one must use caution when finding commonalities and remain loyal to the empirical evidence.[200] Simply put, the solution to the problem of the collected memories of eyewitnesses lies in existing historiographical methodology – careful source criticism and the mettle to explain to witnesses who are mistaken that they are incorrect.

Elites and Witnesses

This chapter and chapter 3 have discussed the difference between empirically driven and theoretically driven approaches from several points of view. As can be seen in theoretical models based on empirical data, such as Rüsen's, there is always room for the world's complexity (or even chaos) and the many levels that influence social and historical processes. A deductive approach allows researchers to accept a great deal of analytic complexity and "connect the dots" between different empirical cases, but restricts our view to specific predetermined areas and variables. An inductive approach allows free exploration of the sources, but restricts our capacity to see what the sources do not contain and our ability to connect our findings to other cases.

Elites and witnesses are two fundamental groups in the context of this research. Elites in our context are actors who have the power potentially to push forward macro-level processes. These are most often political elites, but they could also have other roles in society. The actions of elites can affect the lives, and possibly also the actions in some cases, of other parts of society. Elites, under the definition I employ here, neither control every aspect of life in a society, nor act in unison as a group. The degree to which they can affect others varies between countries based on many factors. Since this research focuses on the people involved in grassroots memory production, elites are not the focus of the analysis. Nonetheless, the actions of specific elites in Israel and the US, as individuals or as a group, have certainly affected the content of Yizkor books by affecting the individual participants or society, and thus forcing authors to respond to those effects. In the context of collective memory, some elites have a vast influence on the production, maintenance and change of any collective memory. Gideon Hausner, Chief Prosecutor at the Eichmann trial, is an example of an elite in this context. Hausner had, in his

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[200] Ibid., 37–59.

role as Chief Prosecutor and later as a member of the Knesset, significant influence on the collective memory of the Holocaust and its commemoration.

A witness is a person who has experienced first-hand the event in question. Witness accounts constitute one part of the origins of some collective memories, at least in their form as collected memories, that is, as the base ingredients for the amalgamation of facts and memories that are then transformed into the collective memory, in this case the memory of the Holocaust and of pre-Holocaust life in the diaspora. In other cases, such as in the case of Masada, the collective memory is made up of knowledge produced by scholars and political elites. The transformation of memory into collective memory, from an internalized experience to an externalized one, happens in every aspect of the transmission process of memory, beginning with the initial act by the witness of communicating the experience, through language, art or any other means, to the attitude, ideas and disposition of the listener, and through a myriad of external factors – historical, cultural, material, personal, and so on.

Political elites have a significant influence on the collective memory through their power within a group or society and through the structure of the state. Political elites have, for example, the power to promote legislation, such as the 1951 Yad Vashem law, that has directly and indirectly affected Israeli Holocaust memory culture, as well as the collective memory of the Holocaust in Israel and, through Yad Vashem's commemoration, in other countries as well. That is, as previously stressed, the case for both historical knowledge and collective memory. The two are closely related. The degree to which elites, through the structure of the state, affect the other parts of society differs from case to case, based on many factors.

Witnesses are at the heart of this dissertation. These are people who witnessed life in the community before the Holocaust, as well as the Holocaust period, and their actions in producing collective memory in Yizkor book form are in constant interaction with the predominant collective memory, with historical knowledge, with the state structure and interests, and with elites both as individuals and as holders of positions of power within the state.

Chapter 5: Jewish, Israeli and US Memory Cultures: An Introduction

Written commemoration has been a longstanding tradition in Jewish Ashkenazi communities at least since the Middle Ages, dating back to the massacres of the Jews of the Rhineland during the early crusades.[201] Rosemary Horowitz notes:

> After the First Crusade, the practice of memorializing ordinary people, not only the renowned, took hold among the Jews, and by the fifteenth century, the *kaddish* prayer and the *yortzeyt* remembrance, as well as the yizker service were incorporated into Jewish practices.[202]

In the Ashkenazi Jewish tradition, communities would compile lists of victims following catastrophic events. Memorial books contained information about important people, such as rabbis and local leaders, as well as those individuals who died as martyrs. The lists would be read aloud once a year on a memorial day, and could be used as a source for saying the *Kaddish* prayer. Interestingly, while Jewish literature commonly contains these necrologies, as well as lengthy discussions of Jewish history, it rarely contains historical accounts of actual events. The main use of these "memorbikher" is during memorial days and services.[203]

Another common Jewish tradition was the *pinkasim* (singular: *pinkas*), which are the extended necrologies of a town. Even though these are sometimes mentioned in scholarly texts, and even in Yizkor books, as

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[201] Jones and Siegel, "Yizkor Books as Holocaust Grey Literature", 52-53.,Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel", 368-369; Cimet, "'To Hold Our Own Against Silence'", 122–123; Rosemary Horowitz, "A History of Yizker Books", ibid.; Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi and Harold Bloom, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, Washington and London: University of Washington Press, 1996).

[202] Horowitz, "A History of Yizker Books", 8.

[203] Yerushalmi and Bloom, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, 31. The exception being the "chain of tradition", the transmission of rabbinic law through the ages (ibid.).

synonymous with the books, the *pinkasim* have several characteristics that separate them from the earlier *memorbikher* and the later Yizkor books. The *pinkasim* were written exclusively by leading community members and do not include any contributions from others. The *pinkasim* do not generally adhere to a chronological order of events. They were updated continuously and passed from generation to generation, and thus not dedicated to a specific catastrophe.[204] Lastly, as I discuss in this dissertation, the *pinkasim* were a necrology of members published by the community, while Yizkor books are a necrology of the community published by its members. As Esther Benbassa notes:

> For centuries, this story (histoire) of suffering stood in for History (Histoire) in the proper sense of the term. It was far more compelling than History for a religious group whose vision of the world was inimical to any form of historicism.[205]

Thus, chronicling suffering instead of contextualizing suffering had been an integral part of pre-Holocaust memorial traditions of Ashkenazi Jewry. This tradition made its way to the *Yishuv* and several memorial books were published in Palestine from the 1910s.[206] Early Jewish and Zionist *Yishuv* memorial book traditions did not, however, view those memorial books as inherently holy. They were instead registries of victims and memorials to suffering, not religious texts to be read as part of religious ceremonies outside of memorial days. The imputed holiness of the books is a new dimension, which appeared first in Holocaust memorial books. In this respect, Yizkor books are not a continuation of previous traditions, but a new one.[207]

Diaspora and Galut

Jewish communities have lived in exile all over the world for nearly two millennia. The Hebrew and Yiddish word for the Jewish diaspora is "galut" (גלות), which literally means "exile". In this dissertation, I use the terms "diaspora" and "galut" interchangeably and in the way defined by William

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[204] Horowitz, *Literacy and Cultural Transmission in the Reading, Writing and Rewriting of Jewish Memorial Books*.

[205] Esther Benbassa, *Suffering as Identity: The Jewish Paradigm* (London: Verso, 2010), 40.

[206] Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel", 369.

[207] Ibid., 373.

Safran.[208] His criteria are based on the Jewish diaspora as paradigmatic and consist of the following elements:

> 1. They [the Jews], or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "centre" to two or more peripheral, or foreign, regions.

> 2. They retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history, achievements, and, often enough, sufferings.

> 3. Their relationship with the dominant element of society in the host land is complicated and often uneasy. They believe that they are not, and perhaps cannot be, fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it.

> 4. They regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – if and when conditions are appropriate.

> 5. They continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity, which reach across political boundaries, are importantly defined in terms of the existence of such a relationship. That relationship may include a collective commitment to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its independence, safety, and prosperity.

> 6. They wish to survive as a distinct community – in most instances as a minority – by maintaining and transmitting a cultural and/or religious heritage derived from their ancestral home and the symbols based on it. In so doing, they adapt to hostland conditions and experiences to become themselves centers of cultural creation and elaboration.

> 7. Their cultural, religious, economic, and/or political relationships with the homeland are reflected in a significant way in their communal institutions.[209]

As Safran notes, the Jewish *galut* has always been based on the idea of living under unfriendly, even hostile, conditions. These conditions were to be tolerated rather than rebelled against. Within the diaspora, Jewish communities have always been centred around a strong institutional base. In

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[208] William Safran, "The Jewish Diaspora in a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective", *Israel Studies* 10, no. 1 (2005).
[209] Ibid., 37.

that sense, a "Jewish community" has a strong formal component, not just an informal one. This does not simply mean all the Jews living in the same place, but includes for example a formal membership, active participation and institutions separate from the official ones (exclusively for internal affairs). When it comes to matters of state law, the tradition of Jewish communities under non-Jewish rule has generally been to accept it and negotiate for the additional acceptance of Jewish rules for Jews. [210]

Safran's definition also fits Jewish life in areas affected by the Holocaust and in the US very well. Beyond their status as one of many minority groups in the US, Jews have also been perceived by others and by themselves as connected to a larger Jewish ethos and to US nationalism. Such self-perceptions have affected discussions and ideas about Holocaust commemoration among US Jews. As Israel has always been perceived as the above-mentioned "homeland" of the Jews, the definition only partially works for Jewish communities in pre-1948 Palestine, and not at all after the state was founded.

Holocaust Memory Culture in Israel and the US

In the context of this research, Israel and the USA share two important characteristics. First, the Holocaust did not take place on their territory. Therefore, any Holocaust commemoration done in these two countries, be it a monument, a ceremony or any other kind, is by definition artificial and symbolic. Commemoration is not taking place in a physical location in which something actually happened that is directly related to the Holocaust. Any location used for Holocaust commemoration in Israel or the US has necessarily been allocated for that purpose, and has thus been attributed holiness or memorial significance at a later time than the events of the Holocaust. In Israel, this issue was sometimes addressed through the importation of survivor remains (ash or bones) from killing sites in Europe, for example, from the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp.[211] Holocaust memory being "artificial" in these particular cases means that without any geographically specific location on which social memory could be based, the collective memory is much more open and vulnerable to interpretation and

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[210] Ibid.

[211] Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel", 374–376.. These remains were buried in cemeteries and gravestones, usually commemorating communities, were erected over them.

manipulation. Discussions around these kinds of commemorations are about the interpretation and significance they have been given in retrospect, and not about the empirical detail; they are largely based on the needs of the present rather than the historical events of the past.

Second, both countries had significant Jewish communities in the post-war years (and still have today). The Jewish community in the US is the largest in the world. Following the destruction of the majority of Eastern European Jewry and the emigration of the majority of survivors, US Jewry became the most significant and influential Jewish community in the world outside of Israel. Thus, the views of US Jews on the Holocaust and the internal discussions revolving around Holocaust memory that have taken place over the years have been significant for the US Jewish community itself, for the US state and for the Israeli state and world Jewry. In the Israeli case, there is no formal "Jewish community". While there are many different groups, based mainly on their members' country of origin, usually going as far as back as their grandparents, the Jewish community of Israel is de facto identified with the state.[212] Communities in the secular segment of Israel have none of the functions that their counterparts in the diaspora have – these are all handled by the state, including religious services. In the religious and ultra-orthodox segments of society, the rabbis of the communities, always men in the Israeli context, still hold power and have significant influence on the daily lives of their members in the context of religious law and mitzvahs. Generally speaking, rabbis in ultra-orthodox communities hold more sway over community members than in other denominations, although there are exceptions. In the US, Jewish communities provide religious services to their members. Some ultra-orthodox communities also provide other services, such as education, in a similar way to pre-war Jewish communities in Eastern Europe and the US.[213]

Israel's great significance for world Jewry – historically, politically and religiously – means that any discussions on or changes regarding Holocaust memory in Israel are strongly echoed all over the Jewish (and sometimes the non-Jewish) world. Important memory events, such as the Eichmann trial, have had exponentially greater resonance due to the added symbolic value they possessed.

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[212] This has, for example, led to an ever-intensifying discussion over the years regarding the political status and legitimacy of Israel's large Arab (and mostly Muslim) minority. These are formally Israeli citizens who have equal political rights to the Jewish population, but have been nonetheless removed from any true political power over the years.

[213] For example Kiryas Joel in New York https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/kiryas-joel .

The significance of Israel and the US within the post-Holocaust Jewish world also means that these have been the two main places of publication for Yizkor books. Israel has been by far the most common place of publication, and the US a distant but significant second. I expand on this point in chapter 6. One of the key differences between the two cases in this context is that in the US, Jews are still a minority, like anywhere else, while in Israel post-1948, the Jewish community has been the de facto state. This dissertation will show that this has in part led to a different relationship between the state's memory of the Holocaust and that of the Jewish communities.

The Eichmann Trial

Adolph Eichmann was captured in Argentina by the Israeli Mossad in May 1960 and brought to Israel. His trial was held in Jerusalem between April and December 1961. Eichmann was the highest ranking Nazi official to stand trial since the Nuremberg Trials, and the first to be tried in Israel under the 1950 *Nazis and Nazi Collaborators (Punishment) Law*. Eichmann was found guilty and executed on 1 June 1962. All the trial sessions were broadcast live on Israeli television, which was highly remarkable for those days. The trial attracted widespread international attention, most famously in Hannah Arendt's reporting for the *New Yorker*.[214]

In contrast to the 1945–46 Nuremberg trials, where the prosecution relied heavily on German documents as evidence, the prosecution in the Eichmann trial relied on the testimonies of Jewish Holocaust survivors. This was an intentional move by Chief Prosecutor Gideon Hausner, the result of which was that many viewers, listeners and readers were exposed for the first time to personal eyewitness accounts that highlighted the conditions that survivors had endured, as well as the moral dilemmas they had faced. For the first time, people in Israel and the US (as well as the rest of the world) were forced to hear accounts of the horrific daily struggles, impossible physical and moral conditions, and helplessness of life in the camps and ghettos.[215] In Jörn

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[214] David Cesarani, "Holocaust Controversies in the 1990s: The Revenge of History or the History of Revenge?", in *After Eichmann: Collective Memory and Holocaust since 1961*, ed. David Cesarani (New York andFlorence: Routledge, 2005); Hannah Arendt and Amos Elon, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 2006); Anita Shapira, "The Eichmann Trial: Changing Perspectives", in *After Eichmann: Collective Memory and Holocaust since 1961*, ed. David Cesarani (New York and Florence: Routledge, 2005).

[215] Berger, *The Holocaust, Religion, and the Politics of Collective Memory: Beyond Sociology*, 179–181; Daniel Gutwein, "The Privatization of the Holocaust: Memory, Historiography, and

Rüsen's terms, the trial caused a critical crisis in society at large in both the US and Israel. However, as I demonstrate, the effect of the trial on the Yizkor books was not as strong, despite its notable impact. The trial also made a sweeping impact on public opinion in both Israel and the US. The stories of the witnesses shaped Israeli and US Holocaust memory culture for years to come. In the US, a whole generation that grew up with the idea that survivors did not want to talk (The Myth of Silence) were forced to face the falsity of that claim.[216] As Hanna Yablonka writes:

> Eichmann's capture, the accompanying surge of national pride, and the court proceedings, which were viewed as "the Jewish People versus the Archenemy of the Jews," were felt to be the high point in Israel's contribution to Jewish life, far outdistancing the part of the Diaspora. The planners of the trial were elated at making history and raising the Jewish people in Israel to a preeminent position in the eyes of the nation.[217]

Yablonka adds:

> Historically, the trials and concomitant personal dramas changed the Holocaust's chronological span – from the war years (1939–1945) to Hitler's rise to power in Germany (1933). This reflected an inherent intentionalist interpretation of the Holocaust that claimed the "Final Solution" began with Hitler's ascendancy. The chronological change led to the Holocaust being dealt with as a subject distinct from World War II. The victorious powers and German documentation had dominated the Nuremberg trials, as distinct from Jewish voices and personal testimony; but, in the Eichmann trial, the survivors themselves brought forth evidence, testimony from the victims' personal experience. After the Eichmann trial, Holocaust research began to rely on Jewish documentation, which told a revised version of Jewish fate in the war.[218]

The Eichmann trial had a major impact on all aspects of Holocaust understanding in Israeli and US society. It marked the beginning of a new phase of how to understand the Holocaust in society, one that has seen much

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Politics", *Israel Studies* 14, no. 1 (2009); Hanna Yablonka, "The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Israel: The Nuremberg, Kapos, Kastner, and Eichmann Trials", ibid.8, no. 3 (2003): 15–22; Waxman, "Testimony and Representation", 495–498.

[216] I expand on American Holocaust memory culture in the next section.

[217] Yablonka, "The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Israel: The Nuremberg, Kapos, Kastner, and Eichmann Trials", 20.

[218] Ibid., 21.

greater willingness on the part of those who were not in Europe during the Holocaust to accept the survivors' plight as legitimate.[219] At the same time, it is worth noting that it is questionable whether the Eichmann trial had a similarly significant effect on government policies or on the state-supported aspects of Holocaust memory culture in Israel and the US.

These different aspects of Israeli Holocaust memory culture contain an inherent tension. On the one hand, Israel's international isolation is seen as a continuation of the isolation of Jews in the diaspora, and any criticism of Israel is perceived as a continuation of historical antisemitism, just like the Holocaust. On the other hand, Israel is also seen as detached from and a contradiction of the very nature of diaspora Jews.[220] From this perspective, however, it is not a contradiction. If one accepts the above-mentioned idea of the Holocaust as another link in the chain of the historical struggles against antisemitism, then the tension can be resolved by asserting that while Jews have changed, and have become warriors, the world around them has stayed the same – inherently antisemitic. That Jews have changed to adapt to the world is the core significance of Zionism from this perception, but the world has not advanced – at least not ideologically.

The Six-day War

The Six-day war was fought between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and Syria, three of its neighbouring states which were then its sworn enemies (with some support from Lebanese and Iraqi forces), on 5–10 June 1967. The Arab nations were also actively supported by the Soviet Union. The result of the conflict was a decisive defeat of all three states by Israel, despite its significantly smaller army, and the capture by Israel of significant territory. This territory included the Sinai Peninsula, later returned to Egypt under the 1978 peace agreement, and the areas known today as East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza strip and the Israeli Golan heights, all of which are still under varying degrees and forms of Israeli control.[221]

Israel's resounding victory in the war reverberated throughout the Jewish world. The Six-day war came to represent the height of the Israeli victim-hero

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[219] Shapira, "The Eichmann Trial: Changing Perspectives", 23–26, 33–35.

[220] Dalia Ofer, "50 Shanim shel siach israeli al ha-Shoah: me'afyenim ve-dilemot", in *Ha-Shoah ba-historia ha-yehudit: historiographia, toda'a ve-parshanut*, ed. Dan Michman (Israel: Yad Vashem, 2005), 297.

[221] Yossi Goldstein, "The Six Day War: The War that no One Wanted", *Israel Affairs* 24, no. 5 (2018); Asher Susser, "Fifty Years since the Six-Day War: How the Middle East Has Changed", *The RUSI Journal* 162, no. 3 (2017).

axiom. On the one hand, Israel emphasized before and after June 1967 the eternal suffering of the Jewish people and its historical successor: the state of Israel. On the other hand, Israel's relatively small military had just defeated three significantly larger and more powerful armies, and Israel was in control of millions of people living in the newly acquired territories. This point in time has often been seen as the point when the contradiction between the claims of victimhood by Israel and world Jewry, and Israel's actual military prowess was at its highest.[222]

For US Jews, the Six-day war has been seen as a turning point in their relationship with Israel. After 1967, the US became more involved in and identified with Israel and Israeli Jews than ever before. This at least partially contributed to the Holocaust being increasingly seen by US Jews as a more Jewish and less universal event. It is by no means the sole reason for these changes in perception, however, and other significant factors, such as the Eichmann trial and overall changes that took place in US state-minorities relations, must also be taken into account. If we analyse the effect of the Six-day war on the Jewish world using Rüsen's model, we can say that it caused a normal crisis for Israeli Jewry and a critical crisis for US Jewry; that is, that in the Israeli case, it merely strengthened a pre-existing perception of the warrior Zionist Jew, while for US Jews it created a new pattern of representation as they generally still saw themselves as part of the historical victims group.

Holocaust Memory in Israel

Memory of the Holocaust in Israel is multifaceted and has changed over time, as well as between individuals, groups within the Jewish majority, such as scholars and the secular, religious or ultra-orthodox, and within the different Jewish ethnic groups and among minority groups.[223] At the same time, however, the predominant state-produced and state-maintained Holocaust memory culture has not changed significantly over the years, continuously stressing the superiority of the interpretation of the Holocaust

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[222] Lawrence Grossman, "Transformation through Crisis: The American Jewish Committee and the Six-Day War", *American Jewish History* 86, no. 1 (1998); Daniel Navon, "'We are a People, One People': How 1967 Transformed Holocaust Memory and Jewish Identity in Israel and the US", *Journal of Historical Sociology* 28, no. 3 (2015).

[223] Dalia Ofer, "The Past That Does Not Pass: Israelis and Holocaust Memory", *Israel Studies* 14, no. 1 (2009); "We Israelis Remember, but How? The Memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli Experience"; Oppenheimer, "The Holocaust: a Mizrahi Perspective".

as unique and an example of the recurring persecution of the Jewish people at the same time,[224] and shows little tolerance towards alternative interpretations and commemorations. This does not mean that alternative Holocaust commemoration does not exist in Israel, but rather that most alternative commemorations are commonly faced with widespread public objections.[225]

While the focus in Israel has always been clearly on the Jewish experience during the Holocaust, the experiences of the "average" Holocaust survivor and victim were never given a substantial place in Israeli memory culture. The Holocaust overshadowed all other historical events that preceded it, including life in the diaspora throughout the centuries, and was perceived as the culmination of all historical processes, a logical peak to antisemitism as represented by a chain of catastrophic events (from slavery in Egypt to the destruction of both temples, Masada, and so on), followed naturally by the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, as both the result of and a response to this chain of events.[226] From this point of view, which, with a few exceptions, has had wide support in Israeli government circles, the Holocaust was seen as the end result of Jewish life in the *galut* and the consequence of the weakness and naivete of diaspora Jews, and the price they paid for their ill-advised quest for assimilation.[227] Generally speaking,

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[224] That is, that the Holocaust cannot be compared to any other case of genocide, but at the same time is also a part of the chain of events that make up the history of suffering.

[225] Jackie Feldman, "Nationalising Personal Trauma, Nationalising National Redemption: Performing Testimony at Auschwitz-Birkenau", in *Remembering Violence: Anthropological Perspectives on Intergenerational Transmission*, ed. Nicolas Argenti and Katharina Schramm (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Steir-Livny, "Remembrance in the Living Room [Zikaron ba-salon]: Grassroots Gatherings as New Forms of Holocaust Commemoration in Israel"; Yablonka, "The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Israel: The Nuremberg, Kapos, Kastner, and Eichmann Trials", 7; Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood*, 3–6; Dalia Ofer, "Studying the Holocaust in Israel", *Israel Studies* 23, no. 3 (2018).

[226] Omer Bartov, *Murder in Our Midst: the Holocaust, Industrial Killing, and Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 175-176; Tim Cole, "Nativization and Nationalization: A Comparative Landscape Study of Holocaust Museums in Israel, the US and the UK", in *After Eichmann: Collective Memory and Holocaust since 1961*, ed. David Cesarani (New York andFlorence: Routledge, 2005), 131–133.

[227] Robert Liberles, "Ha-Shoah veha-ha'aracha mechadash shel ha-historia ha-yehudit ba-et ha-hadasha: Shalom W' Baron ve-historionim acherim", in *Ha-Shoah ba-historia ha-yehudit: historiographia, toda'a ve-parshanut*, ed. Dan Michman (Israel: Yad Vashem, 2005), 76–87; Dalia Ofer, "50 Shanim shel siach israeli al ha-Shoah: me'afyenim ve-dilemot", ibid., 309–317; "The Strength of Remembrance: Commemorating the Holocaust during the First Decade

when Holocaust survivors were mentioned in the first two decades after the Holocaust, the focus was on antisemitism and on the survivors rebuilding their lives in Israel, and becoming part of the eventual "triumph" of Jews over Nazism and antisemitism that is the state of Israel. Even after the Eichmann trial, state treatment of Holocaust survivors in Israel was lacking, to say the least.[228]

Non-Jewish perspectives on the Holocaust, including even the existence of non-Jewish victims, have been minimized if not entirely hidden. This has been done, for example, through the education system, in schoolbooks and through school trips to Poland.[229] Holocaust Memorial Day in Israel is on a separate date to that of the international Memorial Day, and is based around the day the Warsaw ghetto uprising began. Any connection with or comparison to other cases of genocide is vehemently denied.[230] Holocaust memory has become intertwined with Israeli nationalism and nationalistic ideas.[231] In the few cases where alternative memorial traditions have been suggested or attempted, they have been fiercely attacked as desecrating the memory of the Holocaust and of its Jewish victims.[232] In academia, while the Holocaust's powerful presence ignited a re-evaluation of Jewish history as a whole in the light of the atrocity,[233] the study of other cases of genocide or mass-violence

of Israel"; Gabriel Sheffer, "Moshe Sharett, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Jewish Diaspora", *Israel Studies* 15, no. 3 (2010).

[228] Nadav Davidovitch and Rakefet Zalashik, "Recalling the Survivors: Between Memory and Forgetfulness of Hospitalized Holocaust Survivors in Israel", ibid.12, no. 2 (2007): 145-147.

[229] Yair Auron, "Jewish-Israeli Identity among Israel's Future Teachers", *Jewish Political Studies Review* 9, no. 1/2 (1997); *Reflections on the Inconceivable: Theoretical Aspects in Genocide Studies* (2006); Feldman, "Nationalising Personal Trauma, Nationalising National Redemption: Performing Testimony at Auschwitz-Birkenau"; Ofer, "We Israelis Remember, but How? The Memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli Experience".

[230] "50 Shanim shel siach israeli al ha-Shoah: me'afyenim ve-dilemot (50 years of Israeli Shoah discourse: characteristics and dilemmas)", 294.

[231] See Dina Porat, "Meir Ya'ari ve-Aba Kovner: tfisot kotviot shel leumiyut ve-yahadut", ibid.

[232] See a review of efforts of scholars to address the problems regarding the increasingly Israeli-focused nature of Holocaust memory in Israel in: Gutwein, "The Privatization of the Holocaust: Memory, Historiography, and Politics", 39–45. Most notable in the discussion, see: Yehuda Elkana, "Not a Chosen People", *Ha'aretz*, March 18 1996; "The Need to Forget", *Ha'aretz*, March 1 1988; Henry Wassermann, "The Nationalization of the Memory of the Six Million", *Politika*, no. 8 (1986); Moshe Zuckerman, *Holocaust in the Safe Room: 'The Holocaust' in the Israeli Press during the Gulf War (Tel-Aviv* (Tel-Aviv: Zuckerman, M, 1993).

[233] See Gavin I. Langmuir, "Hevedelim be-muda'ut: hashpa'at ha-Shoah al hokrey sin'at Israel", in *Ha-Shoah ba-historia ha-yehudit: historiographia, toda'a ve-parshanut*, ed. Dan Michman (Israel: Yad Vashem, 2005); Truda Maurer, "Lo "shoahtiut" ve-lo "simbiotica":

has been minimal. Noteworthy here are the efforts of professor emeritus Yair Auron, who for many years was the only researcher in Israel to actively engage with issues related to other genocides (as well as the Holocaust), attempted to introduce genocide-related content into the Israeli education system (unfortunately without success) and founded a course on Genocide at the Israeli Open University, while also editing a series of books related to that course.[234]

What role did the Holocaust play in Israel's politics, culture and memorial policies? The answer to this question has been debated over the years. A mainstream argument is that the Holocaust was not particularly significant in Israel until the Eichmann trial.[235] On the other hand, there have also been opposing claims that the Holocaust already had a central role in the early years of the state.[236] I would argue that the latter perspective is more accurate, although I would add that the place and meaning of the Holocaust changed quite significantly between the late 1940s and the early 1960s. Holocaust commemoration had a significant place even before the founding of the state through individual efforts to commemorate communities, which included the smuggling of ash and other victim remains from camp sites in Europe to Eretz-Israel.[237] Moreover, the 1949 establishment of the "Forest of the Martyrs" and the Holocaust cellar in

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gishot hadashot le-toldot hayachasim ben yehudim le-lo-yehudim be-germania shelifney 1933", in *Ha-Shoah ba-historia ha-yehudit: historiographia, toda'a ve-parshanut*, ed. Dan Michman (Israel: Yad Vashem, 2005), 89–108; Keneth Stau, "Knesia ve-metsi'ut: gishot historiyot le-knesia ve-la-yehudim be-yemey ha-beina'im al reka ha-Shoah", in *Ha-Shoah ba-historia ha-yehudit: historiographia, toda'a ve-parshanut*, ed. Dan Michman (Israel: Yad Vashem, 2005) 145–165 .

[234] Yair Auron, Jack Katzenell, and David Silberklang, "The Holocaust and the Israeli Teacher", *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 8, no. 2 (1994); Yair Auron, *The Banality of Indifference* (Tel-Aviv: Dvir, 1995); *Reflections on the Inconceivable: Theoretical Aspects in Genocide Studies*; "Recognizing Genocide to Avoid Others", *Politique Internationale*, no. 147 (2015).

[235] Mikael Tossavainen, "Calendar, Context and Commemoration", in *Echoes of the Holocaust: Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Klas-Göran Karlsson and Ulf Zander (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003).

[236] Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel"; Ofer, "50 Shanim shel siach israeli al ha-Shoah: me'afyenim ve-dilemot (50 years of Israeli Shoah discourse: characteristics and dilemmas)".

[237] Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel"; Ofer, "The Past That Does Not Pass: Israelis and Holocaust Memory"; William Safran, "The Jewish Diaspora in a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective", ibid.10 (2005); Dalia Ofer, "We Israelis Remember, but How? The Memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli Experience", ibid.18, no. 2 (2013).

Mount Zion, the establishment of Yad Vashem in 1953 and the public discussion on diplomatic relations with Germany, in particular around the 1952 reparations agreement, [238] are examples of the clear interest in, at least to some degree and in some aspects of, the Holocaust and its consequences. However, Holocaust memory culture took a different form after the first two decades, as noted above with regard to the Eichmann trial and the Six-day War, and is expanded on further below.
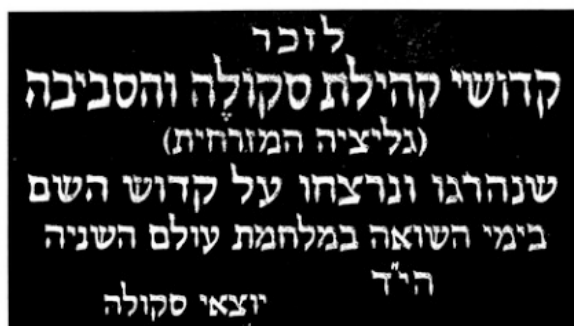
An important component of Israeli Holocaust memory culture is, as discussed above, the place of the diaspora. Dalia Ofer writes that this attitude is inherently self-contradictory. On the one hand, the loss of the diaspora was seen as both a terrible and self-inflicted tragedy that could have been prevented by the actions of diaspora Jews and through the earlier founding of the State of Israel, which in itself had been delayed by the diaspora's attempts at assimilation. On the other hand, the State of Israel was portrayed as a continuation of Jewish history (even its culmination) as well as of Jewish experiences through history, and the antithesis of that form of "weak" existence.[239] I demonstrate that this tension between the two perceptions of the diaspora is widely represented in the editorials of the Yizkor books.

As mentioned above, however, I would argue that this approach was not in fact contradictory. The main idea expressed in Israeli Holocaust memory culture was that while Israel is strong and unapologetic, representing a new kind of Jewish identity, it is not the Jewish experience that stayed the same, but the world that remained somewhere between oblivious of and hostile to Jews. Thus, there is in fact a great deal of internal consistency in Israel's attitude to the diaspora. It is consistently viewed as weak and compromising despite the gentile world's continuously hostile attitude and regular violence of different kinds towards the Jews and their state.

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[238] Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel"; Ofer, "We Israelis Remember, but How? The Memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli Experience", 76. Another example can be found in the controversies around playing the music of Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss in Israel, see: Na'ama Sheffi, "Between Collective Memory and Manipulation: The Holocaust, Wagner and the Israelis", in *After Eichmann: Collective Memory and Holocaust since 1961*, ed. David Cesarani (New York and Florence: Routledge, 2005).

[239] Ofer, "Studying the Holocaust in Israel"; "The Past That Does Not Pass: Israelis and Holocaust Memory", 22–23,25–26; "We Israelis Remember, but How? The Memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli Experience", 72–74.

Figure 5.1. *Example of a Memorial Plaque.*

לזכר
קדושי קהילת סקולה והסביבה
(גליציה המזרחית)
שנהרגו ונרצחו על קדוש השם
בימי השואה במלחמת עולם השניה
הי"ד
יוצאי סקולה

A page from the Skole Yizkor book, presenting a typical memorial plaque from
the Holocaust memorial cellar in Mount Zion, Jerusalem. The Plaque denotes
all the Jews of Skole and its surroundings as martyrs, who died al kiddush ha-
Shem. Source: Skole, 1986, 4.

Nationalism and Judaism

The Holocaust, while widely viewed as a catastrophe unique in its dimensions, has also been perceived since early on by historians as a continuation, at least to some degree, of earlier antisemitism.[240] This viewpoint, which sees the Holocaust as essentially another chapter of ongoing antisemitism, fits well with the ideas and interests of the Zionist movement. The connection between Nazi ideology and previous antisemitism seems sometimes arbitrary and selective, and even simplistic in its retroactive historical predetermination.[241] It nonetheless permeates, alongside other elements, Israeli Holocaust memory culture. This ahistorical approach to the suffering of the Jewish people is what Rosemary Horowitz and Esther Benbassa discuss in the quotes at the beginning of this chapter. Instead of the history of the Jewish people, the focus is on the story of Jewish suffering, which makes any context other than instances of suffering irrelevant.

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[240] Steven T. Katz, "Toldot ha-yachasim ben yehudim le-lo-yehudim derech haprisma shel Auschwitz", in *Ha-Shoah ba-historia ha-yehudit: historiographia, toda'a ve-parshanut*, ed. Dan Michman (Israel: Yad Vashem, 2005), 15–16. Dan Michman, "Shiluv ha-Shoah ba-mirkam ha-rachav shel toldot israel ba-zman ha-hadash: nisyonot hitmodedut shel historyonim movilim", in *Ha-Shoah ba-historia ha-yehudit: historiographia, toda'a ve-parshanut*, ed. Dan Michman (Israel: Yad Vashem, 2005), 47–49, 60–64.

[241] Katz, "Toldot ha-yachasim ben yehudim le-lo-yehudim derech haprisma shel Auschwitz", 18–29, 31–35; Robert Liberles, "Ha-Shoah veha-ha'aracha mechadash shel ha-historia ha-yehudit ba-et ha-hadasha: Shalom W' Baron ve-historionim acherim", ibid., 69–71.

This perception of history fed into the already patronizing attitude of the *Yishuv* towards the *galut*. It transformed Jewish life throughout history into a monochromatic chain of catastrophes, completely disregarding the rich cultural, social, religious and sometimes economic life that has existed all over the world for many centuries.

As part of this chain, the Nazis are no longer historical beings, but instead part of the mythical ahistorical *Amalek*, the people whose name has become a generic synonym for all "enemies of Israel", from biblical times all the way to the present.[242] Through this lens, all enemies of Israel have also been equated with the Nazis. In 1956, Egypt, in threatening to destroy Israel, was called a "rising Nazi power" by Israeli politicians and newspapers. Its leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser, was compared to Hitler, and his nationalization of the Suez Canal with the *Anschluss*, both as an act and as an event that the Jews could only rely on themselves to resolve, as the world could again be expected to stand idly by.[243]

This approach has been maintained through the years, and the Holocaust has been increasingly subordinated to unrelated political and social needs, for example with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip.[244] Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a 2015 speech that it was the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem who gave Hitler the idea of murdering Jews in late 1941,[245] thus de facto transferring responsibility for the Holocaust from Germany to the Palestinians. While the Grand Mufti was indeed an avid Nazi supporter, he had no influence over Nazi policy. Moreover, the destruction of the Jews began before the date when Netanyahu alleges this meeting took place.

[242] Gili Kugler, "Metaphysical Hatred and Sacred Genocide: The Questionable Role of Amalek in Biblical Literature", *Journal of Genocide Research* 23, no. 1 (2021): 1–3; Allan M. Langner, "Remembering Amalek Twice", *The Jewish Bible quarterly* 36, no. 4 (2008).

[243] Grossman, "Transformation through Crisis: The American Jewish Committee and the Six-Day War", 43; Navon, "'We are a People, One People': How 1967 Transformed Holocaust Memory and Jewish Identity in Israel and the US: We are a people, one people", 349–350, 356.

[244] Ofer, "We Israelis Remember, but How? The Memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli Experience".

[245] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPygGYZBgHU . This meeting happened of course after the destruction had already begun. The idea predates Netanyahu, but has become geopolitically significant during his preiod as prime minister of Israel. See in: Shapira, "The Eichmann Trial: Changing Perspectives". Netanyahu's claims were refuted by Yad Vashem chief historian Dina Porat and by Efraim Zuroff from the Simon Wiesenthal Center, among others;https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Netanyahus-Holocaust-distortion-obscures-Muft-is-collaboration-say-historians-428670 .

Through this claim, Netanyahu sought to drastically re-contextualize historically the place of the Palestinian leadership in the Holocaust. In his 2018 speech in Yad Vashem, during the central Memorial Day ceremony for Holocaust victims, Netanyahu compared Iran with Nazi Germany and agreements with Iran with the early appeasement policies of the "Western Powers" (his words) towards Nazi Germany, which led to the Holocaust.[246] Netanyahu's words at the same time completely ignored the Soviet Union's collaboration with Nazi Germany, as well as Russia's long-standing military support of Israel's enemies in the Middle East, including Iran.

Heroes, "Lambs" and "Traitors"

From its early days in post-1945 Palestine, heroism has been the strongest element of Israeli Holocaust memory culture.[247] As stressed above, the Holocaust has been perceived in Israel as one more link in a chain of disasters that have befallen the Jewish people, and as part of an ancient struggle that is still ongoing. One result of this focus is that there are only a few commemoration sites dedicated to the Holocaust in Israel. Holocaust commemoration ceremonies commonly take place at municipal memorials for fallen soldiers, which are found in nearly every Jewish municipality in Israel, or in commonplace public spaces (such as community centres). This adds to the identification between the Holocaust and Israel's wars. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have in this context the added responsibility of preventing the next Holocaust from happening. Moreover, the prowess of the IDF, mostly established after the 1967 decisive victory in the Six-day War, is retroactively viewed as further enforcing the *Yishuv*/Diaspora dichotomy between "here" and "there", and between "warriors" and "lambs". The IDF is the reincarnation, in this sense, of the ancient Jewish rebels, such as the Maccabees, who fought against Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the second century BCE and the Sicarii rebels who fought the Romans (and were finally defeated in Masada around 74 CE).[248] This is also connected to the idea that while the living must avenge in the name of the dead, they cannot and must not forgive in their name.[249]

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[246] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0xQjApFt4U .

[247] Cole, "Nativization and Nationalization: A Comparative Landscape Study of Holocaust Museums in Israel, the US and the UK", 136–138. Gutwein, "The Privatization of the Holocaust: Memory, Historiography, and Politics". Jasmin Habib, "Memorializing the Holocaust in Israel: Diasporic Encounters", *Anthropologica* 49, no. 2 (2007). Stone, "Memory, Memorials and Museums".

[248] Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood*, 182–183.

[249] Ofer, "50 Shanim shel siach israeli al ha-Shoah: me'afyenim ve-dilemot".

In Israeli politics, this differentiation was embodied from the start by the assigning of "heroes" to "us" and "here", and "lambs" to "them" and "there" by both sides of the political divide.[250] Thus, each side sought to highlight its connection with the warriors and claim that the survivors – the lambs who survived through luck or even through so-called collaboration with the Nazis – belonged to the other side.[251] The remnants of this approach can be found in some of the scholarly research on Yizkor books, namely in the claim that the books were written by camp survivor Zionists who survived through their physical prowess.[252] This approach implicitly accepts the narrative about the weak non-Zionists who did not survive, or that the memories of those lambs were too shameful to share with others.

Masada and the Kastner Affair

No other event in Jewish historic consciousness has served as a more important symbol of the "narrative of heroes" than the rebellion at Mount Masada against the Romans. In 73–74 CE, some 960 Jewish Sicarii rebels and their families fortified the top of the mountain and were besieged by the Romans. Near the end of the siege, as the Romans were close to capturing the stronghold, the defenders decided that they would rather die than be captured. As the story goes, they did not fight the Romans, but instead chose to kill their own families and then commit suicide.

The myth of Masada has permeated Israeli memory culture, and before it that of the *Yishuv* and of the Zionist movement. It also had a very real manifestation during WWII. German and Axis forces, under the command of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, were approaching Palestine from the south-west, and by October 1943 had reached El-Alamein in Egypt, around 500 Kilometres from Jewish towns in Palestine.[253] A plan was hatched for the entire *Yishuv* – men, women and children – to fortify Mount Carmel, in the north of what was then Palestine, and if necessary die rather than surrender to the Nazis; that is, in combat but mostly through mass suicide. The fate of European Jewry was already known at the time. This plan was not just an operational one. It became a symbol of the perceived difference in attitude: that the members of the *Yishuv* would not go like lambs to the slaughter, but would instead fight and take as many Nazis as they could with them. This re-

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[250] "The Past That Does Not Pass: Israelis and Holocaust Memory".

[251] Benbassa, *Suffering as Identity: The Jewish Paradigm*.

[252] Amir, "Israel as the Cradle of Yizker Books". Kugelmass et al., *From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry*.

[253] Yehuda Bauer, "The Road to the 'Final Solution'" (Yale University Press, 1994).

emphasized and reaffirmed the pre-existing dichotomy between the *Yishuv* and the Jews of the *galut*. Zionism, according to its own point of view, had been right all along. The gentiles could be neither trusted nor negotiated with. Resistance made death worthy. The result might be the same, but the way – resistance instead of the perceived passivity of the diaspora Jews – made all the difference in the world to the *Yishuv*.[254]

While the self-sacrifice of the Jews on Masada served as a symbol of the heroic struggle of Jews for their freedom, the Holocaust received a decidedly different interpretation in the first decades following the establishment of the Israeli state. In contrast to the Masada myth and the ideas of Jewish heroism, some survivors of the Holocaust were even branded traitors among the *Yishuv* and in Israel. This attitude was especially prominent with regard to the *Judenräte*, the so-called Jewish councils appointed by the Nazis, mainly in the ghettos, to facilitate German orders and needs, and later on to make the liquidation of the ghettos and the destruction of the Jews more efficient. The situation of the *Judenräte* was not seen as complex or a grey area. Instead, it was seen in black and white that these were traitors who collaborated with the Germans and helped to murder their Jewish brethren.[255] One of the most significant events in this context was the "Kastner Affair".

Rudolph Kastner, a Hungarian-born Jew, served on the Committee for Aid and Rescue, a Zionist organization that, until the Nazi occupation of Hungary, had mainly provided aid to the masses of Jewish refugees who had come to Hungary from other parts of Europe. After 1944, the committee attempted to save as many lives as possible, but with little success. Kastner believed he could save some of the Hungarian Jews by negotiating with the Germans, specifically Adolph Eichmann. After several weeks of negotiations, a single train carrying 1,685 Jews was allowed to leave Hungary. Kastner also managed to save 15,000 more Jews by negotiating their transfer to Strasshoff concentration camp, near Vienna. Hanna Yablonka writes the following about this situation:

> Kastner was aware that a number of Nazi leaders understood that Jewish rescue could serve as an opening for negotiations with the West. In Kastner's mind

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[254] Yael Zerubavel, "The Death of Memory and the Memory of Death: Masada and the Holocaust as Historical Metaphors", *Representations* 45, no. 45 (1994); Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood*.

[255] Dan Michman, "Jewish Leadership in Extremis", in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Arendt and Elon, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil*; Yablonka, "The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Israel: The Nuremberg, Kapos, Kastner, and Eichmann Trials"; Rozett, *Approaching the Holocaust: Texts and Contexts*, 71–92.

this could provide a rational basis for further rescue operations. Dov Dinur, a Holocaust scholar, is convinced that over 100,000 Jews from Budapest were saved in this way. Despite these extraordinary figures, however, nearly 500,000 Hungarian Jews were sent to their deaths in record time on the very eve of Nazi Germany's downfall.[256]

After the war, Kastner was accused by Hungarian Jews of aiding SS officer Kurt Becher during the latter's trial, and of accepting favours in exchange for a place on the train that left Hungary. Some even claimed that Kastner had deceived Hungarian Jewry into believing that there were no other alternatives for survival. A 1946 Zionist Congress committee inquired into the accusations but came to no conclusions on the matter.[257] In 1952, Malkiel Gruenwald, a 70-year old Hungarian-born Jew living in Jerusalem, who had emigrated to Palestine before the Holocaust, published a leaflet in which he called Kastner a "careerist who grew fat on Hitler's looting and murder" and accused him of being complicit in the murder of Hungarian Jewry. Gruenwald, a long-time right-wing activist, was not a Holocaust survivor – he was in the right-wing of the underground resistance in Palestine during that period. His accusations are emblematic of the attitude of the *Yishuv* towards the diaspora, based on a complete lack of understanding of the situation and circumstances faced by European Jews during the Holocaust.[258]

Kastner sued Grunwald for libel in January 1954 but instead found himself the accused. In his verdict, Judge Binyamin Halevi said that when Kastner chose to continue negotiating with Eichmann, he "sold his soul to the devil";[259] and that the Jews he saved were indeed "privileged" and chosen by him. In 1957 Kastner appealed the verdict to the Supreme Court of Israel and in January 1958 Judge Halevi's decision was overturned, stating that "not every act of cooperation can be called 'collaboration' and not every person who was in contact with the Nazis and provided them with assistance can be denounced as a collaborator"'. Kastner did not live to hear this verdict. In March 1957 he was murdered by Jewish assassins as a direct result of Grunwald's accusations and Halevi's verdict.[260]

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[256] Yablonka, "The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Israel: The Nuremberg, Kapos, Kastner, and Eichmann Trials", 12–13.

[257] Ibid., 13.

[258] Ibid., 13–14.

[259] Judge Halevi was later one of the three judges who presided over the Eichmann trial.

[260] Berger, *The Holocaust, Religion, and the Politics of Collective Memory: Beyond Sociology*, 179–181.

Hansi Brand, Kastner's former deputy, testified in the Eichmann trial and faced intensive interrogation by the judges (including the above-mentioned Judge Halevi) about the attempts to save Hungarian Jewry, the idea of assassinating Eichmann and the knowledge they had about the ongoing destruction of the Jews. In her testimony she said:

> I do not wish to brag or glorify the committee, but on more than one occasion we weighed the possibility of approaching Eichmann, as we often did, and assassinating him. What would we have gained from it? I wish to say candidly and publicly that we were an aid and rescue committee and no one among us was a hero. Maybe we considered it wiser to let these [Nazis] live, because if we killed them – we [doubted] any rescue would come from it.[261]

This answer demonstrates the level of helplessness Jewish leadership faced, even in the knowledge of what was going on, and was a rejection of the *Yishuv's* one-dimensional perception of heroism. Her testimony was one of many in the Eichmann trial that contributed to the shift in public attitudes to the Holocaust and its survivors. The Kastner affair represents the peak of the "guilt of the victim" syndrome, and the inability of those who were not in Europe during the Holocaust, such as Gruenwald and Judge Halevi, who emigrated from Germany in 1933, to comprehend what the survivors went through or to show them any sympathy.[262]

Historically, this could be seen as a development in the above-mentioned dichotomy between the fighting *Yishuv* and the lambs-to-the-slaughter diaspora. We might ask if there is any difference between pre-emptive suicide (and killing one's own family in the process) and a surrender followed by an execution. In either case, the goal of the enemy – in this case the Nazis – was achieved. In fact, one could argue that suicide makes things even easier for the enemy by saving them time and resources. Moreover, one could even question why killing oneself and one's own children on a mountain top is defined as heroism, while throwing oneself on the electric wire fence of a concentration camp, or dying from starvation while keeping one's children alive, is going like lambs to the slaughter. Moreover, suicide is forbidden in Judaism, but this prohibition is ignored in this context, by the *Yishuv* and later on by the State of Israel.

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[261] Yablonka, "The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Israel: The Nuremberg, Kapos, Kastner, and Eichmann Trials", 18–19.

[262] Ibid., 9–15.

In another example of this misunderstanding of life during the Holocaust, Kastner was accused in his first trial of not intervening in favour of Hannah Szenes, the famous Jewish paratrooper who was captured in 1944. The idea that a Jewish leader could intervene with the Nazi leadership for an enemy prisoner of war (Szenes was a British soldier) was absurd. Nonetheless, this was presented as proof of his "deal with the devil".[263] This sentiment towards Kastner continued well after his murder and remains prevalent in Israel today.[264]

Heroism has been a recurring theme in US and Israeli Holocaust memory cultures and is, as will be shown, an important point of contention in many Yizkor books. This introduction to the matter aims to illustrate that the ideas behind the "lambs" and "heroes" dichotomy are not based on any rationally conceived criteria or thought-through ideas. It has always been subjective or even arbitrary and, as illustrated by the Kastner case, strongly dependent on context and circumstances.

I cannot delve here into this interesting ethical discussion. I have instead presented these points to illustrate that the main difference between the actions of the diaspora and those of the *Yishuv* is in their perception. The *Yishuv*, and later certain parts of the Israeli state, regarded themselves as morally superior to the diaspora. Thus, any action or plan of the *Yishuv*/state was in turn seen as morally superior. The intentions of the diaspora Jews were questioned, and their actions seen in a negative light. It is noteworthy that the *Yishuv* was never put to a real test – the Jews of Palestine never experienced anything similar to life under Nazi rule.

Holocaust Memory in the US

The US came out of the Second World War as the 'big winner'. This is true from the military, economic and geopolitical perspectives. It is important for our context to note that from the US perspective, a significant part of World War II took place in the Pacific theatre, not in Europe. Moreover, Jews being a minority in the country, unlike their situation in Israel, meant that the main Holocaust memory discourse in the US did not revolve around the Jewish experience, the Holocaust as such or the victims. Rather, coming out of the

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[263] Or "Satan" in other translations. Ibid., 14. Rozett, *Approaching the Holocaust: Texts and Contexts*, 71–72.

[264] One only needs to look at any publication or post by Merav Michaeli, his granddaughter, Labor Party leader and current minister in the Israeli government, to see how much and in what way the Kastner affair is remembered.

war and the Holocaust, the genocide in US memory culture came to be seen as a universal crime against humanity, and as a link in a chain of human rights' violations. One major focus of this memory culture, unlike in Israel, was the role and responsibility of bystanders. At least until the 1980s, Nazi racial policies, their attack on the Jews and the Holocaust as a whole had a significantly less important place in modern US historiography, relative to its place in later decades.[265]

US interests in this context were clearly directed by geopolitical considerations, most notably its relationship with Germany (West Germany until 1989) in the light of the Cold War. The result of this underlining of geopolitical interests was a clash between US and Jewish-American Holocaust memory cultures.[266] The Bitburg controversy in 1985 exemplifies this, when then US President Ronald Reagan, for the sake of US-German relations, equated Jewish Holocaust victims with Waffen-SS soldiers killed in World War II as both being victims of totalitarianism, while initially declining to include a visit to a concentration camp in his itinerary.[267] Geopolitical considerations therefore matter, as do the majority-minority relationship in the US in general. The relationship between the US and US Jews should be examined as part of a much wider context of the relationship between the US state and its minorities, such as the African-American and the Latino communities, in particular since the 1980s.

The composition of the Jewish community in the US is generally more heterogeneous compared to Israel. While ethnic tensions have always been a part of Jewish life in Israel, US Jewry is affected by several added factors. US Jewry is made of several denominations.[268] This variety of denominations, coupled with pre-existing ethnic, generational, linguistic and political differences, as well as the status of US Jews as one minority among many, translate at the structural level into a multiplicity of political,

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[265] Cole, "Nativization and Nationalization: A Comparative Landscape Study of Holocaust Museums in Israel, the US and the UK", 133–134, 138–141; Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians*, 8th printing ed. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard U.P, 1997), 22–42.

[266] Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, 85–102.

[267] Cesarani, "Holocaust Controversies in the 1990s: The Revenge of History or the History of Revenge?", 80–81; Deborah E. Lipstadt, "The Bitburg Controversy", *The American Jewish Year Book* 87 (1987); Anson Rabinbach, "From Explosion to Erosion: Holocaust Memorialization in America since Bitburg", *History and Memory* 9, no. 1/2 (1997); Ronald Reagan, "Address by President Ronald Reagan", *World Affairs* 147, no. 4 (1985): 305–310.

[268] Orthodox, Conservative, Reformed and their sub-groups, as well as non-denominated persons.

religious, social, economic and cultural organizations of different kinds, with vastly different and contradictory approaches to and opinions on the Holocaust.[269] This complex structure, in addition to the dichotomy between US Jewry and the state, in turn mean that it is more difficult to talk about a single US Jewry in relation to any one idea, including Holocaust memory, compared to its Israeli counterpart. Nonetheless, there are several phenomena that can generally be related to US Jewry as a whole, two of which I discuss below.

The Myth of Silence

What exactly is meant by the "Myth of Silence" in the US context is unclear and varies between different scholars. It is nonetheless a significant part of US Holocaust memory culture. The main idea behind this term is that from the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust until the 1960s, the Holocaust was rarely discussed in US society, and that the general idea was that survivors did not want to talk about what had happened to them. Even as the Holocaust became more present in US life and the plight of the victims and survivors was more widely recognized, the idea that survivors generally did not want to recollect remained prevalent. Hasia Diner has objected to this description and convincingly demonstrated that survivors in the US were never silent; that they were in fact screaming, literally and figuratively; and that those screams were largely ignored by the state, by local and national leaders, by academics and even by neighbours and family members.[270] This unwillingness later took the form of a retroactive claim that the fault lay with the survivors, that they had remained silent and not wanted to be heard, at least until the Eichmann trial (1961–62) and Israel's complete victory in the 1967 Six-day war. This retroactive claim was the Myth of Silence, as noted by Diner. The perception

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[269] Henri L. Feingold, "Stephan Weiss: manhig yehudi al parashat drachim", in *Ha-Shoah ba-historia ha-yehudit: historiographia, toda'a ve-parshanut*, ed. Dan Michman (Israel: Yad Vashem, 2005), 399–422.

[270] David Cesarani, "Challenging the 'Myth of Silence': Postwar Reactions to the Destruction of European Jewry", in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, ed. David Cesarani and Eric J. Sundquist (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012); Hasia R. Diner, "Origins and Meanings of the Myth of Silence", ibid.; Margarete Myers Feinstein, "Re-imagining the Unimaginable: Theater, Memory, and Rehabilitation in the Displaced Persons Camps", ibid.; Beth B. Cohen, "The Myth of Silence – Survivors Tell a Different Story", ibid.; Eli Lederhandler, "Be-tzel ha-Shoah: ha-shoah be-einei ha-tzibur ha-americani veha-yehudi ha-americani be-shenot ha-hamishim veha-shishim", in *Ha-Shoah ba-historia ha-yehudit: historiographia, toda'a ve-parshanut*, ed. Dan Michman (Israel: Yad Vashem, 2005), 451-462; Allen Mintz, "Me-shtika le-havlata: ha-Shoah ba-tarbut ha-americanit", ibid.; Peter Novick, "Response to Lederhendler and Lang", *Jewish social studies* 7, no. 3 (2001).

of the survivors' silence strongly permeated US Holocaust memory and historiography until as late as the 2000s.[271]

Yizkor books have from the start been one part of these attempts by survivors to tell what happened. Dan Stone has noted that once the displaced persons camps were disbanded, Yizkor books became the sole means of Holocaust commemoration.[272] Generally speaking, the Yiddish world remained an active arena for memories published in different forms throughout the 1950s.[273] US Jews actively commemorated the Holocaust through grassroots social activities in synagogues, seminaries and youth movements, in the private and public spheres.[274] Moreover, Jewish American leaders, such as Stephen Wise, had already become active and involved in US politics on issues such as the fate of Jewish Holocaust survivors and the closely related issue of the Jewish state, before and after the establishment of Israel.[275]

However, when it comes to the US general public and to the US state and the Western bloc, this idea of silence was very much true. In the interests of varied national and international (bloc) memory politics and geopolitics, the focus in Holocaust commemoration was very much on specific grand narratives,[276] on instances of resistance, and on "perpetrator-history"; and not on the survivors, their experiences and their struggles after the Holocaust. Through those grand narratives, the Myth of Silence also permeated popular, non-scholarly culture.[277]

The Place of Holocaust Memory in US Jewish Life
Following the Holocaust, a series of discussions took place within the US Jewish community, especially within its different denominations – the Orthodox, Conservative and Reformed communities, which in turn include

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[271] Hasia R. Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945–1962*, vol. 1 (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 86–149, 365–390.

[272] Stone, "Memory, Memorials and Museums", 514.

[273] Schwarz, "Blood Ties: Leib Rochman's Yiddish War Diary ", 163–164.

[274] Diner, "Origins and Meanings of the Myth of Silence"; Novick, "Response to Lederhendler and Lang".

[275] Feingold, "Stephan Weiss: manhig yehudi al parashat drachim".

[276] For example, in the Israeli case, the establishment of the state of Israel and the importance of Zionism, see Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood*. In the American case, the triumph of good over evil and the good that came out of WWII. See Stone, "Memory, Memorials and Museums".

[277] Diner, "Origins and Meanings of the Myth of Silence", 199–201.

smaller groups.[278] Discussions began as early as during the Holocaust, and continue to some extent even today.[279] Scholars have also taken an active role in these discussions.[280] The main point of those deliberations is the question of the degree to which the Jewish-American community should highlight the Holocaust and, in continuation of that, what the "right" reaction to the Holocaust by American Jewry should be. These questions have been discussed in the context of US-Jewish relations and in the light of what was perceived as the clear and utter failure of the assimilation of German Jews into German society, ending in that community's destruction in the Holocaust. That assimilation had at the time, prior to the rise to power of Nazism, been considered successful. Generally speaking, the three main possible courses of action discussed are:

(1) Disconnecting from US society and strengthening a separatist Jewish identity.
(2) Complete assimilation, or forfeiting the Jewish identity for a US one.
(3) Trying to find a balance between the two identities.

The majority of US Jews, especially within the non-Orthodox communities, have chosen the third alternative. As a result, public discussion has focused on how "Jewish" or "American" US Jews should be and, in the context of the discussion here, how the Holocaust should be remembered and commemorated. The main points in these discussions were "what is 'too' Jewish?"; and "can the US state be trusted after what happened in Germany?" As noted above, these discussions have not come to a generally accepted resolution and are in many ways still ongoing.

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[278] Ibid., 192–193; Lipstadt, "The Bitburg Controversy", 23–24; Mintz, "Me-shtika le-havlata: ha-Shoah ba-tarbut ha-americanit", 463-492; Rabinbach, "From Explosion to Erosion: Holocaust Memorialization in America since Bitburg"; Ofer Schiff, "Hitmodeduta shel ha-yahadut ha-reformit be-Artzot ha-Berit im Shoaht yehudey Europa (1933-1948)", in *Ha-Shoah ba-historia ha-yehudit: historiographia, toda'a ve-parshanut*, ed. Dan Michman (Israel: Yad Vashem, 2005), 423–450.

[279] Eli Lederhandler, "Be-tzel ha-Shoah: ha-shoah be-einei ha-tzibur ha-americani veha-yehudi ha-americani be-shenot ha-hamishim veha-shishim", ibid., 451–462; Shaul Magid, "The Holocaust and Jewish Identity in America: Memory, the Unique, and the Universal", *Jewish Social Studies* 18, no. 2 (2012); Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, 103–123.

[280] An example of such a discussion is: Berel Lang, "Lachrymose without Tears: Misreading The Holocaust in American Life", in *Post-Holocaust: Interpretation, Misinterpretation, and the Claims of History*, ed. Berel Lang (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

Concluding Remarks

Holocaust memory culture has taken a somewhat different turn in Israel and the US that is not unique, but nonetheless specific to each country. Having a locally oriented memory culture of any kind is of course not a special case. The specific characteristics of each case are nonetheless important to the understanding of how Holocaust memory has developed and changed over time, as well as how it has been used, abused and implemented. In Rüsen's terms, the Holocaust caused the worst ever catastrophic crisis in wide parts of Western society. The Jewish communities that survived the Holocaust period, including in Palestine/Israel and the US, were especially affected. As part of the new patterns of representation created following the crisis, in both Israel and the US, the Holocaust was placed into a meta-historical chain of events, in an attempt to relate it to pre-existing perceptions of history. In Israel, the Holocaust was placed into an ahistorical chain of Jewish suffering. In the US, the Holocaust was made part of the general US history of social injustice. In both cases, the result was the formation of a predominant, overarching state Holocaust memory culture that placed little significance on the victims and the majority of survivors in favour of a state-specific narrative. In both cases, the early decades saw Holocaust commemoration focus mainly on aspects such as heroism, liberation and the triumph of good over evil. The Jewish survivors, while active in their local environment, and the victims were largely ignored by other parts of society. Yizkor books are one example of Holocaust commemoration within the immediate environment of the survivors and other landsleit. In the following decades, some historical events, most notably the 1961–62 Eichmann trial and the 1967 Six-day war, caused crises of their own that led to changes in the Holocaust memory cultures of both Israel and the US. These crises, and in turn the need for reorientation they created, also affected Yizkor books, as we shall see in following chapters.

Chapter 6: "We, the Surviving Remnants, have Come Together!" – People, Languages and Places

This chapter is about the people involved in the publication process of Yizkor books – the writers of the editorials, mainly publishers and editors, but also other community organizers and officials – as well as the people the books were aimed at – their target audience and perceived readership. Current scholarship generally considers Yizkor books to be a form of landsmanschaft literature, chiefly written by Holocaust survivors, mainly published in Yiddish through Yiddish publication networks, and aimed at the Yiddish-speaking world. This chapter seeks to explore these claims and demonstrates that the producers of Yizkor books, as well as their target audiences, were significantly less homogeneous than previously believed. I discuss four main types of publishers: Landsmanschaftn, other organizations, private individuals and schoolchildren. The direct relationship each group had to the Holocaust and to the commemorated community varied quite significantly. A clear typology of the editors is not possible, but it is possible to discuss them by placing them on two axes: the professional level of the editors and how close they were to the community. On the former axis can be found everyone from professional Yizkor book editors to people with no relevant education or experience, and many levels in between. On the latter axis are editors who were themselves landsleit of the community and Holocaust survivors, alongside editors who by their own admission had never even heard of the community before agreeing to edit a book commemorating it.

Publishers, Editors and Contributors

I use three basic terms in this dissertation to describe the groups that took part in the publication process of Yizkor books: publishers, editors and contributors. That said, some individuals had multiple roles within the publication process of a single book.

Publishers: the individuals and groups that initiated the publication process. There were four main types of publishers: Landsmanschaftn, other organizations, individuals and schoolchildren. The publishers were the

initiators of the publication process who hired or appointed the editor. They commonly had a personal connection with the commemorated community. The publishers were usually responsible for financing the book, and in some cases also requested and collected material from the community at large.

Editors: Generally the most important when it came to the production of the book, most books credit a single editor but there are also books with multiple editors or a designated editorial committee. The editors made most of the significant decisions regarding the content and design of the book. Some editors also coordinated the collection of material or even fundraising.

Contributors: Every Yizkor book contained contributions from the community. These individuals sent in texts, stories, necrology details, photographs, paintings, maps and original documents. In most books, the publishers and editors were also contributors.

Publisher Typology

I have thus identified four different types of Yizkor book publishers. This is clearly a more heterogeneous image of Yizkor books than in the above-mentioned existing literature.

"Landsmanschaft" is defined as a mutual-aid organization of landsleit, outside of their home country, with a membership based around a common birthplace. This chapter shows that the majority of Yizkor books were published by individuals or organizations whose main function was not mutual aid, but based around collective commemoration. All of these publishers, including actual landsmanschaftn, were always strongly connected to the community, even if they were not themselves landsleit. The fourth type of publisher, schoolchildren, was different from the others. The publishing group itself was based around one or more school classes, and thus had nothing to do with the commemorated community or with commemoration in general. In fact, the connection to the specific community was arbitrary. Many of the children in these classes were not themselves descendants of Holocaust survivors, but still took part in the commemoration effort.

It is difficult to provide exact numbers for the publisher typology. Private individuals and schoolchildren are quite clearly identified as such. However, it is not always possible to know whether a specific organization is a landsmanschaft or another type of organization, although some can be clearly identified through their name, especially if they were outside of Israel. There are, however, a sufficient number of each type of publisher that can be clearly

identified to constitute the four groups presented here and substantiate the claim that the publishers of Yizkor books were more heterogeneous than previously noted.

Landsmanschaftn

These organizations published a number of books, mainly in the 1940s and 1950s, but were not the majority publisher even in that period. Many landsleit organizations were established in Israel and a number still exist today. These were mostly organizations based on commemoration rather than mutual aid.[281]

The Lodzer Yizkor Buch,[282] which is commonly considered the first Yizkor book to be published, falls under this category. This kind of book was more common in the first decade after the Holocaust, when the centres of publication were outside Israel,[283] but its dominance waned as Israel became the centre for Yizkor book publication in the early 1960s.

Other Organizations

Many books were published by different kinds of organizations than Landsmanschaftn. This is not just a typological difference; it is related to a widely different set of backgrounds and interests, as well as linguistic, stylistic and content choices. This group includes organizations of townsfolk that had no component of mutual aid, or in which this component was secondary, where commemoration was usually the primary goal and reason for establishment. In Yiddish, these organizations were often referred to as "landslayt farayn" (in Yiddish: לאנדסלייט פאראיין), meaning "descendant society [of]", similar to the Hebrew "Irgun yots'e …" (In Hebrew: ארגון יוצאי...) or Va'ad yots'e…" (In Hebrew: ועד יוצאי...), denoting a non-profit

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[281] See the definition in: https://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/landshaf.html. Although Jewishgen includes a large number of landsleit organizations in Israel in the contact list on that page, the definition used clearly designates mutual aid and support, not commemoration, as the purposes of a landsmanschaft.

[282] Lodz, *Lodzsher yizker-bukh*.

[283] See Berl Cohen, *Zvoliner yizker bukh* (New York: Zvoliner landsmanschaft in New-York, 1982); H. Gelernt, *Pitshayever yizkor bukh* (Philadelphia: Pitshayever hilfs-landsmanschaft, 1960); Perets Granatshteyn, *Mayn horev shtetl Sokolov* (Buenos-Ayres: Tsentral-farband fun poylishe yidn in Argentina, 1946); A. Wolf Jasny, *Yizker-bukh fun der Zshelekhover Yidisher kehile = Sefer yizkor li-kehilat Z'elihov* (Chicago: Aroysgegebn fun der Tsentraler Zshelekhover landsmanshaft in Shikago, 1953); Shaiak, *Lovitsh*; Nechemias Zucker and Unión israelita residentes de Galitzia (Buenos Aires Argentina), *Pinkes Galitsye: aroysgegebn tsum 20-tn aniversar zayt der grindung fun Galitsyaner farband* (Buenos Ayres: Galitsyaner farband, 1945); *Hurbn Gliniane* (New York: Emergency Relief Committee far Gliniane un Omgebung, 1946).

organization established for any number of reasons, in this particular case by landsleit.[284] As noted above, when examining these descendant societies as they are described in the books, it is not always clear exactly which type of organization is present in each case. Generally speaking, when organizations were founded in Israel after 1948, they were unlikely to function as landsmanschaft even according to the definition of their own members. As Israel on its foundation became "home" for many Jews, these organizations then could no longer be referred to as "landsmanschaftn" as they had been founded in what had now become their home country.

Another notable organization is *Irgun Yots'e Polin* (the organization of descendants of Poland), the umbrella-organization for all Polish Jewry descendant organizations in Israel, which in the 1960s published a series of Yizkor books for communities that lacked such at the time (the *Megilat Polin* series).[285] Some editorials explicitly mentioned that their organization was founded for memorial or commemorative purposes only;[286] and when organizational activities were mentioned, mutual aid was not included, unless the organization served as an intermediary or point of contact for an actual landsmanschaft in another country providing aid to the landsleit residing in Israel.[287] Some editorials specifically noted that the idea of commemorating the community, and to found an organization for that purpose, was raised when members received the news of the Holocaust;[288] that is, that the

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[284] See Benzion H. Ayalon, *Pinkas Ostra'ah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun 'ole Ostra'ah be-Yisrael, 1960); A. Wolf Jasny, *Sefer Pabyanits* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Pabyanits be-Yisrael, 1956). This book was published in cooperation with landsmanschaftn all over the world, but the organization in Israel was not one. The same is true for: be-Yisrael, *Kehilat Kaluszyn*; Haim Yosef Lerer, Moshe Gordon, and Israel Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron shel Tomaszow-Lub* (Jerusalem, Israel: Dfus Weiss, 1972).This book was published by an organization that had a small section for mutual-aid (gmilut hasadim, גמילות חסדים); Sobel, *Sefer yizkor li-kehilat Sarnaki*.The organization was founded for commemorative purposes only ; Abraham Samuel Stein, *Pinkas Kletsk* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Kletsk be-Yisra'el, 1959); Gerszon Taffet, *Zaglada Zydow zolkiewskich* (Lodz: Centralna Zydowska Komisja Historyczna w Polsce, 1946). This book was published as part of collection and documentation efforts by an organization that took part in those efforts. I expand on this topic later in this chapter.

[285] Four books from the series are included in this research: Yehudah Leyb Levin, *Ostra'ah*, Sidrat kehilot Yisrael (Yerushalayim: Yad Yahadut Polin, 1965-1966); *Ostrov Mazovyetsk*; *Ozarkov*, Sidrat kehilot Yisrael (Yerushalayim: Yad Yahadut Polin, 1966); *Ostra*. Sidrat kehilot Yisrael (Yerushalayim: Yad Yahadut Polin, 1966).

[286] See Y. Z. Moskovits, *Sefer le-zikhron kedoshe Roskovah ve-Zovles* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yotse kehilot Roskovah ve-Zovles be-Yisrael veba-tefutsot, 1969).

[287] See H. Rabin, *Sefer Vishogrod* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Vishogrod be-Yisrael, 1971).

[288] See Alufi and Barkali, *Eshishok – koroteha ve-hurbanah*, ה. Stein, *Pinkas Bendin*, 7.

publishers were not present in Europe during the Holocaust and that the organization did not exist prior to it.

Private Individuals

This group of publishers is present from the start of the Yizkor book phenomenon. It includes private individuals who, in very small groups and sometimes alone, decided to publish Yizkor books, most commonly because there was no organization of any kind in existence to publish the book, or because they felt a personal need to commemorate a specific town.[289] For example, the book on Glubokie,[290] often mentioned by scholars as part of landsmanschaft literature, is in fact the work of two brothers, Michael and Zvi Rajak, who collected pieces and published it with the help of an editor, but without any organization behind them. Another notable example in this category is Hugo Gold – a Jewish historian born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1895 who died in Israel in 1974 – who edited several Yizkor books about German-speaking Jewish communities in present-day Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic.[291] Gold published the books himself through his own publishing house *Olamenu* (Our world, עולמנו).

These publishers still followed the common practice for publishing a Yizkor book, as is described below. Their books were by no means their own individual products. They initiated and organized the process, much like other publishers, and their books were still acts of communal commemoration that included texts and other contributions from the community at large.

Schoolchildren

Some books were published by schoolchildren, aged 7–16, in different schools all over Israel. In some respects, such as the relation to the community, schoolchildren differed from the other publishers. This section highlights

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[289] See: Eva Feldenkreiz-Grinbal, *Et azkara* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun Yotse' Tzoyzmir be-Yisrael, 1993); I. Kafri, *Yalkut ayarat ha-te'omim, Novoselitsah* (Israel: Hotsa'at Shamir, 1963); Jack Kagan, *Novogrudok: The History of a Jewish Shtetl* (London and Portland, OR.: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006).

[290] Rajak and Rajak, *Hurbn Glubok, Sharkoystsene, Dunilovitsh, Postov, Droye, Kazan: dos lebn un umkum fun yidishe shtetlekh in Vaysrusland-Lite (Vilner gegnt)*.

[291] Hugo Gold, *Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina*, vol. 1 (Tel-Aviv: Olamenu, 1958). *Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina*, vol. 2 (Tel-Aviv: Olamenu, 1962); *Geschichte der Juden in Wien* (Tel-Aviv: Olamenu, 1966); *Geschichte der Juden in Oesterreich* (Tel-Aviv: Olamenu, 1971); Hugo Gold and Franz Komjati, *Die Geschichte einer Gemeinde...* (Tel-Aviv: Olamenu, 1972); Hugo Gold, *Gedenkbuch der untergegangenen Judengemeinden Maehrens* (Tel-Aviv: Olamenu, 1974).

some of those differences and is therefore more extensive than the sections above regarding other publishers.

Schoolchildren's books were published in the 1960s and 1970s, and often mention being inspired by a call made by Gideon Hausner, then a member of the *Knesset* and formerly the Chief Prosecutor in the Eichmann trial, for schools to take up the commemoration effort for communities that had not yet received a memorial book. Eleven books of this type are included in this research. From their editorials, it is clear that the phenomenon of schoolchildren-published Yizkor books comprises more books than those included in this research. The appearance, and subsequent disappearance, of these schoolchildren's Yizkor books are an example of the process described by Rüsen in his Disciplinary matrix of historical thinking.[292] In this case, the Eichmann trial was an event that created a need for orientation in Israeli Jewish society. This eventually led a group – in this case, schoolchildren – to create new concepts – their understanding of diaspora life and Holocaust experience – which led to a new method "for dealing with the experience of the past" (book-form commemoration). This in turn led to a new form of representation (new to them, Yizkor books) of the memory of the diaspora and of the Holocaust. This representation then became a way for those schoolchildren to orientate themselves in the past, in particular in the Holocaust and pre-Holocaust periods.[293]

The publishing unit was generally one or more classes. The connection between the children and the commemorated community was based on a survivor who lived in the same town, with whom the school could get in contact. The survivor's original community was then the one commemorated in the book. The initial contact with that survivor was often made based on a previous relationship with one of the authority figures in the school – the class teacher or the principle.[294] In one case included in this research, the book began as a project by a single student about his family and developed into a Yizkor book published by the school.[295]

From the children's perspective, the choice of community was commonly not based on any individual or personal background. None of the children

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[292] Rüsen, Kerns, and Digan, *Evidence and Meaning: A Theory of Historical Studies*, 43. See chapter 4.

[293] Ibid., 43–44.

[294] Tamar Amarant, *Le-zekher kehilat Dvinsk* (Ḥefah: Hativat beynaim "Kiah" = Kiah Middle School, 1974).

[295] Efraim Rimon, *Yahadut Tarnov ve-irgune ha-noʿar*, Mahad. 2. ed. (Yerushalayim: Yad Vashem, 1970).

involved had experienced the Holocaust as they were born in the first half of the 1950s at the earliest. Moreover, as is almost always the case in Israel, the children (or their parents) had different origins. They were probably all Jews, but many were *tzabarim* (the *sabra*, literally translated as "cacti", or those whose parents were born in Palestine or Israel) or had parents who were born outside of the Axis-controlled areas during World War II.[296] Thus, their families had no direct connection with the Holocaust.[297]

The result of these weak personal connections to the Holocaust, coupled with the children's ages – commonly 12 to 14 but sometimes younger – is that the books published by them tend generally to be less personal and more melodramatic, to strongly echo Israel's predominant Holocaust memory culture and to lack the more nuanced kind of commemoration found in books published by other publishers. Take for example this entry from the Yizkor book on Lask, published by 12–14-year-olds, entitled *We Shall Remember*:[298]

> We shall remember and carve on our hearts the memory of the Lask community that was torn out and erased, its sons who were killed by the Nazis, that were tortured, body and spirit, in the concentration and death camps, who were expelled to a terrible land and never heard from again; who were mass-murdered in the markets and streets. Who were led to be massacred in death train cars, who were buried alive, who suffocated in the gas chambers and were burned in the crematoria, their honor desecrated and their blood spilled on *kiddush Shem* Israel.
>
> We shall remember and not forget our children in the Lask community, pure born of pure, who were taken from their parents' lap by beasts and led to slaughter, who were beheaded and killed in different deaths and piled in piles for all to see.

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[296] For example from Iran, Iraq and Yemen.

[297] Other examples of these books included in this research: Bet ha-sefer ha-mamlakhti Komemiyut, *Hantsa'hat kehilat Ripin-Polin* (Bene Berak: Bet ha-sefer ha-mamlakhti Komemiyut, 1966); Abraham Gal and Bet-sefer mamlakhti yesodi "Savyon"-Gane Yehudah., *Le-zekher Rovnah* (Savyon: Be. s. Savyon-Gane Yehudah, 1967); *Le-zekher kehilat Volkovisk* (Heifa: "'Aliyah", 1969); Hayim Bronshtain, *Skalat* (Petah-Tikvah: Bet ha-sefer 'al shem Ya'akov Karol ve-irgun yehude Skalat be-Yisrael, 1971).

[298] The word used here is "nizkor", the more modern form of "yizkor". "Nizkor" is not commonly used, especially not in the different versions of the Yizkor prayer. This can be seen at the same time as creating a more personalized text, or as a sign of the children's more modern and colloquial Hebrew.

Toddlers and babies smashed onto walls of stone and thrown alive by cruel hands in sacks to the river's depths.

We shall remember that last tear of a child, frozen silently as he starved on the road from famine and cold.

We shall remember his final scream, silenced in space – as he was stomped on and thrown into the pit.

We shall remember the final cry of a child: Father, mother, look! As he fell hunted on the road.

We shall remember the cry of loss of a father and mother, their hearts torn as their precious children were crushed to dust.

We shall remember and not forget![299]

This text is not written based on experience. It is considerably more melodramatic than the texts written by survivors. It is not necessarily more emotionally evocative, but turns to well-known memorial imagery used to represent the Holocaust, rather than build on any personal experience as is the case in the books published by other types of publishers. The memorial images used in this text are generic. No location is mentioned, not even Europe, apart from the second paragraph where the name of the town has been inserted. By today's standards, it is too strong a text for a child of this age to be exposed to, let alone write. Many Holocaust memorial sites in Europe have an age limit for entrance, often 12 or 14 years of age.

These schoolchildren's Yizkor books are much more symbolic in nature than the books produced by other types of publishers. Commemoration is always symbolic, but in other types of Yizkor books that symbolic act is grounded in the experiences of people who had been, and still were at the time of publication, part of that same community. Their descriptions of the community and of the Holocaust period were significantly more nuanced and case-specific.

One of the main uses of the schoolchildren's Yizkor books was to be read aloud during the Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony in the school. They therefore include the types of texts that are commonly read out in these ceremonies, which tend to be more generic, Zionist and emotionally

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[299] Ze'ev Tsurnamal and Kefar Ganim. Bet ha-sefer ha-yesodi ha-mamlakhti., *Zikhron netsah la-kehilah ha-kedoshah Lask: asher nechrevah ba-shoah* (Petaḥ-Tiḳvah: Bet ha-sefer ha-mamlakhti Kefar-Ganim, 1967), 15.

evocative than the texts written by survivors and other witnesses in other Yizkor books. Moreover, in most Yizkor books, as is demonstrated in the following chapters, more room is dedicated to commemoration of the life of the community before the Holocaust than to the Holocaust period as such. The parts of these books that were read out during gatherings and ceremonies were not necessarily the ones about the Holocaust. That is another important difference between schoolchildren and other publishers. In the former's books, the Holocaust was seen as far more significant than the life of the community prior to it, in line with the Zionist view of the diaspora, while in the latter the life of the community was more important, and was thus the main focus of the book.[300]

Figure 6.1. contains photographs of the commemoration ceremony (as it is referenced in the book) for the Yizkor book on Halmin-Turts, held in a school in Hadera. These photographs, which were added to the book before it was published, show speeches made by (from to left to right, clockwise) Rabbi David Werner, a representative of the Hadera Ashkenazi *Rabbanut* (the municipal rabbi's office); School Principal Yehuda Schwartz, who was also credited as the editor of the book; Menachem Karmi, a representative of the Halmin-Turts landsleit; and Mordechai Kostlitz, deputy-mayor of Hadera. These photographs are interesting because they show that the publication of the Yizkor book drew significant attention from outside the school. While it makes sense for the school to have a ceremony around its publication and for a representative from the community to be present, the involvement of the municipality and the municipal rabbi's office suggests this was seen as an important event from a religious perspective, as well as involving the whole town, or local community, together with the Halmin-Turts community. We can also see from the photographs that the school was a religious one (*mamlachti-dati*, ממלכתי-דתי); that is, a religious-Zionist school that taught the regular Israeli curriculum alongside enhanced Jewish religious studies. We find religious-Zionist schools alongside the more common secular schools among the ranks of the publishers.

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[300] I expand on the central place of pre-Holocaust life in these books in chapter 8. See also Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel", 371–372.

Figure 6.1. *Commemoration Ceremony for the Halmin-Turts Yizkor Book.*

מרא דאתרא הרב הגאון ר' דוד ורנר שליט"י
מברך בשם משרד הרבנות בחדרה

יהודה טורץ מנהל בית-הספר
פותח את טכס ההנצחה

מרדכי קוסטליץ,סגן ראש העיריה
מברך בשם עירית חדרה

מנחם כרמי מברך בשם
יוצאי האלמין טורץ והסביבה

Source: Schwartz, *Zikhron netsakh la-kehilot ha-kedoshot Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah asher nekhrevu ba-Shoah* (1969), 11.

Publication Process

The Holocaust differed from previous attacks on the Jewish population in many ways. Most significant for the discussion here is the fact that, unlike in previous attacks against Jews, the Holocaust resulted in the complete destruction of the majority of the Jewish communities in the affected areas and, as is amply demonstrated in research, the Nazis sought also to destroy the memory of the Jews in addition to exterminating them physically. Thus, Yizkor books commemorate not individuals destroyed in a community, but the community itself that was extinguished by the Nazis. This also means that the books were published almost entirely outside of Europe, mainly in Israel, but also in the US, Argentina and other post-1945 centres of the Jewish world. The human infrastructure required to complete such a project no longer existed in the areas where the communities had once been.

From the commemorative aspect, two key factors, which are relevant for this research, strongly affected the choices made during the publication process for Yizkor books: first, the idea that all Holocaust victims were martyrs (I expand on this further in chapter 8); and, second, material and political conditions in Europe.

In the aftermath of the attacks on Eastern European Jews prior to the Holocaust, the communities were not eradicated. The victims were thus commemorated within their own communities, by their fellow townsfolk, in the place where the attack had taken place. From the list of victims, only two groups were considered worthy of individual mention beyond their name: significant figures, such as rabbis, and martyrs. The former group generally included only men. The latter group included only those killed *al kiddush ha-Shem* in the narrowest sense, meaning that they chose death over conversion, but usually slightly expanded to include those who acted heroically, for example, to save the synagogue, and perished in the process. The majority of the victims were not counted as part of this group. In Yizkor books, however, everyone was considered a martyr and thus worthy of extended commemoration. The problem was that the people now in need of commemoration in the aftermath of the Holocaust were not well-known and records of them had not as a rule been kept, as had been the case for community rabbis and other important figures and functionaries. The commonly small group of people directly involved in the Yizkor book publication process could not possibly have known all of the victims personally. To exacerbate the problem, many of those involved in the publication process had emigrated from the community before the Holocaust

and thus could not have known many of those victims very well. Thus, to collect information about all of these "amcha", the so-called little people, the publication group had to extend requests for information to those who possibly did know them – the remaining landsleit around the world. The large number of victims also required a large number of sources. Those *amcha* victims were the kind of people for whom information could not be found anywhere but in the minds and memories of those who knew them personally. An archive, if available at all, might contain some basic biographical information, but anything more required personal familiarity.

Many editorials note that the material and political conditions in post-1945 Europe were very difficult. Most local archives and records in areas that had previously been the main places of residence for Jews, such as Poland, had been destroyed. Soon after the end of the war, Eastern bloc archives and other sources of information became unavailable. For most of the Yizkor book publication period, access to archives in the Eastern bloc was impossible for those Jews living in Israel and the US.[301]

This lack of available sources for the books due to the physical destruction and later unavailability – of people, records and archives – led the publishers and editors to turn to the wider group of survivors and descendants as alternative sources. In all cases, once the decision had been made to produce a Yizkor book, either personally or formally within an organization, letters were sent out all over the world asking for contributions.[302] These might be financial, but most of all they were for information: texts, photographs, the names of those who had died and, in some cases, current contact information for living landsleit. All Yizkor books, even if they are the result of the efforts

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[301] See for example in Uri Azrieli and Mordekhai Boneh, *Sefer Zvhil* (Tel-Aviv: Ha-igud ha-artsi shel yots'e Zvhil veha-sevivah, 1961-62 (inferred)), page marked ***; Israel Cohen, *Sefer Butshatsh* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1955-56), 7; Yosef Mazor and Mishah Fuks, *Sefer Baltsi Basarabia* (Israel: Agudat yots'e Baltsi, 1993), 5; Elazar Sharvit, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Sanok vaha-sevivah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Sanok veha-sevivah be-Yisrael, 1969), 6–7; Tory, *Mariyampol, Lita*, 3; Meir Sokolovski, *Roz'inoi* (Israel: Irgun yots'e Ruz'inoi be-Yisrael, 1957), 5; Laszlo Szilagyi-Windt, *Az ujpesti zsidóság története* (Tel-Aviv: s.n., 1975), 7.

[302] See for example in Benzion H. Ayalon, *Maitshet – sefer zikaron* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Maitsheṭ be-Yiśra'el uve-huts la-arets, 1973), 16; Matityahu Bar-Ratson, *Yizkor le-Krivits – ner tamid* (Israel: Irgun Yots'e Krivits be-Yiśra'el uva-tefutsot, 1976), 5; Aaron Meirovitch, *Megilat Kurenits* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Kurenits be-Yiśra'el uve-Artsot-ha-Berit, 1956), 5–6; Gedaliahu Stein, *Sefer zikaron Borshah* (Kiryat Motskin, Israel: Va'ad le-hotsa'at ha-sefer, 1985), 20–24; *Hurban Volkovisk be-milhemet ha-olam ha-sheniyah, 1939–1945* (Tel Aviv: Va'ad irgun yots'e Volkovisk be-Erets-Yisrael, 1946), 95.

of a single person or a small group, contain contributions from many other individuals.

The collection period could take anything from one or two years to several decades. The editorials recount several reasons for delays. The most common difficulties mentioned are a lack of leadership or leading figures to organize and see the process through, a lack of funding and low levels of participation by the community. Some editors failed to do their job; others were too busy with other things. In some committees, members argued constantly and could not come to any agreement, while others are said to have been too traumatized to handle the emotional burden of working on the book. In several cases, the long production time resulted in the passing of key members of the publication team before the book was finished. In many cases, several problems converged to cause significant delays in the publication process.

The Yizkor book on Kolomiyya in Ukraine, published in 1972, took 20 years to complete because there were too few people left from the community willing to work on it.[303] Some editors reported a strong response – thousands of letters as well as sufficient donations to finance the project, including translations. Many others reported a very poor response, which led to projects being halted and restarted over and over. For example, Moshe Kaganovits, editor of the 1968 Yizkor book for Ivyeh in Poland, reports in his editorial that apart from a few individuals, there was almost no participation from community members and, as a result, the book production process took "years upon years".[304] The Yizkor book for Borsah, which today is in northern Romania, was published in 1985. Its editorial includes letters sent out repeatedly to community members, the first in May 1957. The reluctance of community members to take part in the publication process meant that the book took nearly 28 years to complete.[305] The editorial in the 1996 Katowice (Poland) Yizkor book notes that the decision to publish the book was made at a meeting of survivors in 1984, 12 years before.[306] The surviving remnant of the 1971 Vishogrod (Poland) community first decided to publish a book at their first meeting after the Holocaust, an *azkara* held in December 1947.[307] The editorial of the 1986 book for Braslaw

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[303] Dov Noy and Mordechai Schutzman, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Kolomiyah veha-sevivah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Kolomiyah veha-sevivah ba-arets uva-tefutsot, 1972), 7–8.

[304] Mosheh Kaganovits, *Sefer zikaron Le-kehilat Ivyeh* (Tel Aviv: Irgune yots'e Ivyeh be-Yisrael uve-Amerikah, 1968), 15–17.

[305] Stein, *Sefer zikaron Borshah*, 15–24.

[306] Chrust and Frankel, *Katowice*, VII–VIII.

[307] Rabin, *Sefer Vishogrod*, 5–6.

(Belarus) and its surroundings notes that the idea of publishing a Yizkor book was raised thirty-nine years earlier, in the Eschwege Displaced Persons (DP) Camp in central Germany, where survivors held the first *azkara* for their townsfolk and families in 1947. The authors do not expand on what caused this long delay.[308]

Leon S. Blatman, editor of the 1966 Kamenetz-Podolsk book, sums up these types of problems in his introduction:

> Originally it was planned to issue a book of about 500 pages, well illustrated in color, in a deluxe edition. Unfortunately, the response to our appeal for funds was such, that the editor himself had to do all of the writing and all of the work connected with the publishing of this book. The lack of funds made it necessary to revise the book to its present size.[309]

The book finally published had 133 pages. This example demonstrates just how significant the financial hardships were for the publication process, as it commonly involved sending many letters, and even emissaries, abroad from Israel, which constituted a significant expense at the time, and often meant hiring an editor and translators. There was also the time and effort spent by the members of the publishing group, who generally did not receive any recompense for their time or the cost of printing the book.

It must always be borne in mind that, in the majority of cases, material considerations had a significant impact on the publication process and the editing choices made. Decisions such as whether to send someone to an archive in Europe, to have a representative go from house to house to interview witnesses, or to translate pieces that had been sent in, to name just a few examples, were all first and foremost subject to financial considerations rather than ideological choices. In other words, most publishers and editors would have probably wanted to include all of these as part of the production process of their book, but were unable to do so due to insufficient funding.

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[308] Ariel Machnes, Rinah Klinov, and Association of Braslaw and Surroundings in Israel and America., *Emesh Sho'ah--: yad li-kehilot – gevidmnt di kehiles Braslav, Opsah, Okmenits, Dubinah, Zamosh, Zarats', Ya'isi, Yod, Slobudkah, Plusi, Kislovshts'iznah, Rimshan* (Israel: Irgun yots'e Braslaw veha-sevivah be-Yiśra'el uve-Artsot ha-Brit: Bet Lohame ha-geta'ot ve-hotsa'at ha-Kibuts ha-me'uhad, 1986), 10–11.

[309] Leon S. Blatman, *Kamenetz-Podolsk – A Memorial to a Jewish Community Annhilated by the Nazis in 1941* (New-York: Published by the sponsors of the Kamenetz-Podolsk memorial book, 1966), 5. Originally in English.

The Editors

In his personal introduction to the Yizkor book for Gabozdzic (today Hvizdets in Ukraine), editor Mendel Zilber writes:

> I myself am not from Gabozdzic. I have never visited it and if I were not married to one of the town's daughters, I admit I would surely never have known anything of its existence. Thanks to my wife, I became rooted and involved in all things related to this remote town on the edge of eastern Galicia, in which a small, vibrant Jewish settlement existed, with a warm Jewish temperament – now I feel as if I was one of them.
>
> Let this moderate donation of mine, of publishing the memorial book, be a candle for the souls of my family, destroyed in Auschwitz, while blind fate condemned me to life.[310]

This excerpt provides us with several interesting pieces of information. First, we learn that the editors, those with the most influence on the structure and content of the book, did not necessarily have a direct connection to the community they sought to commemorate. Second, that these editors were not necessarily Holocaust survivors themselves. These first two points contradict opinions expressed in the research on the relation between such editors and the Holocaust.[311] Third, we can read a first-hand account of just how important commemoration was to these people, not only the commemoration of the community, but that the act of commemoration extended in effect to other people who were lost, in this case Zilber's parents. According to Zilber, the act of commemoration has an intrinsic, personal significance that goes beyond remembrance. I expand on these reasons for publication in chapter 7.

Similar feelings were conveyed by Uri Oren, editor of the book on Monastir (today Bitola in Macedonia), who in his editorial states that he had never heard of the town before he was approached to take on the editor's position. The book, according to Oren, was accomplished through the backing and financing of a single wealthy Jewish man named Louis Russo, who was born in the town but emigrated in 1913. He wanted it to have a Yizkor book specifically in honour of Leon Kimchy, Russo's childhood friend, who saved many Jews during the Holocaust and died in Treblinka in 1943.[312]

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[310] Mendel Zilber, *Sefer zikaron Gabozdzic ve-hasviva* (Israel: Yotz'ei Gabozdzic ve-hasviva be-israel ve-hatfutzot, 1974), VI.

[311] These are mentioned in Kugelmass et al., *From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry*, 15. and later on in Amir, "Israel as the Cradle of Yizker Books", 32.

[312] Uri Oren, *'Ir u-shemah Monastir* (Tel-Aviv 1972), 7–10.

All the editors, regardless of whether they had a personal relation to the commemorated community, express the grave importance of the task they have taken on. This point is commonly raised in editorials. Moreover, it is often stressed that the act of commemoration, that is, the work put into it, as well as the resulting book-form monument, also serves to commemorate the editor's own relatives and loved ones who were lost in the Holocaust. This is commonly the case even when the relatives in question were from a completely different community.

We can, as indicated in the introduction to this chapter, examine the editors through two main axes: their professional background, or familiarity with the position of Yizkor book editor; and their connection or familiarity with the community commemorated in the Yizkor book.Some editors were landsleit of the community the book was commemorating.[313] In such cases, the editors commonly stressed their strong emotional connection to the specific community, its people and the project of publishing the Yizkor book. At the other end of the spectrum we find editors who had no prior knowledge of the specific community or town, like the above-mentioned Uri Oren. This lack of previous relationship did not preclude an emotional connection to the project, however, and a strong emotional bond to the community was often formed through the project. In between, there are editors such as David Sztokfisz, who edited at least twenty-two Yizkor books.[314] While Sztokfisz was born in Poland and strongly connected to Polish Jewry (he was for a while the chairman of Yad Yahadut Polin), he obviously had no personal connection as a landsleit to the majority of the Yizkor books he edited.

In terms of levels of professionalism, there are again a variety of types, from professional Yizkor book editors like David Sztokfisz, to professional editors who were not necessarily experts on Yizkor books, such as Mendel Zilber, to highly trained academics, mostly historians, such as Nachman

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[313] For example Benzion Ayalon (born 1901), who edited four books and co-edited one more, all for communities in the Wolyn region: Benzion H. Ayalon and Abraham Yaron-Kritzmar, *Hoshtsh sefer zikaron* (Tel-Aviv: Ole Hoshtsh be-Yiśra'el, 1957); Ayalon, *Pinkas Ostra'ah*; *Sefer zikaron Tutshin-Kripah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Tutshin-Kripah veha-sevivah be-Yisrael, 1967); *Antopol* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Antopol be-Yiśra'el uve-Amerikah, 1972); *Maitshet – sefer zikaron*.

[314] Horowitz, "A History of Yizker Books". See David Sztokfisz, *Sefer Vishkov* (Tel Aviv: Irgune yots'e Vishkov be-Yisrael uve-huts la-arets, 1964); *Sefer Demblin-Modz'its* (Tel-Aviv: Irgune Demblin-Modz'its ba-arets uve-hul, 1969); *Sefer Krashnik* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Krashnik be-medinat Yisrael uva-tefutsot, 1973); *Sefer Divenishok: yad va-shem le-'ayarah yehudit = Devenishki Book: Memorial Book = Sefer Divenishok: geshikhte fun a shtetl* (Tel Aviv?: Irgune Yots'e Divenishok be-Yisrael uve-Artsot ha-Berit, 1977).

Blumental,[315] established professionals in other fields who took on a specific book, like the above-mentioned school principal Yehuda Schwartz, and finally those individuals who had no relevant background but nonetheless decided to take on the editing. This latter group comprised mainly the editors elected from within a publishing committee or from a wider group. This type of choice was usually made because the project had insufficient funds to hire a professional editor, but sometimes also because a close relationship to a community was seen as a significant advantage. Other editors of this type were landsleit who were also the publishers. These publishers who were also editors became more common in later decades, from the 1980s, as the Holocaust generation was increasingly replaced by second- and third-generation landsleit as publishers and editors.[316]

Women as Publishers, Editors and Committee Members

This section is mostly descriptive. The results presented here cannot be further contextualized due to a lack of information. If a specific committee has fewer or more women members compared to others, there is no way of knowing why this was the case. For example, we cannot know whether this was a relatively more patriarchal group, or there were few women who wanted to take part in the publication process. The only information provided on the publishers is about those who did participate, as well as occasional mentions of reluctance to take part in the process on the part of the community. There are no individual reasons given for those who did not participate, only general statements. Nor were there any reasons provided for the composition of the publishing committee or organization. At least as far as one can tell from the editorials, participation in a publishing or similar committee was voluntary and open, and in most cases it is likely that anyone who wanted to could take part in the process. If anything, it seems from

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[315] Who also edited several books: Nachman Blumental, *Sefer Mir* (Yerushalayim: Entsiklopedyah shel galuyot, 1962); *Sefer-yizkor Baranov* (Jerusalem, Israel: Yad va-shem, irgun yotse'e Baranov, 1964); *Aleksander (al yad Lodz')*; *Sefer yizkor Rozvadov veha-sevivah* (Jerusalem, Israel: Yad va-shem, 1968); Nachman Blumental and Aviva Ben-Azar, *Sefer yizkor Maikhov, Kharshnitsah, ve-Kshoinz'* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Maikhov miśrad ha-bitachon, 1971). Other publications with Historians as editors: Yehezkel Keren, *Yahadut Krim me-kadmutah ve-ad ha-Shoah* (Yerushalayim: Reuven Mas, 1981); Alter Levine, Dina Porat, and Roni Stauber, *A Yizkor Book to Riteve* (Cape Town: Kaplan-Kushlick Foundation, 2000).

[316] See Rachel Aharoni, *Toldot kehilat Rakoshpalotah* (Ramat-Gan1990); Gila Dagan and Yoseph Kobo, *The Jews of Ruschuk, Bulgaria* (Kibbutz Dalia: Ma'arechet, 2002); Kafri, *Yalkut ayarat ha-te'omim, Novoselitsah*. See also an early example in: Brandes, *Ketz ha-yehudim be-ma'arav Polin*

many editorials that those who were involved often felt overwhelmed and would have welcomed additional participants, men or women.

A majority of the members of the publication and editorial committees were men. Women were not a rare sight on these committees, however, as there was usually at least one woman on each committee and several women in one committee was not an uncommon occurrence.

It is not always possible to know exactly how many women were involved in a specific editorial committee. There are many gender-neutral first names in Hebrew, a phenomenon which has become more and more prevalent over time. Even traditional or biblical names, such as Yonnah (יונה) or Simcha (שמחה), could belong to both a man and a woman. Some books abbreviate all first names to their first letter so, without a photograph, it is impossible to calculate the ratio of men to women.

Where it is possible to assess the gender distribution of a committee, the majority of the members are normally male, as noted above. There are, however, some exceptions. For example, the eight-member book committee for the 1973 Maitshet (Molczadz) Yizkor book consisted of four women and four men, including the male editor (see figure 6.1).[317] In another example, six of the 12 committee members for the 1964 book on Tsihanovits (Ciechanowiec) were women (see figure 6.2).[318]

Many editorials include a large section of acknowledgements. These are a good source for learning more about what different people did in the publication process. Women are regularly mentioned in these sections, although not as often as men. Some women were said to have hosted meetings, sometimes alongside their husbands, in what could be considered a traditional, gendered role. For example, Mrs Mira Mendelevitch is mentioned in the Wielun book as such a hostess, once by herself and once alongside her husband.[319] In another example, the book on Mosty mentions Haya Borowsky in an editorial as a similar kind of hostess,[320] while another woman, Hannah Dichter, is said in another editorial in the same book to have greatly contributed to its writing and promotion.[321] This book therefore illustrates a mixed representation of gendered roles. Editorials in other books name

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[317] Ayalon, *Maitshet – sefer zikaron*, 18.

[318] Eliezer Leoni, *Sefer Tsihanovits* (Tel-Aviv: Ha-irgunim shel yots'e Tsihanovits be-Yisrael uve-Artsot ha-Berit, 1964).

[319] *Le-zecher kedoshey Wielun*, 11,14.

[320] *Pyesk ve-Most: sefer yizkor* (Tel Aviv?: Irgun yots'e Pyesk ve-Most be-Yiśra'el veha-tefutsot, 1975), 10.

[321] Ibid., 14.

specific women as the "living spirit" behind the publication of the Yizkor book, as well as other commemorative activities of the organization, such as placing a commemorative plaque in the Mount Zion memorial cellar.[322]

With only a few exceptions, the editors of the books were almost always men. The 1990 book on Rakoshpalotah, Hungary, was edited by a Hassidic woman, Rachel Aharoni.[323] The 1968 Book on Sokolka was edited by a woman named Esther Mishkinski,[324] who was part of a two-person book committee, alongside David Yardeni. The "Initiating committee" of the book had eight members, three of them women, including Mishkinski. The 1988 book on Stryj was published by a Helena Nusenblat.[325] Holocaust historian Dina Porat was one of the editors of the 2000 book on Riteve, Lithuania.[326] The 2002 book on Rajgrod, Poland, had a woman, Rachel Gazit Velingstein, listed as one of three editors.[327] Gila Dagan was one of two editors of the book on Ruschuk, Bulgaria,[328] which was also published in 2002.

Most Yizkor books were published before the end of the 1970s, in a period in which Jewish secular society, which produced the majority of Yizkor books, had more defined gender roles than today. In the Orthodox tradition, women were not allowed any leadership roles in the religious arena, apart from in a women-only context. In ultra-orthodox society and in the Orthodox synagogue in society more generally, this is still the case today. Nonetheless, as Israeli and US Jewish societies have become more liberal when it comes to gender roles, at least some change might be expected. Indeed, Rachel Aharoni, the above-mentioned editor of the 1990 Rakoshpalotah book, is an example of a religious Orthodox woman who took on the role of editor of a Yizkor book. It is clear that from the 1990s, alongside the decline in the proportion of publications by organizations and an increase in individual publishers, there was also an increase in the number of women in the position of editor. The overall number of publications had significantly declined, but this change is nonetheless noticeable.

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[322] Cohen, *Sefer Butshatsh*, 7–8; David Sztokfisz, *Sefer Rubiz'evits', Derevnah, veha-sevivah* (Tel Aviv: Arzi, 1968).

[323] Aharoni, *Toldot kehilat Rakoshpalotah*.

[324] Ester Mishkinski, *Sokolka* (Yerushalayim: Entsiklopedyah shel galuyot, 1968).

[325] Zvi Nusenblat, *Ha-ze'akah ha-ilemet: (toldot yehude ha-ir Stryi, Galitsyah ha-mizrahit, Polin, be-et milhemet ha-olam ha-sheniyah)* (Tel-Aviv: Bamot le-sifrut ule-omanut, 1988).

[326] Levine, Porat, and Stauber, *A Yizkor Book to Riteve*.

[327] Haim Filkelstein, Haim Shen'hav, and Rachel Gazit Velingstein, *Rajgrod* (Tel-Aviv: Ad-Hai, 2002).

[328] Dagan and Kobo, *The Jews of Ruschuk, Bulgaria*.

Figure 6.2. *The Book Committee for the Maitshet (Mouchadz', Belarus).*
Yizkor book.

Source: Ayalon, *Maitshet – sefer zikaron*, 18.

Figure 6.3. *The Book Committee for the Tsihanovits Yizkor Book.*

העורך וחברי המערכת

לאוני אליעזר — העורך

בלומנקרנץ (פרץ) דבורה   אשלני (זילברברג) תהילה   אבנר (יארמוס) שושנה   אלישר (קמינקובסקי) צבי

חרובל אברהם-משה   הלר-לוין רחל   דרורי (יסקולקה) שמעון   בקשט (ליובוביץ) בתיה

פרץ טוביה   ספסטרנק צבי   לוין מנחם   ורבה (סטהר) חוה

Source: Leoni, *Sefer Tsihanovits*, 9.

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Examples of Yizkor Book Typology

I now present six examples of Yizkor books, using the typologies of publishers and editors introduced above. The goal is to present several different examples of publisher and editor combinations. I demonstrate that Yizkor books are a significantly more heterogeneous phenomenon than has been claimed in previous research. Even those books commonly accepted as Yizkor books by scholars using the narrow definition of "landsmanschaft literature" are in fact a much more varied group when the publishers and editors are closely examined. The first five books of the six listed below appear in the list of Yizkor books provided in *From a Ruined Garden*, as well as in other similar publications, even though only one corresponds to the definition of landsmanschaft literature[329] used in those same scholarly publications; that is, mainly Yiddish literature, published by landsmanschaftn, written by Holocaust survivors (specifically young and Zionist) and published and distributed for and through the Yiddish cultural world.

Starting with the *Lodzer Yizker Buch*,[330] which is widely considered the first Yizkor book, published in 1943, it is a classic example of landsmanschaft literature. It was published in Yiddish by the United Emergency Relief Committee for the City of Lodz (UERCL), a New York-based organization formed by former migrants from Lodz, living in the US, to aid their townsfolk back in Poland. In this sense it fits very well into the scholarly view of Yizkor books. However, the book was published in 1943, while the Lodz Ghetto was liquidated in May 1944. Thus, the producers and contributors of the book were not Holocaust survivors by any definition, they were those who had emigrated before the Holocaust, and the full scope of the *Hurbn* was not yet known at that point. Specifically, the Lodz community had not yet been destroyed. The book was therefore focused on the history of Jewish Lodz, the ongoing catastrophe of the Nazi occupation and the relief committee's efforts. The book did not contain a list of victims as the majority of later books did, which is acknowledged in the book as the publishers had no reliable information about who exactly had perished at that point. Nonetheless, it was already called a "Yizkor Buch", meaning that the catastrophe was already understood to be significant enough to require commemoration of the victims, as well as potentially the community itself, alongside the then still-ongoing relief efforts for those who were still alive in the Lodz ghetto.

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[329] As discussed in the Publisher Typology section.
[330] Lodz, *Lodzsher yizker-bukh*.

The Lodz Yizkor book was published by a pre-existing organization, that is, one that was not established for the purpose of producing the publication, and so included a list of the leaders of the UERCL and the committees responsible for the relief efforts, and for publishing the book. An editorial committee of fourteen members included five of the six board members of the organization. Zalme Zylbercweig, the chair of the organization, was listed as the "executive editor" of the book.

Another book widely referenced as an example of a "classic" Yizkor book is *Hurbn Glubok*.[331] This book, which is entirely in Yiddish, was published in Argentina in 1956 to commemorate six communities in today's northern Belarus, close to the Latvian and Lithuanian borders. It was published by two brothers, Michael and Zvi Rajak, alongside its editor, Shlomo Suskevitch, who had no formal organization behind them. The two brothers collected contributions and helped to edit the book. So, while this book is in Yiddish and was naturally circulated in the Yiddish literary world, it cannot be defined as "landsmanscahft literature" as no formal organization took part in its publication.

The Ostra Yizkor book[332] is an example of a series called *Megilat Polin*, which was published in Israel in the second half of 1960s by *Yad Yahadut Polin*, a worldwide Jewish organization founded in 1965 with the explicit goal of commemorating the destroyed Jewish communities of Poland and Lithuania. The books in this series were all published in Israel and in Hebrew. *Yad Yahadut Polin* was not a community-specific organization. It published books for communities that its members did not necessarily have any direct personal relation with. The communities commemorated in the series were explicitly chosen as communities that had previously not received book-form commemoration, and the books were published in alphabetical order. Even if some of the participants in the publication were Holocaust survivors, they were not from the same community. These types of books are therefore not landsmanschaft literature from any point of view.

The book *A Town called Monastir*[333] commemorates a community that existed in the town known today as Bitola, in the southern part of North Macedonia. The Jews of Monastir were Sephardic, not Ashkenazi, and were therefore strangers to the tradition of book-form commemoration. As Sephardic Jews, they neither spoke Yiddish, nor had any strong connection to the Yiddish world. The book was published entirely in Hebrew.

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[331] Rajak and Rajak, *Hurbn Glubok, Sharkoystsene, Dunilovitsh, Postov, Droye, Kazan: dos lebn un umkum fun yidishe shtetlekh in Vaysrusland-Lite (Vilner gegnt)*.

[332] Levin, *Ostra*.

[333] Oren, *'Ir u-shemah Monastir*.

As noted above, this book was the initiative of a single person – Louis Russo – a businessman living in the US who emigrated from Monastir to the US before World War II. He hired a professional editor to publish the book, Uri Oren, who by his own account, as discussed above, had never even heard of the town before being approached. According to Oren, no Landsmanschaft existed anywhere in the world for the town.

The 1968 Yizkor book on Cluj, Romania,[334] is an example of Yizkor books that were published by schoolchildren. All of these were published in Israel and in Hebrew, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. This particular book was published by 7th and 8th graders (aged 12–14), in collaboration with survivors from the town. The children who wrote the book were all born in the early 1950s at the earliest, and some of the pupils, as well as some of the school staff, had no family that had been directly affected by the Holocaust or even any connection to the Ashkenazi world and the tradition of book-form commemoration. Nonetheless, this book is defined by both its authors and by scholars as a Yizkor book.

The book *Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, published in 1966, is one example among many of books published entirely in German. There are seven books of this kind included in my database, all of which are the work of the above-mentioned Austro-Hungarian born Jewish Historian, Hugo Gold, who lived in Israel during the years of their publication. He published the books through his own publishing house, *Olamenu* ("Our world" in Hebrew), and also acted as editor. The main language of Austrian and German Jews was German, rather than Yiddish.[335]

Looking at these examples, it becomes obvious how varied the picture is of Yizkor book publishers and editors. While some of the characteristics of Yizkor books are more common than others, the field is quite varied and contains more types than previously noted in the scholarly literature.

The Intended Audience for the Books

This section examines who the books were aimed at, who the publishers and editors saw as the target audience and how their understanding of the recipients of the books affected their work and choices. Zvi Yasheev, editor

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334 Shelomoh Zimroni and Jehudah Schwartz, *Zikhron netsah la-kehilah ha-kedosha Koloz'var-Klozenburg, asher nehrevah ba-Shoah* (Tel Aviv: Hug yots'e Koloz'var be-Yisrael, 1968).

335 Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 159–223.

of the 1972 Yizkor book for Olkush, a town in today's southern Poland, writes in his introduction:

> And since most of the book is in the Hebrew language, we hope that members of the young generation, born in Israel, the children of the people of Olkush, would also read well this book to pick up reliable information about that from which they came and to know the spiritual heritage given to our people by Polish Jewry of which tiny Olkush was a part.[336]

In his introduction to the 1989 Yizkor book of Opoczno, a town north of Olkush and south of Lodz, editor Yizthak Alfasi writes:

> We put in pieces in Yiddish and English as well, so that future generations, even those who do not read our language, will know a little about something in the chronicles of the community and the events of its ruin.[337]

In his introduction to the 1970 book of Debretsen (Debrecen), a town in today's eastern Hungary, close to the Romanian border, Oygen Chengery, chair of the commemoration committee (*va'ad ha-hantsacha*) states:

> The historical material appears in Hungarian and Hebrew. In Hungarian for the elderly in Israel and in the diaspora, in Hebrew for Israeli society to know who the members of the exterminated communities were, how they worked and what they created. Let our sons and daughters who do not speak Hungarian read the chronicles of their parents and their parents' parents, and properly appreciate the actions of their forefathers.[338]

These examples, as well as many others found in the editorials, demonstrate that the choice of language was generally an intentional one. Much thought, deliberation and action went into ensuring that the correct languages were used in the book, from the point of view of the community. At the same time, however, financial considerations, as noted above, were always significant factors too.[339]

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[336] Zvi Yasheev, *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Olkush* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Olkush be-Yiśra'el, 1972), 8.

[337] Yitsḥaḳ Alfasi, *Sefer Opoczne* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Opoczne veha-sevivah, 1989), 12.

[338] Moshe Elijahu Gonda, *Me'ah shanah li-yehudey Debretsen* (Heifa: Debreceni Zsidók Emlékbizottsága, 1970), 9.

[339] See also Israel Ben-Shem and Nathan Michael Gelber, *Z'olkiv* (Yerushalayim: Hevrat entsiklopedyah shel galuyot, 1969 (inferred)), 16; Blumental, *Sefer yizkor Rozvadov veha-sevivah*, 11; Avraham Mordekhai Ringel and Josef H. Rubin, *Rawa Ruska* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Rawa Ruska veha-sevivah be-Yisrael, 1973), 3–4; Slutsky, *Babruisk*, 843; Mendel

The target audience was made explicit in many editorials. Generally speaking, Yiddish was associated with the past, with the lost community and with the generations that experienced life in the diaspora. Many among them had also experienced the Holocaust, but not necessarily everyone. This group included those who emigrated from Europe before 1939 – not only to Hebrew-speaking Palestine, but also to, for example, the US, Canada, Argentina, Australia and South Africa, where Yiddish remained the dominant language alongside the local language. Books published in Argentina, for instance, included sections in Spanish,[340] while books published in English-speaking countries often, although not always, contained parts in English.[341]

The above-mentioned Alfasi, editor of the Opoczne book, expressed an unusual alternative view – the possibility that children will not speak Hebrew, the language of the current generation, and that Yiddish and English were the languages of the future.[342] This position stands in contradiction to most Hebrew Yizkor books, which treat Yiddish and other diaspora languages as the languages of the old and the past.

Moreover, as is discussed in the section on Metaphysical Reasons, writing in (and reading) Yiddish was part of the process of resurrection of the community. Yiddish was the heart and soul of the culture of most Eastern European Jews. Texts in Yiddish acted as an introduction to the destroyed community at a level that transcended the content. It created a feeling of nostalgia in the reader, and also functioned as an important component of the resurrection of the community, connecting the old and the dead with the new and resurrected communities through one of the strongest bonds, if not the strongest, as Yiddish has often been noted to have a special status and a special power that transcends religion and history.

Zinger, *Berestechko, haytah ayarah* (Heifa: Irgun yots'e Berestets'kah be-Yiśra'el, 1960–61), Devar ha-ma'arechet.

[340] See Mordechai Wolf Bernstein, *Pinkes Zshirardov, Amshinov un Viskit: yizker-bukh tsu der geshikhte fun di kehiles ... fun zeyer oyfkum biz zeyer hurbn durkh di natsis yimach shemam* (Buenos-Ayres: Di landslayt-fareynen in Amerike, Yiśroel, Frankraykh, Argentine, 1961); Iedidio Efron, *Amdur, mayn geboyrn-shtetl* (Buenos-Ayres: Komitet tsu baern dem ondenk fun R. Yedidye Efron, 1973); *Plock* (Buenos Ayres: Plotsker landsleyṭ fareyn in Argentine, 1945).

[341] See Meilech Bakalczuk-Felin, *Yizker-bukh fun Rakishok un umgegnt* (Johanesburg: Rakishker landsmanshaft in Yohanesburg, 1952); Berl Kagan, *Suwalki* (New-York: Suvalker relif-komitet in Nyu-York, 1961); Melech Ravitch and Farband of Warsaw Jews in Montreal, *Dos amolike yidishe Varshe* (Montre'al: Farband fun Varshever yidn in Montre'al, 1966).

[342] Alfasi, *Sefer Opoczne*, 12.

Hebrew, on the other hand, was the language of the present for the majority of books and of the future of the Jewish people. If the target audience for the books was to be found mainly in Israel, it was assumed that Hebrew would be the language required to communicate with those readers. In Israel, from the second generation on, Hebrew was the first, and many times the exclusive, language. Thus, communication with Israelis required Hebrew, sometimes at the expense of losing a significant part of the cultural heritage in the process.

As noted above, many editorials mention that individual entries were published in their original language due to lack of resources – either there was no sufficiently competent translator available, or there was no money to pay for translations. In such cases, pieces sent in remained in their original language regardless of the editors' presumed target audience. The one exception to this point was the Polish language. The schism between Polish Jews and their non-Jewish neighbours is well-known and sometimes mentioned in the books.[343] For many Polish Jews, the Poles were worse than the Germans, as they had been their neighbours and friends before the war, and their betrayal of the Jews was perceived as deeper and more personal than the actions of the Germans. Moreover, anti-Jewish violence was rampant in Poland after the end of the Holocaust and World War II, while this was no longer the case in most other parts of Europe. Polish was a common language among Polish Jews before the Holocaust but after 1945 there was a clear aversion to it.

This attitude to Poles is mentioned repeatedly in the books. The editorial choices that stemmed from it, however, are never discussed. Nonetheless, there is a stark contrast between the books published by Hungarian Jews, for example, which commonly contain tens, if not hundreds, of pages written in Hungarian, and the books published by Polish Jews, which, with the exception of five books, contain no Polish apart from an occasional original document, such as the town charter or royal decree allowing the Jews to settle in the town. Two books include a larger number of such pages;[344] two books included contributions in Polish;[345] and one book was published entirely in Polish.[346] For the vast majority of books on Polish Jewry, however, either not a single

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[343] See David Brodski, *Sefer Pruszkow* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Pruszkow be-Yisrael, 1966 (inferred)), 13–14; Gelbart, *Sefer kehilat yehude Dombrovah Gurnits'eh ve-hurbanah*, 8; Mishkinski, *Sokolka*, 11.

[344] Meir Shim'on Geshuri, *Volbrom irenu* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Volbrom be-Yisrael, 1962); *Sefer Kalish*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: Israel-American Book Committee, 1964).

[345] Yitshak Eisenberg, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Vayslits* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Vayslits, 1971). This book contains twenty-three pages of contributions in Polish out of 299 total. Shemuel Meiri, *Kehilat Wieliczka – Sefer Zikaron* (Israel: Irgun yots'e Wieliczka be-Yiśrael, 1980).

[346] Taffet, *Zaglada Zydow zolkiewskich*.

text was submitted in Polish, or every text in Polish was either translated or denied publication. Either way, given that other languages – including German – appear in Yizkor books more often than Polish in spite of the significantly smaller number of publications commemorating communities outside of Polish Jewry, this is a clear stance against the Polish language.

The Languages of Yizkor Books

This section provides an overview of my quantitative data on Yizkor book languages, which is based on my own database and analysis. The choice of publication language for Yizkor books is mostly intentional, and language was generally seen as significant by both publishers and editors. This point is amplified by the fact that contributors sent in individual entries in several different languages, and the editors had to decide whether to publish these texts in their original language or have them translated. Where editors chose not to have contributions professionally translated, however, this was often the result of financial constraints.

It is important to emphasize at this point that Hebrew and Yiddish cannot always be differentiated between by examining a specific page. Yiddish contains a large Hebrew component that is used mostly in religious contexts, including commemoration, so a commemorative page in Yiddish could look like it is written entirely in Hebrew. This makes the identification of language in some pages in the mixed-language books impossible. Thus, in such cases this analysis is based on a rough estimate rather than an exact page count.

"Single language books" are those which were clearly fully written in a single language. In these cases, if an entire book is written in Hebrew, for example, there is no reason to assume that some of the necrologies would be in Yiddish, and vice-versa. "Dual language books" are those which have a substantial number of pages that can be identified (at least ~20% for one, the rest for the second) in each language. "Triple language books" are books that have a substantial number of pages that can be identified (at least ~20%) in three languages. Some books have only a very small number of pages (usually ten or less) in a language other than the main one. Some books in Hebrew, for example, might include a translation of the foreword at the end. Categorization of those books is based on the one to three main languages in the book.

Table 6.1. *Single Language Yizkor Books.*

Language	#	%
Hebrew	136	55,51
Yiddish	88	35,92
English	12	4,90
German	7	2,85
Other[347]	2	0,82
Total	245	100

Source: Yizkor book database.

Table 6.2. *Dual Language Yizkor Books.*

Languages	#	%
Hebrew & Yiddish	232	79,45
Yiddish & English	17	5,82
Hebrew & English	16	5,48
Hebrew & Hungarian	20	6,85
Other[348]	7	2,40
Total	292	100

Source: Yizkor book database.

Table 6.3. *Triple Language Yizkor Books.*

Languages	#	%
Hebrew/Yiddish/English	65	85.52
Hebrew/Yiddish/Polish	4	5.27
Other[349]	7	9.21
Total	76	100

Source: Yizkor book database.

Hebrew is the most common single language in 136 of the books examined, or 22.18% of the total number. The single largest overall group is a combination of Hebrew and Yiddish, at 232 books or 37.84% of the total number of books. Within this group, the vast majority (220, or 94.82%)

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[347] Including: Hungarian (1), Polish (1).

[348] Including: Hebrew with: Romanian (3), German (1), Spanish (2). Yiddish with: Spanish (1).

[349] Including: Hebrew/English/German (3), Hebrew/Hungarian/English (3), Hebrew/Yiddish/ Czech (1).

contain a significant proportion of each language, usually a ratio of around 60:40 between Hebrew and Yiddish. It is far more common to find Hebrew as the majority language in this case (184 of the 220, 83.64%) than Yiddish. The remaining twelve books in the Hebrew and Yiddish dual language category are those where one of the two languages is significantly more present than the other. Within this small group, Yiddish is more prevalent, as eight of the twelve (66.67%) books contain a majority of pages in Yiddish.

Of the 613 books examined, 184 (30.01%) contain Hebrew to some significant extent – that is, as one of up to three main languages in the book – without any Yiddish, including as a single language. At the same time, 106 books (17.29%) contain Yiddish to a significant extent without any Hebrew; 302 books (49.26%) contain both Hebrew and Yiddish to a significant extent; and. Twenty-one books (3.42%) contain no Hebrew or Yiddish, all of which are single language. In every case where a book includes more than one language, at least one of those is either Hebrew or Yiddish. English is the most common additional language: 155 of the books (25.28%) contain English in a significant capacity, of which the largest sub-group is English together with both Hebrew and Yiddish (sixty-five books, 10.6% of 613).

Polish, as discussed above, is almost entirely absent from Yizkor books. This is especially notable in comparison with Hungarian. The languages spoken by Jews could differ between individuals and communities, and it is not always possible to say with certainty which languages a specific book *should* include. Nonetheless, an examination of the rough numbers provides some perspective. There are fourteen books from communities in Hungary included in this research, in addition to several which we should expect to include Hungarian speaking contributors, such as communities in northern Transylvania, Romania. Of the total number of books examined, twenty-four contained significant amounts of Hungarian, including one single language book. In all the other cases, Hungarian appears alongside Hebrew, and in three books with English in addition to Hebrew.

On the other hand, 270 (44.04%) of the books examined commemorated communities in post-WWII Poland. In addition, another 140 (22,84%) books commemorated communities in Ukraine and eighty-two (13,37%) in Belarus, many of which were seen as a part of Polish Jewry. Polish appears in only five books, one single language and four more as a third language with Hebrew and Yiddish. It is therefore clear that while Hungarian is prevalent in books commemorating Hungarian-speaking communities, Polish is very rare and hardly used in books commemorating communities in areas of Polish Jewry. This is an expected result that testifies to the

antagonistic relationship between Jews and Poles, and the often hostile attitudes and actions directed at Jews by local Poles and the Polish state before, during, and after the Holocaust. These aspects undoubtedly affected the language choices of Yizkor book editors.

When examining change over time (seetable 6.4), it is apparent that Yiddish was the dominant language of publication until the late 1950s. At that time, dual-language Hebrew and Yiddish books began to appear, and within those Hebrew was more common than Yiddish. In the period 1964–66, Hebrew surpassed Yiddish in the number of single language publications. In the following nine years, there were thirty-five books published in Hebrew and only eleven in Yiddish. The last book in Yiddish was published in 1982.[350] The last book in Hebrew and Yiddish was published in 1993.[351] After the last book in Yiddish was published, fifty-three single language books were published in Hebrew, including fifteen after 1993, the last of which was published in 2008.[352]

These findings show that the transition from Yiddish to Hebrew as the main language of Yizkor books had already taken place by the mid-1960s, before the peak period of publication. Moreover, this peak period is in fact based on an increase in the production of Hebrew, as well as Hebrew and Yiddish language publications, which offset a significant decline in Yiddish-only publications. This contradicts previous research, which pinpointed the 1980s as the period in which the transition took place.[353] The findings presented in table 6.4 also show that Yizkor books are above all a Hebrew-focused phenomenon, and not just Israel-focused. These conclusions are further strengthened by the results on place of publication (see table 6.5).

The first Yizkor book to be published entirely in English, the Kamentets-Podolski Yizkor book, only appeared in 1966. There are no books published with a combination of English as the main language and another, secondary language. English appears to be less prevalent overall than previous research has suggested.

[350] Chaim Zaidman, *Hirlau – Der hoyv fun zikorn* (Jerusalem: Dr. Shemu'el un Rivkeh Horovits-fond bay der Yidisher kulṭur-gezelshaft in Yerusholaym, 1982).

[351] Eliezer Verba and Shimon Matlofsky, *Sefer yizkor li-kehilat Lokats' (Polin) = gedenk bukh far di shtetl Lokatsh* (Yerushalayim: Le-haśig etsel Sh. Matlovski, 1993).

[352] Refael Parezis, *Ha-kehilah ha-yehudit be-Volos, Yavan = The Jewish Community of Volos, Greece*, 1st edition. ed. (Be'er Sheva: M.A. Faragi, 2008).

[353] Cimet, "'To Hold Our Own Against Silence'", 123.

Table 6.4. Yizkor Book Publication: Language over Time.

PUBLICATION LANGUAGE	YEAR OF PUBLICATION																						TOT.
	1943-1945	1946-1948	1949-1951	1952-1954	1955-1957	1958-1960	1961-1963	1964-1966	1967-1969	1970-1972	1973-1975	1976-1978	1979-1981	1982-1984	1985-1987	1988-1990	1991-1993	1994-1996	1997-1999	2000-2002	2003-2005	2006-2008	
Hebrew	1	2	2	7	7	8	3	10	14	14	7	5	3	5	6	15	12	5	1	3	3	3	136
Yiddish	2	6	13	9	14	9	11	9	5	1	5	1	1	1	1								88
English								1	4							2			1	1		3	12
German			1			1	1	1		2	1												7
Hebr./Yid.		1	2	7	13	23	25	28	40	35	35	10	5	4	1	1	2						232
Hebr. & Eng.									1	1	1	3	2	2	2	2			1	1			16
Hebr. & Hung								1	1	5	6	2	1	1	2	1							20
Yid. & Eng.	1	2	4		1		1		1	1	2	1	1	1			1						17
Hebr./Yid./Eng.						1	6	4	2	6	8	8	3	4	2	4	2	1	1		1		53
Other		1			1		4	3	2	4	1	2	5	1		4	3	1					32
TOTAL	4	12	22	23	36	42	51	57	70	69	66	32	21	19	14	29	20	9	2	5	4	6	613

Source: Yizkor book database.

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Table 6.5. Yizkor Book Publication: Place of Publication over Time.

PLACE OF PUBLICATION	1943-1945	1946-1948	1949-1951	1952-1954	1955-1957	1958-1960	1961-1963	1964-1966	1967-1969	1970-1972	1973-1975	1976-1978	1979-1981	1982-1984	1985-1987	1988-1990	1991-1993	1994-1996	1997-1999	2000-2002	2003-2005	2006-2008	TOT.
Argentina	2	1	4	3	3	1	3	2	1		4												24
Australia								1			1				1								3
Canada			1		1			2															4
France		1		1								1											3
Germany			1																				1
Israel	1	3	4	17	29	35	40	48	63	66	60	30	19	17	13	23	18	9	2	4	4	3	508
Israel and USA						1	1			1			1										4
Poland		1																					1
Serbia																						1	1
South Africa				2																1			3
USA	1	6	12		3	5	7	4	6	2	1	1	1	2		6	2					2	61
TOTAL	4	12	22	23	36	42	51	57	70	69	66	32	21	19	14	29	20	9	2	5	4	6	613

YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Source: Yizkor book database.

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Table 6.5 is based on the place of publication as listed in each Yizkor book. Some books list two locations and appear as such in the table. Israel was clearly the most common place of publication (508 of the 613, 82.87%) with the US a distant second (sixty-one of 613, 9.95%), while a further four books (0.65%) list both Israel and the US as the place of publication. While Yiddish has remained alive in Israel over the years despite the state's efforts to suppress it, it is not possible to make the general claim that publishers and printing houses in Israel were a part of the Yiddish world and Yiddish publication networks. Some certainly were, but others were just as much, if not more, part of any other publication network that did not cater specifically to Yiddish. Yad Vashem, for example, which is listed as the publisher or was otherwise involved in many publications, cannot be defined as part of any Yiddish-speaking network. Yiddish has continued to be used as a first language in Israel almost exclusively by the Ashkenazi ultra-orthodox community, as a cultural language, mainly through musical shows and theatre, or in the private sphere, when meeting friends and landsleit, among the secular Ashkenazi population born in the Yiddish-speaking diaspora. Only in the past twenty years or so has there been some attempt, albeit quite limited in scope and mainly through universities, to revive Yiddish.[354]

Relation to Early Collection efforts

As noted in chapter 2, Yizkor books have previously been mentioned by some scholars as strongly related to, or even part of, early commemoration and collection efforts. These commemoration and collection efforts began during the Holocaust, in places such as the Warsaw and Kovno ghettos,[355] and continued after the liberation of the camps and the end of World War II, mainly in DP camps in Austria, Germany and Italy, but also through state-based organizations in France and Poland.[356] Annette Wieviorka, however, has

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[354] Rachel Rojanski, Yiddish in Israel: A History (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2020).

[355] Samuel D. Kassow, "Inside the Kovno Ghetto", in *The Clandestine History of the Kovno Jewish Ghetto Police* (Indiana University Press, 2014), 37–41; *Who will Write our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive*, vol. annotat (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 1–16.

[356] Cohen, "The Jewish DP Experience", 412–421 . Dean, "Local Collaboration in the Holocaust in Eastern Europe", 130; Jockusch, *Collect and Record: Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*, 140,157.

noted that these collection efforts by displaced persons were mainly directed inwards, for their own remembrance needs, rather than outwards as commemoration so that others could know what had happened. According to Wieviorka, the outward-facing projects were the work of historians who understood the importance of documentation in the wider context of commemoration.[357] This study now shifts focus from the languages used to a discussion on the relationship between the books and early collection efforts.

There are three books in the database compiled for this research that were published in Europe during the relevant period in which displaced persons' remembrance and collection efforts took place. The last of the three was published in Germany in 1949, at a time when there were still several displaced persons camps in the US zone in Germany. Of the three, two are standard Yizkor books published by a landsleit organization, and not based in a DP camp. One of the three, the Yizkor book on Zolkiew, was indeed published by a documentation organization, *Centralna Zydowska Komisja Historyczna w Polsce* (Central Jewish Historical Commission of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland), in Poland in 1946.

Apart from the Yizkor book on Zolkiew and three others I discuss below, none of the forewords from the other books mention collection or documentation efforts as their source, inspiration or basis. Moreover, these early efforts were mostly historical in nature – they were either led by historians, or carried out to create a wide base for future historical research, on the basis of "collect now and sift through later". Undoubtedly, the results of these collection efforts made it indirectly later on into Yizkor book publication efforts, through archives and memorial institutions such as Yad Vashem. The editors and other contributors almost certainly came across and used documents collected in the immediate post-Holocaust period by those research institutions. However, such efforts are not explicitly acknowledged. Nonetheless, many of the editors were professionals and some were even historians, so they probably knew about these collection efforts.

The goal of the early collection efforts was to gather historical data on the singularity of the Holocaust, on Nazi ideology and on the fate of different groups.[358] The forewords more often than not explicitly mention that the book being published is not a piece of historical research. Whether the books are historical sources from a historian's point of view is another question, which I discuss in chapter 7. The common stance on the matter presented in the

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[357] Wieviorka, "The Witness in History", 388–389.

[358] Jockusch, *Collect and Record: Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*, 9.

editorials and noted in chapter 7 is that the books were meant to serve primarily as items of commemoration rather than historiography. Thus, even if they do not explicitly reference the early collection efforts, the authors of Yizkor book set their own goals as clearly different from those of the people who initiated those efforts and took part in them.

As noted above, three books mention the early efforts in their editorials. All three mention Emanuel Ringelblum and the Warsaw ghetto collection efforts. The 1957 book on Radzin (today Radzyn Podlaski in eastern Poland) includes a line about a specific text, a will of a "childhood friend" found in the Ringelblum archives, as one of the reasons behind the publication of the book.[359] In his introduction to the 1953 Zamosc (also in eastern Poland) book, Ya'akov Na'aman, one of the participants in the publication of the book, writes that he had been studying to be an archivist at YIVO in Warsaw in 1927, where he "came into close contact with the writers and chroniclers of the history of Polish Jews", among them Ringelblum. His time there, Na'aman claimed, helped him understand the importance of source collection, and the sources he collected were used in the Yizkor book as well.[360] In one editorial in the 1967 Yizkor book for Częstochowa (in southern Poland), titled "About the unwritten monography (a sort of introduction)", the book committee writes that before the war, a book about the local committee, funded by a local group of *askanim* (wealthy community members), had been in the works at the Jewish Scientific Institute, led by Ringelblum, and that the project had been halted when the war began.[361]

Based on what is now known about how Yizkor books were used, thanks both to Yehudith Baumel's research,[362] and the content of the editorials (see also chapter 7), it appears that Annette Wieviorka's conclusion that the efforts of Yizkor book publishers were aimed outwards as commemoration, so that others would know what happened, is indeed correct. With the exception of the book on Zolkiew, no Yizkor books were produced as part of these early collection efforts, and the editorials do not generally mention anything in relation to those efforts. The three mentions of Ringelblum are made regarding his archive being the source for a document that had contributed to the reasons

[359] Yitshak Zigelman, *Sefer Radzin – yizkor-bukh* (Tel-Aviv: Va'ad yots'e Radzin (Podlaski) be-Yiśra'el, 1957), 5.

[360] Moshe Tamari, *Zamosc be-ge'ona uve-shivra* (Tel-Aviv: Hotsa'at va'ad ole' Zamosc be-Yisrael, 1953), 5.

[361] Schutzman, *Czestochow*, 25–26.

[362] Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel".

for publishing the book, or to Ringelblum himself, among others, being an inspiration for document collection. The references do not support the idea that Yizkor books were part of those early efforts. This demonstrates how Yizkor books have been incorrectly labelled as a part of another phenomenon, in this case early collection and documentation efforts, by some previous scholars, instead of being seen as a related but nonetheless independent phenomenon.

Conclusions

The goal of this chapter was to examine, through the editorials, the people involved in the publication process of Yizkor books – not only the writers of the editorials, who were most commonly the publishers or editors, but also other community organizers and officials – and the target audience intended by the authors.

The publishers of Yizkor books were a significantly more diverse group than is implied in the existing research. The majority of Yizkor books were the result of the work of organizations of different kinds, most of which were not landsmanschaftn. In Israel, which is generally considered by Jews to be the home of the Jewish people after 1948, the main organization of landsleit was built not around mutual aid, but around remembrance and commemoration. The activities of such organizations included an annual *azkara* (memorial ceremony) for the community and perished landsleit, planting memorial trees, setting up commemorative plaques, erecting gravestones and memorials, and, of course, publishing Yizkor books This kind of organization still exists in Israel and still engages in these types of activities.[363]

The landsmanschaftn, mostly Yiddish-speaking, mutual aid organizations, were significantly more present as publishers in the first decade or two after the Holocaust, but were quickly overtaken by other organizations, by private individuals who came together without any formal organization behind them, and, for a period during the 1960s and 1970s, by schoolchildren. This process happened side by side with the change from Yiddish to Hebrew as the main language of publication, and from several locations to the overwhelming dominance of Israel as the place of publication.

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[363] For instance the organization of Warsaw landsleit: http://warsaw.org.il/eng-text/main-eng.htm

The editors overall were a more homogenous group than the publishers. This is to be expected, as the editor has a professional function, and is the most important and influential regarding the end result. Editors were either part of the publisher group or brought in from the outside. In the former case, they were less likely to be professional editors, chosen based on their position in the group. In the latter case, where editors were hired from the outside, they were more likely to be professionals in a relevant field, although not always editing. Scholars, especially historians, could also fill the position. Side by side, we also find professional Yizkor books editors such as David Sztokfisz and others, who each edited several books. In the case of the books published by schoolchildren, the editors were usually the school principal or a class teacher.

The target audience was generally carefully considered, and these considerations are often mentioned in the editorials. The language of the book was decided by the perceived target audience, but also based on material considerations such as the availability and cost of a suitable translator. The exception to this was the Polish language, which was nearly always translated and rarely included apart from in original documents.

The starting point of this chapter was previous research in the existing literature. The goal was to examine, through a grounded analysis of the editorials, whether the people behind Yizkor book publications were in fact as homogenous a group as has been claimed. As demonstrated above, the answer is a definite 'no'. Yizkor books were published by a variety of groups, from the classic landsmanschaft to classes of schoolchildren, and by a diverse array of organizations and individuals whose one common characteristic was their view that commemorating the community, not just through Yizkor books, but also by other means, was incredibly important.

Chapter 7: "Millions of our People, Dead without a Jewish Grave" – Reasons for Publishing Yizkor books

The goal of this chapter is to set out the reasons given for publishing a Yizkor book, as expressed by the authors in the editorials, in order to create a basic typology of motivations, and to situate and analyse these from scholarly, theoretical, historical and contemporary perspectives. These categories are initially based on words or phrases found in the sources. However, similar concepts have been brought together under the same title, even if the authors did not use exactly the same wording. For example, the category and heading "the dead demand!" is based on a phrase that appears several times in different editorials, but similar points that did not use that specific wording have also been included.[364] An exception is the category and heading "tell your children", which is based on the well-known biblical phrase "ve-higadeta le-bincha" (tell your son),[365] which in turn relates to several well-known common Jewish practices and rituals, such as the *Seder Pesach* (the meal on the eve of Passover). This phrase is often used in several similar forms or words.

   The chapter evolves around four foci divided into smaller sub-sections; and the structure of the various sections is based on the different points raised in the editorials related to the books as memorial or commemorative items. The first focus, "commemoration and remembrance", is built around discussions in the editorials regarding the different functions the books fulfil from this perspective, for instance, as gravestones or as memorial candles, as well more general, wider themes of memory, such as the status of commemoration of a community or the relation between a specific Yizkor book and the genre or ideas of collective memory or communal commemoration. The second focus, "personal circumstances", examines the motivations that the authors perceive to be connected to them personally, or to people who are especially important to them. The third focus, "metaphysical reasons", discusses the reasons the authors

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[364] For instance: the phrase "the voice of our brothers' blood cries out to us" in: Menahem Dol and Yitshak Siegelman, *Sefer Yezernah* (Heifa: Vaʻad yotsʼe Yezernah be-Yisrael, 1971), 7.

[365] Exodus 13:8 – "And thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt."

describe as having an external basis: from God to other "supernatural" motivations, such as the spirits of the dead; to more general external factors, such as the pull of feelings of nostalgia and the wish to resurrect the destroyed community. Most of the categories can be seen as part of the need of the authors to "tell what happened", which could naturally be connected to the categories examined in "personal motivations" or "metaphysical reasons". The difference is not the existence of an urge or need to tell, remember or share. This urge is ever-present and without it, the publishers and editors would not have put themselves through the arduous publication processes. The difference is the place in which the value, or impetus, of the memory is found. In "personal motivations", the need came from the individual's own psychology and has an inherently personal value. In "metaphysical reasons", the need came from a power outside of them, such as morality, faith or religion. The main component of these reasons is, according to the editorials, the commitment to follow an external order to commemorate. The fourth focus concerns history. The urge to commemorate is described in terms of the importance of sharing knowledge and memory as a goal in its own right. The point here is not just that sharing is important. What sets the different reasons apart is *what* is told: the specific content loaded onto the memory. Whatever the content, it must not only be remembered, but also shared with the wider world. This discussion also addresses the nature of the content of Yizkor books as historical or true.

Without exception, Yizkor books were seen by their authors as memorial or commemorative objects. Memory is used as an umbrella concept that includes different forms of memory, commemoration, memorialization and remembrance. Some editorials mention many different reasons for publishing a specific Yizkor book, while others focus on only a few. There is no correlation between the length of the texts and the number of different motivations discussed. Some authors list several points in a single paragraph, while others write several pages elaborating on only a few motivations. It is the nature of Yizkor books as books – as objects not inherently used for any of these commemorative functions – that allows them to have multiple meanings and uses. For example, a Yizkor book can serve at the same time as a substitute gravestone and a memorial candle, two different objects with different functions, precisely because it is neither; its meaning and symbolic nature are malleable enough to substitute for both at the same time.

The project of publishing a Yizkor book was not an easy one by any means. Even when all went well, the publication process required the people involved to spend countless hours and financial resources, and took a significant emotional toll. Short publication processes usually took a year or two, while

longer ones lasted for decades. These hardships were known to many as they embarked on the publication process, and they still chose to do so. This choice was made for a variety of reasons. Some felt compelled due to personal circumstances. Some felt that publishing a Yizkor book would alleviate their excruciating emotional pain. Some saw it as a holy duty or a mitzvah that they must fulfil. Others felt that the act of sharing the story of what happened with their children or with the world had its own value. Many authors expressed a combination of these different motivations.

Reasons for Publishing Yizkor Books

The editorials describe many different motivations for producing the Yizkor books. Most of these focus on that editor's own particular book, while some mention the Yizkor book as a genre. In his editorial for the 1968 Yizkor book on Lukow, in today's eastern Poland, M. Tsanin, who was not a member of the publishing committee, writes:

> Every Yizkor book that the surviving remnant publishes is a holy book, a monument to the slaughtered stump of our people. Yizkor books are the only testimony to tell the next Jewish generations of the greatness of the Eastern-European branch. The Lukow Yizkor book will be a kind of sign for all passers-by, to say: Man, see what can the creature created in God's image do to his relatives. And if the guilty are not punished, if the blood of the innocents is not avenged, then humankind's existence is forfeit and all its hopes are false.[366]

According to Tsanin, the books are items of commemoration, as all the motives described in the editorials have at least something to do with memory. Tsanin lists several different aspects of Yizkor book commemoration: the books are holy items, they serve as both a monument and a testimony. Specifically, Tsanin writes that the Lukow book should tell the world what happened to the Jews and about the depths of evil to which man can sink, so that the perpetrators will be punished, the victims avenged and humanity can ensure that the Holocaust will never happen again.

Commemoration and Remembrance

By their nature, the goal of every Yizkor book is commemoration. Most also have remembrance as a goal, mostly through the contributions of witnesses to

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[366] Binem Heller, *Sefer Lukow* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Lukow be-Yiśra'el, 1968), 11.

the Holocaust. The most common motivation for publication raised in this context is for the book to serve as a gravestone, both as a commemorative location and as a substitute for the grave, to serve as a place to hold memorials and say *Kaddish*. In close relation to the gravestone function, many books are also said to serve as memorial candles – as items of great importance in Jewish mourning, commemoration and remembrance traditions. Another common reason for publication is to fulfil the biblical command to remember, sometimes also expanded to include passing on what is remembered to future generations, but not necessarily in every case. In the 2007 book on northern Bukowina, the following text appears as one of the editorials:

> There is a book one reads and remembers,
> And there is a book one reads and forgets,
> And there is an *aron koddesh* book for important memories,
> Read it a little bit and sometimes browse through.
> Such is the book in front of you…
> It is recommended to read it from A to Z,
> But those who have difficulties reading through,
> Please read a little… a few times a year,
> About the chronicles of the community and family,
> A memory of the deportation and of those who died in the Shoah…[367]

This moving plea is an example of how the authors perceived the books as tied to acts of commemoration and remembrance. First, the book is explicitly described as an item of memory. It is meant for people to remember and to prevent them from forgetting what had happened. It is described as a special item; not only a book that one remembers after reading, but also a book that contains special memories. It is said to be the kind of book one keeps in the *aron koddesh*; the place in the synagogue where the most holy books are kept, the scrolls of the Torah, which contain, according to Jewish belief, the history of the Jews, including the most important events that have shaped the Jewish people. In the same vein, a Yizkor book contains the important events that shaped the Jewish community it commemorates, and thus the worst event in Jewish history and the most significant event in the history of the community: the Holocaust. A Yizkor book is therefore a book of the highest level of sanctity, almost like the scrolls of the Torah.

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[367] Menachem (Author) Camil and Shay (editor) Shertser, *Sho'at yehudey tzfon Bukowina*, Mahad. 2. ed. (Tel-Aviv: Ha-irgun ha-olami shel yehudey Bukowina, 2007).

It is important to note that the Yizkor book is not completely equated with the Bible. It is not claimed that the book contains the word of God. Instead, it is presented as the harbinger of the most important and holy parts of the history of the Jewish people, in particular those that happened to that specific community.

The ideas represented in the text from the northern Bukowina book corroborate the points previously discussed by Yehudith Baumel.[368] She has shown that the books have been used in a similar way to the Bible; they have a ceremonial role in social and memorial gatherings. Excerpts are read aloud, in a similar way to how the Bible or the prayer book are read aloud during synagogue services. Roni-Kochavi-Nehab has further argued that the books are sanctified and serve as books of instruction, and that they contain laws (*mitzvahs*) that instruct Jews on life.[369] The idea that these books are sanctified is very common in the editorials, as in the above example. This is also in line with Baumel's argument. However, the idea that there are laws in Yizkor books, similar to the Bible, is not supported by the editorials and not mentioned even once. The books do, according to the editorials, include historical events that the readers can learn from and might even use to avoid the mistakes made by Jews of the diaspora and the peoples of the world. These are not commands, however, but lessons from the past; and certainly no editorial presumes to present them as the word of God or anything like it. It is therefore possible to conclude that the idea that the books are sanctified items of commemoration is widely accepted by the authors of the editorials. Yizkor books are not, however, sanctified to the degree that the Torah, the Bible or prayer books are. According to Jewish common belief, the Bible contains the word of God and the laws mentioned by it must be followed. This is not the case with the editorials. Yizkor books are closer to the *siddur*, the prayer book, in that way. Yizkor books and the *siddur* are both sanctified, but their content are more flexible and can be altered according to need. Every *siddur* contains the same general prayers and customs, but how they are used and the exact content and order of the verses varies from community to community. Like the Bible, however, Yizkor books contain the story and history of the Jewish people, its "History of Suffering". [370] Consequently, Yizkor books continue the stories told in the Bible, such as the story of Amalek and the Israelites. The connection between Yizkor books and the Jewish idea of the History of

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[368] Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel".

[369] Kochavi-Nehab, "'Write This as a Memorial in the Book' – A Jewish Pattern for Memory".

[370] Benbassa, *Suffering as Identity: The Jewish Paradigm*.

Suffering is often mentioned and appears throughout the editorials in relation to several different motives for publication.

Collective Memory and Collected Memories

The theory chapter above discussed the distinction between collective memory and collected memories. In short, in the thinking of Maurice Halbwachs,[371] memory is an internal, introspective process while collective memory is an external, perceptive process.[372] Furthermore, collected memories are the different accounts provided by witnesses of the same kinds of objects as collective memory, in our case a community, people and events. However, in the case of collected memories, there is no aspiration to create a single version of events or a unified narrative and there can be several differing accounts of the same event. The discrepancies between the different versions only become significant when someone, for example a historian, tries to understand what really happened.[373] Otherwise, the versions can continue to coexist within a group. Collective memory is thus how the group sought to commemorate the community, people and events, while collected memories are the amalgamation of individual recollections found in each Yizkor book.

The differentiation between the two concepts and what they mean from a methodological or a theoretical point of view is mostly the stuff of scholarly discussion. The authors of the editorials generally did not make the distinction between the two concepts when they discussed group aspects of commemoration or remembrance. Many editors reported encountering several, or "duplicate", versions of the same story or descriptions of a person, and most took a practical approach to these issues. That is, cases of several variations of the same story, or different descriptions of the same event, were handled as a normal editing issue – either some were not included in the book because they were tabbed "duplicates", or parallel versions were included verbatim. The criteria for such decisions are rarely discussed, apart from some editors mentioning that due to a lack of sufficient knowledge on their part, a lack of financial resources or because they did not want to hurt anyone, multiple or duplicate versions had been included.[374] As the majority of editors

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[371] Halbwachs and Coser, *On Collective Memory*.

[372] Ibid.

[373] This is discussed in Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*, 38–39.

[374] See Alexandroni, *Kehilat Augustow*, 12–13; Zvi Yasheev, *Sefer Apta* (Tel-Aviv: Yots'e Apta be-Yisrael, Ar. ha-B, Kanadah, Brazil, 1966), 3; Eliyahu Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Zborov* (Heifa: Irgun yots'e Zborov veha-sevivah be-Yiśrael, 1975), 9.

were not historians and were probably unfamiliar with historical methodology, we do not generally know how duplicates were handled when only one version was published. In one case, Shmuel Nitzan, the editor of the Rachov-Annopol book notes that eyewitness accounts had been prioritized over others when relaying the same event.[375] It is likely that other editors used similar criteria to his, chose better-written pieces, or perhaps those that better fit the collective memory of the particular group. In any case, this is generally not noted beyond a short comment about duplicates being excluded.[376] There is no way of knowing, for example, which stories or testimonies were sent in more than once or exactly which details were "duplicates".

This section thus refers to both "collective memory" and "collected memories", that is, the shared aspect of the memory alongside the plethora of recollections of the same event. It also includes the publishing activity in itself as collective, and how these different aspects relate to the people, the books and memory.

Where, according to the editorials, does this idea of collective commemoration come from and why is it significant? To quickly recap from chapter 6, there were two main reasons: the need to commemorate so many people, institutions, groups and events; and the lack of available sources. As is stressed throughout this thesis, one of the most common ideas expressed in Yizkor books is that all the victims of the Holocaust, including for example those Jews who died in the Soviet Union because of the physical conditions or violence of the Soviet authorities, became martyrs on their death. This requires that all of them be mentioned in some detail in the community's Yizkor book. At the same time, many people who knew them had also perished in the Holocaust, while local archives and sources had been destroyed or lost, and others sealed behind the iron curtain. The inflation of the number of commemorated individuals alongside the absence of traditional sources meant that a small group could not by itself complete a Yizkor book to the required level of detail of commemoration. The publishers and editors needed the help of others who had the information on, and knowledge and memories of everyone and everything that needed to be commemorated. These included institutions that had already begun to collect data, such as Yad Vashem or Beit Ha-tefutzot in Israel, but also numerous private individuals. This kind of collective effort came to be seen in Yizkor books not only as a necessary solution to a practical problem, but also a positive development.

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[375] Nitzan, *Rachow / Annopol – pirkey edut ve-zikaron*, 14.

[376] For instance: Shelomoh Spivak, *Sefer zikaron le-kedoshei Zavyertsyeh ve-hasevivah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yots'e Zavyertsyeh ṿeha-sevivah, 1957–1958 (inferred)), 9.

In his foreword to the 1957 Radzin (today Radzyń Podlaski in eastern Poland) Yizkor book, editor Yitshak Zigelman writes:

> But the book is known to have a special significance due to it being a collective creation. For as much as the writers took part, so did they find expression for every idea and every individual uniqueness: so did the breadth of details and events brought to light grow. And the participants – some were experienced in employing the writer's pen and some were unable to even put their own story in writing. But those latter ones, most had been physically embroiled themselves in the terrible events – and their writings have been written in their blood. Indeed, they inscribed horrifying testimonies of suffocation and stoning. From them, from their writings, sound the clear echoes of death rattling, theirs or their relatives'.[377]

Zigelman's text is an example of a common claim made in the editorials: that the fact that Yizkor books were the result of a collective effort – that is, that they are, in the terms used here, a work of collected memories – gives them a special, positive status. Moreover, as Zigelman states, the fact that the stories of the Holocaust have been recollected by people that experienced them first-hand (they were "written in their blood"),[378] makes them more significant and more powerful than other descriptions of the Holocaust. Their truth-value, according to Zigelman, is of the highest order, as they echo the sounds of death. In our terms then, these are not collective memories but individual recollections grouped together. Going back to Aleida Assman,[379] we can say that through their transmission in writing to us the readers, these personal, collected memories have become integrated into the collective memory of the Holocaust.

In the 1975 Yizkor book on Zboriv (today Zboriv in western Ukraine), an editorial called *dvar ha-ma'arechet*[380] ("A Word from the Publishers" דבר המערכת) includes the following text:

> …but this book is not a historical monograph, based on objective research conducted by experts on the matter; this is in principle a book commemorating a collective memory, a book written about many by many.[381]

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[377] Zigelman, *Sefer Radzin – yizkor-bukh*, 5.

[378] Ibid.

[379] Assmann, "Transformations between History and Memory".

[380] More specifically, the word *ma'arechet* refers to the place where the production of a book, newspaper, television programme, etc., happens, or the people as a group do the work, or to both.

[381] Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Zborov*, 9.

This is another example of a similar idea to the ones brought up in Zigelman's text. It does however present us with an example of another point: the collective commemoration in Yizkor books stands in contradiction to scholarly publications. The work of experts is objective and impersonal, while Yizkor books are subjective and personal. According to the editorial, Yizkor books represent a plethora of recollections and memories, and of subjective truths, in contrast to historical works, which by their nature are claimed to contain a single, "true" narrative.

This point is also raised in different forms in the editorials of other books.[382] It also takes us back to the points brought up by Christopher Browning regarding the methodological implications of working with collected memories: a historian researching a historical event or period cannot simply present different or contradicting memories side by side.[383] The historian's work is to sift through these memories, in the form of testimonies or documents, and qualify and corroborate them, thereby coming closer to constructing the history of the event. The historian can present these different or contradicting memories in some cases, for example when examining the memory of an event, when further corroboration is impossible, or when he is interested in how individuals *perceived* the situation. The opinion presented in the Zborov book editorial agrees with this approach, and states that the fact that Yizkor books contain memories, which are not processed using historical methodology, clearly makes the Yizkor book an item of commemoration rather than a historical work. In his editorial in the 1972 book on Antopol (Belarus), landsman Moshe Pollack writes:

> Following our ardent wish and tendency that our Antopol book should include contributions of our landsleit who knew Antopol, the writers and the poets, who are capable of perpetuating the memory of destroyed Antopol, in eulogy and lamentation over the ruin and destruction of the Jewish Antopol community of blessed memory, and in this way publish the memorial book, in its proper form and appearance…[384]

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[382] See also See *Baranovits – sefer zikaron* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Baranovits be-Yiśra'el, 1953), 9. Josef Chrust, *Kaidan – sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv?: Irgun yotse Kaidan be-Yisrael, 1977), 7. Yitshak Idan, *Sefer zikaron David-Horodok* (Tel-Aviv?: Va'ad yots'e David-Horodok, 1957), 6. Zevulun Poran, *Sefer ha-zikaron le kehilat Yurburg-Lita* (Jerusalem: Igud yots'e Yurburg be-Yiśra'el, 1991), 6. Mosheh Zilberman-Silon and Ya'aḳov Berger-Tamir, *Kehilat Lipkani – sefer zikaron* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yotse' Lipkani be-Yiśra'el, 1963), 9. *Pinkas Ludmir* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Ludmir be-Yiśrael, 1962), 13.

[383] Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony,* 39.

[384] Ayalon, *Antopol*, 2. Originally in English.

When Yizkor book authors used the term "collective memory", they were not using it in the same way as scholars do. They were referring to the fact that the book was a collection of memories produced by people who collectively worked on it. Moreover, since the vast majority of editors were not professional historians, any problems encountered in this context were approached and resolved as any other editing problem would be. Nonetheless, the collective nature of Yizkor books is discussed quite often in the editorials, and usually presented in a positive light as having inherent value that went beyond simply being a practical way to contend with the high number of commemorative objects and the lack of sources.

Are the Books Gravestones?

The status of Yizkor books as gravestones has been discussed a number of times in scholarly works over the years,[385] and this discussion is well-represented in the sources. The relation between Yizkor books and gravestones is the single most common point raised in the editorials and the vast majority of the texts contain at least one reference to this topic. Ya'akov Nechushtan, chair of the publishing committee for the 1971 Yizkor book on Pultusk (just north of Warsaw, Poland) wrote in his introduction:

> It has always been a mitzvah to erect a gravestone, as a sign of memory, on the grave of the deceased. How can we follow this ancient mitzvah, when most of our dearest who died in the Holocaust found their death in the gas chambers, in the flaming crematoria of the Germans and others…and those who were lucky to stay alive fell during their flight in the snowy tundra of Russia…
>
> How do we erect a gravestone for them, if they did not even receive a Jewish burial?[386]

Nechushtan makes several key points that come up in many editorials. First, that the circumstances of many of the victims' deaths often prohibited their relatives from knowing when or where they died. Second, that the bodies were destroyed instead of being buried, so that no grave existed even when the place of death was known. Third, that if there were bodies, they were buried in unknown locations, and of course not in a Jewish cemetery or according to Jewish ritual. The result is that there is neither a place to erect a gravestone,

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[385] Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel", 369–370, 374–375. Kugelmass et al., *From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry*, 25–27. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, 7.

[386] Yitshak Ivri, *Pultusk* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Pultusk be-Yisrael, 1971), 7.

nor a time or place to perform the rituals of mourning and commemoration – the burial service and the *azkara* memorial service. It is not even possible to say *Kaddish* in the synagogue on the deceased's *yahrzeit*.

This issue often appears in the scholarly literature as a discussion about the nature of the books in the eyes of their authors. If a Yizkor book is mentioned as being a gravestone, what does this mean? In what way was it a gravestone? How did this status affect how community members and readers treated the book? Was it a replacement for a missing stone memorial? Or did it possess any additional qualities that separated the two? Was the book merely seen as a symbolic gravestone, or did it have a "real" quality to it? These kinds of questions have become a point of contention between new and old scholarship. Jacob Shatzky's statement that "gravestones are rarely visited"[387] has been echoed by recent scholarship and taken as a criticism of Yizkor books, as if Shatzky was saying that the books are like gravestones in the sense that they are uninteresting, collect dust and are only visited when one has to. However, what Shatzky probably meant is that gravestones made of stone are only visited once a year in most Jewish traditions, but that books as gravestones made of paper are much easier to visit, say a prayer on, and use to perform the annual tradition of *azkara*.[388] This interpretation makes more sense in the wider context of Shatzky's work on Yizkor books. The points made in the editorials on this issue, as well as the historical context – there are over a million Jewish Holocaust victims still unaccounted for even today – also supports this understanding of Shatzky. There were many more victims without a grave in the 1950s, and their living relatives were unable to visit their place of burial, say *Kaddish* or perform the *azkara*. Yizkor books were intended from the beginning to serve as a replacement "place" to perform different religious rites. I will show that the scholarly argument regarding whether the books are in fact considered gravestones was a moot point for the authors of the books. For them, the Yizkor books were not *stone* gravestones, but they were gravestones nonetheless. At the same time, they were and were not gravestones, and different editorials presented this point in slightly different ways. However, the basic idea appeared consistently across the field. In an

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[387] Horvath, "The Role of the Survivors in the Remembrance of the Holocaust: Memorial Monuments and Yizkor Books".

[388] In Hebrew and Yiddish, the word for "gravestone" or "tombstone" does not include the word "stone" in it, and nor does it reference a tomb. The word "matzeva" refers only to the act of putting-up or erecting something. Thus in Hebrew and Yiddish it is easier for one to conceive of a stoneless gravestone.

editorial in the 1966 Yizkor book on Kalarash (today Călărasi in Moldova), the publishing committee writes:

> In the meeting of the initiating committee, in 1960, we decided to take care of the collection and gathering of historical material and of bringing up events from our ancestors' lives – the Jews of Kalarash-Bessarabia.
>
> We said "we will erect a memorial" [also: gravestone, in Hebrew: מצבת זיכרון] in book form to reflect the full scope of life in the town.[389]

This is an example of the most common way this point is made in the editorials. That there was an idea, followed by a decision to erect a gravestone in book form. In Hebrew, the verb commonly used (*le-hatsiv* – להציב) and the common word for gravestone (*matseva* – מצבה) are derived from the same root and make sense together. These same words are commonly used in Yiddish as well, as part of the Hebrew component where *matseva* would usually be pronounced as *matseyve*. Another common word used is *gal-ed* (גל-עד), which is usually translated into English as "cairn", meaning a permanent or lasting artificial marker, commonly made from stone, similar to a gravestone. In this context, it marks a place of burial or of other sanctified significance. Thus, the two common ideas associated with gravestones in the Jewish context are that they are put up or erected, and that they serve as a permanent commemoration. In Yizkor books, the material nature of the commemorative object is clearly not a necessary component of the term "gravestone".[390]

What can also be learned from the Kalarash excerpt is that another reason for using books is that they allow much more information to be included. Stone memorials are often symbolic and contain little information beyond basic details and a short inscription. A book can better present and transfer the knowledge that the authors would like the reader to have. This is in line with the other most common motivation for publishing the books – to "tell our

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[389] Noah Tamir, *Sefer Kalarash* (Tel-Aviv: Defus Ari'eli, 1966), 15.

[390] Examples of both terms can be found in: Bar-Tzvi, *Ayaratenu Ternovkah*, 5. Cohen, *Zvoliner yizker bukh*. Cohen, *Sefer Butshatsh*, 13. Ben-Shem and Gelber, *Z'olkiv*, 15. Eliyahu Freidenreich and Aryeh Yakobovits, *Sefer yizkor li-kedoshe Byalah-Ravska* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Byalah-Ravska be-Yiśra'el uva-tefutsot, 1972), 13–14. Gelernt, *Pitshayever yizkor bukh*, 9. Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha*, 447-454. Noy and Schutzman, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Kolomiyah veha-sevivah*, 7. Eliyahu Porat, *Sefer Kotsk* (Tel-Aviv: Va'ad Irgun yots'e Kotsk be-Yisrael, 1961), 6. Yitshak Zigelman, *Sefer Kobilnik* (Heifa: Va'ad yots'e Kobilnik be-Yisrael, 1967), 7. This is brought up in nearly every editorial. Also in Sephardic books, See *Saloniki – Ir va-em be-israel* (Tel-Aviv: Makhon le-heker Yahadut Saloniki 1967), editorial.

children" what happened. This cannot be done through stone memorials or plaques. I expand on this point below.

The introduction from the *ma'arechet* to the 1970 Mlinov-Mervits (today Mlyniv in western Ukraine) book begins with the following words:

> Polish Jewry is gone, and with it our beloved ones from the towns of Mlinov-Mervits are gone. Twenty years and more have passed since the terrible times, when the murderer came to our childhood cradle, but the voice of the blood of our brothers is screaming to us still from the killing places.
>
> Therefore, we could not forego erecting this gravestone for the martyrs of our two towns. And although we knew that our language is too poor to explain and encompass the magnitude of the Holocaust in all its depth, we could not absolve ourselves from the heavy responsibility, which lay on us, to put in writing and bring up at least what little that we could.
>
> And we, the few remnants, have been ordered to erect a memorial for the town and its martyrs, so their memory is not ended. And this was done in the form of the book in front of us.[391]

Shatzky's above-mentioned statement that "gravestones are rarely visited" echoes the sentiment expressed in many editorials. It is an important motivation for the decision to publish a book: to erect a gravestone that people can have close to them in their own home and visit often; not just "a cold gravestone... on which we carve the banal 'here lies'...".[392] The majority of the authors of the editorials would have undoubtedly agreed with Shatzky's words. An illustrative example of this position can be found in the editorial for the 1972 book on Aleksandria (today in southern Poland), which includes a quote from a famous landsleit, Rabbi Sternberg, that for the destroyed community "we should not put up a cold stone gravestone with the banal "here buried..." on it".[393] This stresses the added value of a book-form gravestone over a stone one.

Overall, I found three types of claim on this matter in the editorials: (*a*) that the book is a gravestone; (*b*) that it is a stand-in for a stone gravestone; or (*c*) that it is a replacement for a gravestone, but not the same thing. However, I would argue that when the different arguments are read in-depth and in context, they all in fact argue the same thing: that the books are not

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[391] Yitsḥak Siegelman, *Sefer Mlinov-Mervits* (Heifa: Va'ad yots'e Mlinov-Mervits be-Yisrael, 1970), 7.

[392] Shmuel Israeli and Nathan Livneh, *Pinkas ha-kehilah Aleksandria* (Tel Aviv: Va'ad yots'e Aleksandria be-Yisrael, 1972).

[393] Ibid., 8.

gravestones in the material sense. They are not immobile stone structures erected over the remains of one or more persons. The books are, however, gravestones from a functional perspective. They create a memorial space, a place to gather around to mourn the dead and conduct the Jewish rituals of remembrance and commemoration, to say prayers and to have conversations with others.

Thus, when editorials mention that the book is not a gravestone,[394] they mean that it is not a *stone* memorial, but still a memorial. When the editorials say that the book is a gravestone,[395] they mean the same thing – that the books are memorials that are erected, but not of stone. That is, some authors implicitly used the word 'matzeva' to mean "a *stone* memorial" and some to mean that it only meant "a memorial", but in both cases they meant that the books are nonetheless memorials and a replacement for the gravestone made of stone. Editor Asher Ben-Oni of the 1960 Mizots' (today Mizoch in Ukraine) book resolved this problem by referring to his Yizkor book as a "gravestone-book" (ספר-מצבה),[396] demonstrating the inherently dual nature of Yizkor books.

A Place and Time to Say *Kaddish*

The *Kaddish* is a Jewish prayer that is spoken on several occasions, in slightly different versions according to one's group, throughout the Jewish calendar. Unlike the *Yizkor*, which is a memorial prayer, the *Kaddish* prayer is a hymn to God. One of the most common traditions among Jews is for the spouse or child of the deceased to speak the *Kaddish* aloud during the funeral, and later on in memorial services. Who exactly can and should say it also varies between different groups. There are many variations between different denominations and communities. The funeral *Kaddish* is a widely accepted tradition, even among secular Jews. The *Kaddish* is also spoken on the deceased's *yahrzeit* and during many synagogue services,[397] although these occasions are attended by significantly fewer people compared to funeral services in graveyards.

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[394] See Blumental, *Sefer-yizkor Baranov*, 11. Chrust, *Kaidan – sefer zikaron*, 8. Sokolovski, *Roz'inoi*, introduction.

[395] See Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha*, 447, 451, 454. Yosef Levin, *Antopal* (Tel Aviv: h. mo. l., 1967), introduction. Mazor and Fuks, *Sefer Baltsi Basarabia*, 5. Yasheev, *Sefer Apta*, introduction. David Sztokfisz, *Sefer Zgyerz': mazkeret nestach li-kehilah yehudit be-Polin = Sefer Zgerzsh: tsum ondenk fun a Yidisher kehile in Poylin* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Zgyerz' be-Yisrael, 1975). Michael Walzer-Fass, *Sefer Novi-Targ ve-hasevivah* (Israel: Irgun yots'e Novi-Targ veha-sevivah be-Yisrael, 1979), 13–15.

[396] Asher Ben-Oni, *Mizots'* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Mizots' be-Yisrael, 1960).

[397] Anita Diamant, *Saying Kaddish: How to Comfort the Dying, Bury the Dead, and Mourn as a Jew* (New York: Schocken Books, 1998). Maurice Lamm, *The Jewish Way in Death and*

The *Kaddish* is to be spoken on the grave of a deceased person on their *yahrzeit* but, as the excerpt from the Pultusk Yizkor book demonstrates, the circumstances of death were partially or entirely unknown for many victims, and they did not receive a Jewish burial. Thus, their relatives did not have a time or place to say the *Kaddish*.

In line with the above-mentioned discussion regarding the books as gravestones, many editorials also mention the book as a place to say the *Kaddish*. In many ways, the two points are related, as the Yizkor book serves as the gravestone for many Holocaust victims, and thus the place around which the *Kaddish* can be spoken. The *yahrzeit* for those victims whose circumstances of death are unknown is often determined according to the *yahrzeit* of the entire community. Most commonly, this would be the day the local or otherwise most relevant ghetto was liquidated or – in the case of many Eastern European communities, where this issue is most prevalent – a day of a notable mass murder of the local Jewish population. In other cases, another significant date is established as the *yahrzeit* of the community, such as the day the Nazis first entered the town.[398] Editor David Jakubowicz writes in his editorial for the 1967 book on Wadowice, Andrychow, Kalwarja, Myslenice and Sucha, five communities in Silesia, Poland:

> The immigrants from Wadowice rightly asked: why are our townspeople behind by not paying respects to those passed, like other townspeople do? There are no graves and gravestones left for the martyrs where one can show one's sorrow and sadness over the loss of those dear ones and say *Kaddish*. It is only possible to meet once a year and show sorrow in a general prayer. As this has become a tradition among other immigrants, why, then, do the people of Wadowice not get organized to follow in their footsteps?[399]

The writer uses the word *olim* to refer to those migrants making *aliya*, emigrating to Israel from other places. When he writes about the tradition of

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Mourning (New York: J. David, 1969). Abner Weiss, *Death and Bereavement: a Halakhic Guide* (Hoboken, NJ., New York: Ktav Pub. House; Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, 1991).

[398] See examples of different events mentioned as the *yahrzeit* of the community: Ya'akov Adini, *Radzivilov sefer zikaron* (Heifa: Irgun yots'e Radzivilov be-Yiśra'el, 1966 (inferred)), 9; Grünwald and Etz-Chaim, *Megilat ha-Sho'ah shel kehilat kodesh Cakovec, h.y.d*, 13; Eliezer Laci Klepner, *Zikhronotai me-Banfi-Hunyad* (Jerusalem: Sifre Ramot, 1990), Introduction; Levita, *Sefer zikaron kehilat Breziv (Bz'ozuv)*, 2; Stein, *Sefer zikaron Borshah*, 21; *Shorashim shelanu*, 4 vols., vol. 3 (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Hrubieszow be-Israel, 1994), 3.

[399] Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha*, 451.

"other immigrants", he is referring to other groups of landsleit who had already published Yizkor books of their own, and now had a time and place to say the *Kaddish* for the deceased. Others were able to fulfil this mitzvah while the landsleit of Wadowice still could not. This excerpt demonstrates how important having a place and date to say the *Kaddish* is to Jews. The customs of burial and mourning are generally very important in Judaism, even for non-religious or secular Jews. What is significant here is that *Kaddish* is indeed spoken at a funeral, over the body of the deceased before it is put into the ground.

The reality that survivors and others who remained faced after the Holocaust was that their families, relatives, friends or townsfolk had perished, but their bodies or remains could not be found and brought to a proper burial. Thus, a normal burial and mourning process could not be followed. In the editorial for the Baitsh (Biecz in southern Poland) Yizkor book, the authors write:

> A "memorial book" has great importance. First of all for us the survivors from Beitsh, scattered to the four corners of the world, it needs to be in each of our houses, to come together with the souls of the martyrs once a year on the "memorial day" that is set by us.[400]

Once more connecting this to the discussion of Yizkor books as gravestones, the books are mentioned many times as a place to say *Kaddish*. The excerpt from the Baitsh Yizkor book adds another element to this discussion, specifically the state of the Jewish world after the Holocaust. While the centre of the Jewish world moved to Israel, many families were now scattered all over the world. They could not make an annual trip to a place of burial even if there was one. Instead of standing next to the grave of the deceased, they could use the book as a stand-in for the hallowed location and say *Kaddish* over the book. Finally, since many of those who died had no surviving relatives to say *Kaddish* over them, anyone can use the Yizkor book to say *Kaddish* over all those who died by using the necrology, thereby fulfilling the Mitzvah for all of them, as they now all have a place and time of death.

Remember! …and Pass it on!

"Zachor!" (Remember! – !זכור) is a biblical command to all Jews. The full verse appears in the book of Deuteronomy, 25:17: "Remember what Amalek

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[400] Yehudah Leyb Blum, Pinhas Vagshal, and Devorah Vainfeld-Samu'el, *Ayaratenu Baitsh* (Ramat-Gan?: Irgun yotse Baitsh veha-sevivah be-Yisrael, 1959–60), 20.

did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt".[401] [402]
Amalek, the mythical nemesis of the Israelites, is mentioned in the Bible as
having attacked the Hebrews on several occasions. This specific verse refers
to Amalek attacking the Hebrews on their way through the desert after the
exodus from Egypt. Amalek became symbolic in Jewish tradition of the
gentiles throughout history attacking the Jews in order to destroy them.[403] The
Passover *Haggadah*[404] is based around the story of the exodus, and includes
another famous and important command: "ve-higadeta le-bincha" (tell your
son), which extends the command of remembrance to the act of transferring
to others that which is remembered. This is done traditionally with the intent
of ensuring that every generation remembers what has happened, and feels as
if it came out of Egypt, that its members are also victims of the symbolic
Amalek and part of the History of Suffering.[405] In this original context, the
suffering of Israel at the hands of *Amalek* is ended each time through the power
of God, who rescues the Hebrews. In the context of post-Holocaust Zionist
thinking, this notion became focused on the State of Israel as the new saviour
of the Jews from *Amalek's* schemes to destroy them. In one editorial, for the
book on Cakovec in Croatia, the author even writes the part of his text
discussing this point, and titled "For you shall tell to the final generation", in
a form that strongly resembles the Passover *Haggadah*:

> And if your son asks you tomorrow: All this research, interest and
> reminiscence, for a world that was destroyed and is now gone, what do they
> mean?

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[401] Translation taken from https://st-takla.org/Bibles/Holy-Bible.html

[402] See for example in Gonda, *Me'ah shanah li-yehudey Debretsen*, 7-9. Grünwald and Etz-Chaim, *Megilat ha-Sho'ah shel kehilat kodesh Cakovec, h.y.d*, 9. Poran, *Sefer ha-zikaron le kehilat Yurburg-Lita*, 6. Dol and Siegelman, *Sefer Yezernah*, 7. Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha*, 9–10.

[403] This is reflected in Yizkor books, See for example in Adini, *Zikaron le-kehilat Bihavah*, 14; Binyamin Haruvi, *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Shedlishts'eh veha-sevivah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Shedlishts'eh veha-sevivah, 1970); Levita, *Sefer zikaron kehilat Breziv (Bz'ozuv)*, 2; Nathan Livneh, *Pinkas ha-kehilah Trisk* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Trisk be-Yiśra'el, 1975), 7; Zilberman-Silon and Berger-Tamir, *Kehilat Lipkani – sefer zikaron*, 9.

[404] The Passover book read during a special family meal on the eve of the holiday, containing, among other things, a version of the story of the exodus from Egypt.

[405] See for example in Moshe Carmilly, *Cluj* (New York, 1970), ט-י; Grünwald and Etz-Chaim, *Megilat ha-Sho'ah shel kehilat kodesh Cakovec, h.y.d*, 10, 180; Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha*, 10; Moshe Mendelevitsh, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Veyelun* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Veyelun, 1971), 14; Zilberman-Silon and Berger-Tamir, *Kehilat Lipkani – sefer zikaron*, 8–9.

…

> You have learned, my son, that in every generation they came to destroy us, but, remember and do not forget, that in no generation has an enemy like this terrible Nazi monster risen, which brought on us the Holocaust and the destruction, that after which was established the largest graveyard since the world was made, of six million of our people, *ha-Shem yikom damam*!

> In this infinite and inconceivable house of death there is a special plot for us, for the 428 souls of the holy members of the Cakovec community – enormous in its dimensions and horrifying in its depth. On it our tears run dry, our throats are hoarse and our heart shall beat till our souls perish.[406]

The Nazis, as another group which tried to destroy the Jews, are also commonly referred to as Amalek. Thus, the command to remember what Amalek did is the command to remember what all others who tried to destroy the Jews have done as well. This command is then extended to include remembering the Holocaust and the actions of the perpetrators and bystanders. The dual nature of Yizkor books as gravestones and books allows them to fill both roles at the same time – as memorials and as reservoirs of knowledge. Another often-mentioned point is the imperative to tell the next, or future,[407] generations what happened. Some editorials mention both target audiences. For example, an editorial signed by "the Secretariat" (*ha-mazkirut*, המזכירות) of the Plonsk (Poland) Yizkor book notes that the book is aimed both inwards, towards "our sons and daughters", who are a part of the community, and outwards towards "future generations", so both can know the history of the community and what had happened to it.[408]

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[406] Grünwald and Etz-Chaim, *Megilat ha-Sho'ah shel kehilat kodesh Cakovec, h.y.d*, 180. The first line is a direct reference to the story of the four sons in the *Haggadah*. In the second paragraph quoted, the phrase "in every generation" is the one commonly said about Amalek (כי בכל דור ודור).

[407] See Azrieli and Boneh, *Sefer Zvhil*, Editorial; Mordekhai Amitay and Yehoshua Robert Büchler, *Korot mekorot li-kehilah yehudit Topolts'ani* (Jerusalem: Va'adah le-hotsa'at sefer zikaron li-kehilat Topolts'ani be-Yiśra'el, 1976), 7; Freidenreich and Yakobovits, *Sefer yizkor li-kedoshe Byalah-Ravska*, 13; Mazor and Fuks, *Sefer Baltsi Basarabia*, 5; Eliyahu Shpitser, *Kehilat Sombor be-hurbanah: dape-zikaron li-kedoshe ha-kehila* (Jerusalem: E. Shpitser, 1970), 1; Sztokfisz, *Sefer Zgyerz': mazkeret nestach li-kehilah yehudit be-Polin = Sefer Zgerzsh: tsum ondenk fun a Yidisher kehile in Poylin*, 6; *Vurke yizkor buch* (Israel: Aroysgegebn durkhn Vurker landslayt fareyn in Yiśroel, 1976), 11.

[408] Mordekhai Halamish, Mendel Mann, and Shlomo Zemach, *Sefer Plonsk ve-hasevivah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Plonsk be-Yisrael, 1963), 6.

In the editorials, this phrase can appear either in a similar form to the original, most notably as a quote from the Bible or the *Pesach Haggadah*, or sometimes in slightly modified form. People must therefore not only remember the History of Suffering themselves, but also pass it on to the children or to the far wider group of 'future generations'. This knowledge always includes the story of the plight of the Jews and their suffering during the Holocaust, including the destruction of the community. This is in line with the above-mentioned Jewish idea of the History of Suffering.[409]. However, many editorials expand what one should tell one's children to include the much larger body of knowledge of the life and history of the community before the Holocaust. This is connected to the ideas of nostalgia and resurrection discussed below. The stories, photographs and maps are not just knowledge as such. They connect the descendants of the townspeople to the community of their ancestors, bringing it back to life and providing the old with the opportunity and ability to reminisce.

The command to remember encompasses all other memorial activities, and these can therefore be seen as resulting from it. Here, however, I would like to look at this issue not as an overarching one, but instead as its own distinct topic. In the list of different functions of the books and motivations for their publication, remembrance for remembrance-sake is a category of its own. Remembering what happened is mentioned many times as important in its own right, regardless of the specific content remembered or the personal background of the person who is remembering or producing the memory. Moreover, as noted above, remembrance in itself does not necessarily mean that the memory is passed on; this is the key difference between remembrance and commemoration.

As is often the case for Ashkenazi Jews, who are not ultra-orthodox, assigning religious reasons to customs might be a valid anthropological way to approach them and explain these customs from a group perspective, but these types of explanation are often inadequate when trying to explain individual action. In other words, while as researchers we can make the connection between the biblical command to remember and the individual actions of the authors of Yizkor books through the historical tradition of written commemoration, and safely assume that the origins of these memorial traditions are rooted in the Bible, the individual authors of the editorials did not necessarily make that connection as it related to themselves. They explicitly saw remembrance as incredibly important on its own – otherwise

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[409] Benbassa, *Suffering as Identity: The Jewish Paradigm*.

they would not have published Yizkor books – but did not always connect it to the biblical tradition. Instead, remembrance was often presented as inherently important, without a specific motivation. For example, Yitshak Yehezkieli, publisher and editor of the 1964 Sopotskin Yizkor book, writes, interestingly in poem-form:
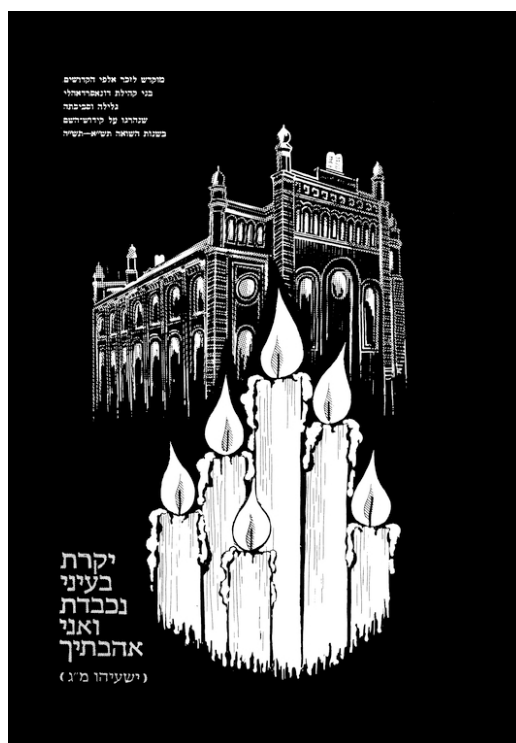
> I am a simple man,
>
> The wit of a farmer resides in me;
>
> This quality I have inherited from my town.
>
> And I will tell you with no shame in my heart.
>
> I am not an author,
>
> Not a writer,
>
> And not a poet,
>
> And yet to you I tell:
>
> Remember and do not forget –
>
> The exterminators of our people.[410]

This short text suggests that the act of remembering held inherent significance for Yehezkieli, quite apart from its historical or ritual meaning. Remembering was important in itself and one did not have to assign external reasons to it.

The editorials bring up the command using several key phrases. Most common are the Hebrew phrases: "lizkor ve-lo lishco'ach" (to remember and not forget – לזכור ולא לשכוח) and "lo nishcach ve-lo nislach" (we will not forget and not forgive – לא נשכח ולא נסלח), and the Yiddish parallel of the latter "nischt fargessen nischt fargeven" (never forget, never forgive – נישט פארגעסן, נישט פארגעבן). These phrases all include the element of not forgiving. In Judaism, unlike some Christian traditions, there is no implicit idea that "only God forgives". God can only forgive crimes against God, not crimes between people, which are considered out of God's jurisdiction in life. For crimes against other people, one must repent and ask forgiveness from the person one sinned against, not from God. Thus, the implicit idea in these phrases, made explicit on many occasions, is that there is no forgiveness to be had for the Holocaust, and that God cannot forgive the perpetrators, but will punish them and avenge the victims.

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[410] Yitshak Yehezkieli, *Kol adam ve-zikhrono: 'ayarah, perihatah ve-hurbanah, hayeha, demuyoteha ve-tipusehah: Sopotkin nikra otah* (Tel Aviv: 1964), 106.

Figure 7.1. *Memorial Imagery from the Dunajská Streda Yizkor Book.*

מוקדש לזכר אלפי הקדושים
בני קהילות דונאסרדאהלי
גלילה וסביבתה
שנהרגו על קידוש־השם
בשנות השואה תשי״א—תשי״ה

 יקרת
בעיני
נכבדת ואני
אהבתיך
(ישעיהו מ״ג)

Source: Alfred Engel, *Sefer Ha-Zikaron Li-Kehilat Dunasrdahali* (1975), 3.

A Memorial Candle

In one of the editorials for the book on Debretsen (Debrecen in Hungary) and eight other communities, titled "Forever candle", Ogen Chandry, chair of the "Va'ad ha-hantsacha le-kedoshey Debretsen" (the commemoration committee for the Debretsen martyrs), writes:

> And we that by the compassion of God came out alive from the flames of the furnaces, the infernal furnaces heated by scoundrels, as we take this book in our hand, we feel as if we have lit a memorial candle on the graves of our dearest, as a gravestone does not mark their resting place.[411]

Chandry's starting point is, then, the common one presented in the editorials, that the locations of the graves of Holocaust victims are unknown. However, his words are also an example of another item of commemoration: the

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[411] Gonda, *Me'ah shanah li-yehudey Debretsen*, 9.

memorial candle, connected to Jewish traditions of commemoration and remembrance.

A memorial candle in the Jewish context is a candle lit in memory of someone who has passed to be placed on their grave when it is visited, or at the home of the living person (be it family, friend or other) on *Yom Kippur*, the day of atonement, or on the deceased's *yahrzeit*. These are special long-lasting and sanctified candles,[412] and other candles, such as those used for the Sabbath or on *Hanukah*, cannot be used for this purpose. These memorial candles cannot usually be seen from a distance, unlike other candles, such as the ones lit on *Hanukah*, which should be placed in the window and be highly visible to others. A memorial candle is not meant to be visible to the outside world. It is instead a personal form of remembrance and a link between the living and the dead.

We must remember that, according to Jewish tradition, the bodies of Jews must not be cremated or destroyed but must be buried, as whole as possible, in an individual grave. Like the *Kaddish* prayer, a memorial candle is supposed to be lit on the *yahrzeit* of the deceased, preferably on their grave. Just as in the excerpt from the Debretsen book, many editorials mention that the Yizkor book is also a memorial candle.[413] This idea has remained prevalent throughout the different periods of publication. Much as in the case of the gravestones, the idea is that the book has a similar memorial or commemorative function to that of another object, in this case the candle. Yizkor books do not emit light and cannot be seen by others. Moreover, a

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[412] These candles burn for around twenty-four hours There is also a commonly used electric version of these candles, which attaches straight into the socket without a cord, and is commonly small and black with a small red light in its "flame".

[413] See Camil and Shertser, *Sho'at yehudey tzfon Bukowina*, 26. Tuvia Drori et al., *The Tree and its Roots – sefer korot Sofivka Igantovka* (Giv'atayim: Agudat bet Tal, 1988), 11-12. Yehuda Evron-Nachberg, *Mi-Shtefaneshti le-Erets Yisrael* (Heifa: Y. Evron-Nakhberg, 1989), 9. Mendl Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Oshminah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Oshminah be-Yisrael, 1969), 11. Henoch H. Halpern, *Megiles Gline (Glinyane): zikroynes un iberlebungen fun a horev gevorener kehile* (New York: Aroysgegeben fun der Glinyaner emoyrdzshensi relief komite, 1950), ד; Yitshak Ivri, *Sefer kehilat Ostrolenkah – bukh fun Ostrolenker kehile* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Ostrolenkah be-Yisrael, 1963), 11; Getzel Kressel, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilot Radihov, Lopatin, Vitkov Novi, Holoyov, Toporov, Stanislavtshik, Staromiletsh, Shtrovits* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e ha-yishuvim dil'el, be-Yisrael uve-huts la-arets, 1976), 1; Efrayim Shedletski, *Pinkes Khmielnik: yizker-bukh nokh der horev-gevorener yidisher kehile* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yotse'e Khmielnik be-Yisrael, 1960), 13; Zoltán Singer, *Dej*, vol. 1 (Tel-Aviv: Dés és Vidékéről Elszámazottak Landsmannschaftja, 1970), 19; Sokolovski, *Roz'inoi*, 5; Stein, *Pinkas Bendin*, 6; *Kartuz-Berezeh – sefer zikaron le-ayaratenu* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun Yots'e Kartuz-Berezeh be-Erets Yisrael 1993), 8.

Yizkor book is clearly not meant to be on a grave and left there, exposed to the elements. What do the authors mean then when they state that their Yizkor book is a memorial candle? Mendel Zilber, editor of the 1974 Gbodzic (Hvidetz in Ukraine) Yizkor book, writes in his introduction:

> Let my modest contribution here to the publication of this memorial book serve as a memorial candle for the soul of my family, which was destroyed in Auschwitz while a blind fate sentenced me to life.[414]

The similarity in function between the books and the candles is linked to commemoration. Yizkor books are supposed to be displayed prominently at home. As they are displayed, the books serve to remind residents and guests of the lost community and people. In the same way as a memorial candle, the book is a reminder and presenting it is a way to show that the deceased are remembered. In other words, it is a different form of commemoration. Zilber introduces the idea that each person's contribution to the book makes their own memorial candle, in memory of their family and friends, thereby allowing the books to serve as a public and a private memorial at the same time.

"Because We Have no Yizkor Book"

In some cases, not having a Yizkor book was in itself a motivation to produce one. This category includes two reasons: the complete lack of a Yizkor book or that the one already in existence is incomplete or in what is sometimes referred to by authors as the "wrong" language. As stressed above, Yizkor books were perceived to be of the utmost significance. This is evident from the quotes discussed above. Even without any personal or emotional motivation, a community without a Yizkor book, or with a partial or unsuitable one, had a very serious problem that had to be resolved. Some editorials call it shameful or embarrassing that the community still had no Yizkor book, unlike other communities that had already published one.[415] It is clear that the overall sentiment among the various organizations, as well as many individual landsleit, was that the commemoration of their community was incomplete without the publication of a suitable book. Two other memorial activities are

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[414] Zilber, *Sefer zikaron Gabozdzic ve-hasviva*, VI.

[415] See Dina Ginton, Mikhle Rozenbaum, and Moshe Tamari, *Kehilat Benderi* (Tel-Aviv: Vaʻad yotsʼe Benderi be-Yiśraʼel, be-hishtatfut yotsʼe Benderi be-Artsot-ha-Berit, 1975), 5; Abraham L. Grussgott, *Be-ovdan moladeti* (New York: A. Grussgott, 1988), 6; Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha*, 450–451; Levin, *Ozarkov*, 5.

often mentioned – placing a plaque in the Holocaust Cellar in Mount Zion and planting a tree in the Forest of Martyrs, both in Jerusalem.[416] These two were usually the first to be completed, as the task of publishing a Yizkor book required far more time, funding and participation from the wider community. Another commemorative activity these organizations probably took part in was the erection of communal gravestones in several cemeteries in Israel. While we know that these were erected on the initiative, or at least with the participation, of landsleit organizations,[417] they are not commonly mentioned in the editorials.

As discussed above, Yizkor book publication processes usually lasted for several years, in some cases even several decades, and there were many reasons for the production of a Yizkor book. Where the book was significantly delayed, the aims of the publishers were not fulfilled, whatever they might be. Thus, beyond the shame noted when comparing the commemoration of the authors' community to other communities – others had a book, a plaque and a tree, while the authors' community only had the latter two – the authors also faced their own difficulties of having a personal task not completed. Whether the book was to be published, for example, in honour of their deceased families, or because of a vow made to a dying comrade in the camp, the authors had failed, from their point of view, to fulfil that mission and preserve the memory of those people. The shame in failure was then multiplied. Often, this also meant that the authors felt that they had failed to fulfil the biblical commandment of "Zachor!".[418] Most importantly, as discussed above regarding the books as gravestones, with the book unpublished, the families of the victims did not have a place to hold the *azkara* and to say the *Kaddish*. Thus, beyond the general shame of "others having done this but we have not", the failure to publish a Yizkor book had a significant effect on many others in the wider community.

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[416] As described in: Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel". See in: Azriel Omer-Lemer, *Sefer Yozefof* (Tel-Aviv ha-Irgunim shel yots'e Yozefof be-Yisrael uve-Ar. ha-B., 1974–1975 (Inferred)), 11; Shlomo Blond, *Tlumacz – sefer edut ve-zikaron* (Tel-Aviv: Yots'e Tlumacz be-Yisrael, 1976), 9. Rabin, *Sefer Vishogrod*, 5-6; Blond, *Tlumacz – sefer edut ve-zikaron*; *Turek – sefer zikaron* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Turek be-Yisrael, 1982), 7; *Shorashim shelanu*, 3, 71.

[417] Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel", 374–379.

[418] See Grussgott, *Be-ovdan moladeti*, 6; Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha*, 450–451; Ginton, Rozenbaum, and Tamari, *Kehilat Benderi*, 5; Zimroni and Schwartz, *Zikhron netsah la-kehilah ha-kedosha Koloz'var-Klozenburg, asher nehrevah ba-Shoah*, Foreword.

The responsibility for publishing a Yizkor book was sometimes seen as reaching beyond the landsleit of a particular community. One example of this extended sense of responsibility is the "Poland series" (*sidrat Polin*, סדרת פולין) published by Yad Yahadut Polin, the umbrella organization for Polish Jews in Israel. The explicit goal of this series was to fill the gap for communities without Yizkor books. The people involved in the early publishing process were not landsleit of the community the Yizkor book was set to commemorate. Nonetheless, they stressed in their editorials that the void must be filled and the end goal of the project was to publish Yizkor books for all Polish Jewry, including those from the western parts of Ukraine and Belarus.[419] As far as can be seen from the publications, the project fell well short of its goal. Nonetheless, several books were successfully published as part of the series.

Another common example of commemorating other communities was the act of including the "surrounding areas" (ha-sevivah, הסביבה), that is, the Jews of the surrounding villages, in the Yizkor book for a larger community.[420] These villages were often included in this way because it was impossible to produce a separate Yizkor book for them. The most common reason for this was that there were too few or no survivors remaining to complete such a task. As noted above, it is quite common to find books commemorating these smaller communities, which is a testimony to the importance of commemoration, as well as the extent to which these ideas were applied. The villages were not formally part of the commemorated community and their inhabitants were not considered landsleit by the book's authors. Moreover, if these villages had no surviving landsleit of their own, who was the commemoration aimed at? There were no future generations and no children to pass on the knowledge to. Nonetheless, time and time again these efforts were made, and time and money were invested in mentioning them, and providing the Jews of those tiny communities with a gravestone as a marker of a Jewish grave and a place to say *Kaddish*, even if no one ever would.[421]

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[419] Levin, *Ozarkov*, 5; *Ostra'ah*, 5.

[420] See Slomo Friedmann, *Sefer yizkor li-kedoshe Tshenger, Ports'almah u-sevivatah* (Tel-Aviv: h. mo. l., 1966); Halamish, Mann, and Zemach, *Sefer Plonsk ve-hasevivah*; Aharon Kleinmann, *Sefer yizkor li-kehilat Margirtin veha-sevivah* (Yerushalayim: Haim Frank (Melburn), 1979); L. Losh, *Sefer-yizkor li-kehilat Radomsk veha-sevivah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yots'e Radomsk be-Yiśra'el, 1967); David Sztokfisz, *Sefer Kutnah veha-sevivah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Kutnah veha-sevivah be-Yisrael uve-huts-la-arets, 1968).

[421] As previously discussed, see Bialystoker Center et al., *Der Bialystoker yizker bukh* (New York: Der Bialystoker center, 1982), V; Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Oshminah*, 11; Grussgott, *Be-ovdan moladeti*, 6; Livneh, *Pinkas ha-kehilah Trisk*, 8; Losh, *Pinkas Belitsah*, 5,13; Oren, *'Ir u-shemah Monastir*, 10.

A different kind of motivation suggested in some editorials was that a Yizkor book had already been published for the community, but it was incomplete, possibly due to a lack of sources or funding, or published in the wrong language, usually meaning that the publishers wanted to address a target audience that could not read the original language. This usually meant that the previous book was in Yiddish and could not be read by Hebrew-speakers; or that it was in Hebrew or Yiddish, and could not be read by English-speakers.[422] This does not mean that the newer publication was necessarily a translation of the original. Some texts were translated, but many of these new books went through the normal publication process of a Yizkor book, that is, the publishing team requested, collected and published pieces sent to them.[423]

In his foreword to the 1991 Yizkor book for the Jews of Ukrainian Carpathian Ruthenia, editor Shlomo Rozman presents a different point of view on the idea of a missing Yizkor book:

> I must admit…I was horrified…when I found out that secular authors and writers of memorial books had begun to publish books containing a horribly distorted description of the lives of the communities, intentionally ignoring the vibrant spirit of the *Haredi* [ultra-orthodox] Jewry, choosing the chaff over the wheat, focusing on the fringe instead of the centre of Jewish life in Karpatros-Marmarus [Ukrainian Carpathian Ruthenia].…[424]

In contrast to other authors, Rozman refers to other Yizkor books not as an inspiration or an example, but as false and deceitful. He notes that they deliberately ignore the ultra-orthodox Jews in favour of secular Jews. Rozman does not say so explicitly, but he was referring to the heavy focus on Zionism in the books. Perhaps the group most hostile to the ideas of Zionism was the ultra-orthodox. The basic idea of the Zionist movement – a national home for Jews – contradicted the integral religious belief that Israel can only be founded

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[422] See Berl Kagan, *Memorial Book Szydlowiec* (New York: Shidlowtzer Benevolent Association in New York, 1989).

[423] There are several communities that had multiple Yizkor books published for them, such as: Warsaw: Pinye Kats and Landslayt-fareyn fun Varshe un umgegnt in Argentine, *Pinkes Varshe* (Buenos-Ayres: Aroysgegebn durkh dem landslayt-fareyn fun Varshe un umgegnt in Argentine bay der mitarbet fun Argentiner "Ikuf", 1955); Ravitch and Montreal, *Dos amolike yidishe Varshe*. Tomaszow-Lubelski: Sh. Likht, *Tomashover yizkor buch* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Tomashover Relief Committee, New York, 1965); Lerer, Gordon, and Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron shel Tomaszow-Lub*. Czestochowa: United Czenstochover Relief Committee and Ladies Auxiliary, *Czestochowa* (New-York 1948); Schutzman, *Czestochow*.

[424] Shelomoh Rozman, *Sefer shefer harare kedem*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn, NY: Zikhron kedoshim, 1991), יד.

after the arrival of the Messiah, and that the yearning for Jerusalem and Israel, which Rozman notes in his foreword,[425] must remain a yearning until the end of days. As I have underlined several times, there is a significant, sometimes exaggerated, focus on Zionism in the vast majority of editorials and books, and the ultra-orthodox were certainly one of the communities neglected as a group as a result of that focus. Rozman represented the rare position that the focus on Zionism was false. This book was published in the US and not Israel, a location that makes sense as the place of publication for an anti-Zionist religious Yizkor book.

There have also been a large number of translations of Yizkor books into English, from Hebrew, Yiddish and many other languages. Most of these were direct translations and did not involve any process of collecting testimonies and texts. These can be found for example on the JewishGen website, which serves as a central hub for many Yizkor book translation projects.[426] These translated volumes are not treated as separate publications in this research and therefore not included.

Personal Motivations

Many of the editors and publishers, as indicated above, had personal ties to the Holocaust. Some were themselves survivors, and all had family members who had perished. The books were often said to have been written in memory of an individual, in addition to their basic role as commemoration of a community. There are two main categories of personal reasons. The first includes mentions of the author working on the book, or publishing it, in memory of a specific person or persons, be they family, a close friend, a relative or an important figure from the community. Many of these had no ties with the actual community being commemorated in that specific Yizkor book. Instead, publishing the book is said to be an act that honours them through the accomplishment of the act itself. The second category involves mentions of the personal emotional pain that the author has felt, and which publishing the Yizkor book has helped to relieve. In this category, there are two groups of authors: those who themselves were Holocaust survivors and those who were not. Survivors usually identify guilt over their inability to convey what really happened and their memories of those who died, and must be remembered and commemorated, as the sources of their pain. Those

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[425] Ibid., יא.

[426] https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/translations/.

who were not survivors usually highlight their exposure to witness accounts as the source of their pain.

In Memory of Others

Some books were specifically published in memory of the publisher's or editor's family or another specific person they knew. Where a book is dedicated to a person who was a community member, the act of dedicating the book to such people is usually represented as a way to honour that individual's life, actions or death, which are often said to have been exceptional. The person or persons commemorated were thus significant not only to the author, but to the entire community. This does not necessarily mean that the book itself is in memory of someone. It could mean that in the act of publishing the book, the entire publication process was seen as a holy or charitable act, and that this act was in memory of the families. This kind of reasoning is similar to any other mitzvah or *tzedaka* done in the name of a person who has passed. In his introduction to the 1988 book on Stryi, today in western Ukraine, editor Zvi Nusenblat writes:

> My uncle Yitzhak Nusenblat *zichrono li-vracha* was the surviving remnant from a large family of tens of souls, who lived in eastern Galicia in Poland after World War I. A family that was and is no more. He and three other family members were saved in hiding by a Polish family in the town of Stryi. After liberation and his emigration to Israel he wrote the chronicles of those terrible days, included also in the play that appears in this book, published by his wife Helena, to erect a memorial for him.[427]

Nusenblat presents his uncle Yitzhak Nusenblat's story and states that the book has been published in his memory. The book is therefore a gravestone, as has been seen in other examples, but in this case not for the community, but for a specific person. The person in question was not said to have done anything exceptional – the story of Yitzhak's experiences in the Holocaust is a fairly standard one – as he survived by hiding in the forest and with the help of a local gentile. Instead, Yitzhak is commemorated primarily because his widow Helena is the publisher of the book.

The main difference between dedicating a Yizkor book to family or another individual is that the family members are not necessarily landsleit of that community. In the case of Yitzhak Nusenblat, the town he was a landsman of was also chosen to be commemorated. In other cases, the connection between

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[427] Nusenblat, *Ha-ze'akah ha-ilemet: (toldot yehude ha-ir Stryi, Galitsyah ha-mizrahit, Polin, be-et milhemet ha-olam ha-sheniyah)*, 5.

those family members and the community was through the editor(s) or publishers of that particular book.[428] Moreover, the extended family of a person would probably have resided in several different towns, and would then have belonged to several other communities. Thus, the Yizkor book of one community could also serve as a memorial, or a gravestone, for people belonging to completely different communities. In this case, unlike when the book is a gravestone for a community, the book serves as a more traditional form of gravestone – as a memorial with a short inscription, not the significantly expanded reservoir of knowledge as in the case of the communal gravestone.

There are two main types of books published in memory of an individual. Some individuals were said to have been exceptional and thus as part of the overall commemoration of the community, the goal of the book was to tell more about their extraordinary life, or in some cases their heroic actions during the Holocaust. The above-mentioned Yizkor book on Bitola is one example of this type.[429] Leon Kimchy, the man in whose honour the book was published, was said to have been an avid Zionist who saved hundreds of his townsfolk by arranging safe passage for them to Palestine, then refused to go himself because he would not abandon his community and was later murdered in Treblinka. Kimchy was thus a hero whose actions, rather than his relation to the producers of the book, were deserving of commemoration.

In other cases, the publisher dedicated the book to an individual not because they were somehow exceptional in other contexts, but because the person was important to them personally. The book of Stryi belongs to this category. Yitzhak's story is not necessarily worth telling because it is exceptional, but rather because Yitzhak was important to his wife Helena.[430] In both cases, the

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[428] See Sh. Avni, *Agadot Strimtereh* (Tel-Aviv: Reshafim, 1985), 7; Elimelech Fainzilber, *Oyf di hurves fun mayn heym* (Tel-Aviv: o. fg., 1952), 3; Gelernt, *Pitshayever yizkor bukh*, 9; Kleinmann, *Sefer yizkor li-kehilat Margirtin veha-sevivah*, 6; Chaim Rabin, *Mikhov (Lubelski)* (Israel: Irgun yots'e Mikhov, 1987), 4; *Shumsk: sefer zikaron le-kedoshe Shumsk she-nispu be-Sho'at ha-natsim bi-shnat 1942* (Tel Aviv: h. mo. l., 1968), 6; Rimon, *Yahadut Tarnov ve-irgune ha-no'ar*, 3.

[429] Oren, *'Ir u-shemah Monastir*.

[430] See another example in: Friedlander and Mark, *Sefer yizkor: mukdash li-yehude ha-'ayarot she-nispu ba-Sho'ah ba-shanim 1939-44: Linsk, Istrik, Beligrod, Litovisk veha-sevivah*. This book is dedicated to a childhood friend of one of the editors. See also: Israel Ch. Biletzky and Betsal'el Shvarts, *Sefer Kobryn* (Tel Aviv: h. mo. l., 1951), 3; Filkelstein, Shen'hav, and Velingstein, *Rajgrod*; Gonda, *Me'ah shanah li-yehudey Debretsen*, 9; Jakob Moshe Hollander, Haim Klein, and Shmuel Hacohen Weingarten, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Selish veha-sevivah* (Israel: Irgun yots'e Selish veha-sevivah be-Yiśra'el, 1976 (inferred)), 9; Jasny,

act of publication can be seen by the authors as an intrinsically significant personal act, as the fulfilment of a mitzvah or as both.

Survivor's Guilt and Emotional Pain

In the foreword to the book on Bez'ez'ani, Narayuv, and their surroundings (today the area around Berezhany, Ukraine), editor Menachem Katz writes:

> I myself have dedicated my best free time to its editing, designing and printing. I was born in Bez'ez'ani, the chronicles of its community under Nazi rule are clear to me, and the suffering of my townsfolk would not let me rest throughout all my years since the war. I have decided to pay my debt to all those I hold dear. This debt is like an oath to me. This is a daily "commitment" that was given during the dark days of the ghetto, between a man (איש) and his comrade (רעהו), in which it was said: "If you get to live through this hell, remember me too; tell what happened, tell how we were destroyed and avenge our blood".[431]

This is a vivid illustration of an editor discussing his emotional pain. Katz was a Holocaust survivor who is describing the twofold guilt that he has carried with him since his days in the ghetto. One point he makes is that he, as someone who was there, has the knowledge of how life was in the ghetto. Furthermore, he is haunted by the memory of those who died and the understanding that except for him, there is no one who remembers what truly happened and who can commemorate those who died by passing on the knowledge of events and people. People who were tormented by something related to the events of the Holocaust, such as the death of someone close, a specific happening or events in general, the treatment of survivors or the treatment of the memory of the victims, often reported feeling that the way to handle this torment, the pain they were feeling, was through publication, or participating in the publication, of a Yizkor book. These were not necessarily survivors, but also other people who describe the publication of the book as a therapeutic[432] act which they felt would ease their pain.[433]

Sefer jadow, 15; Kleinmann, *Sefer yizkor li-kehilat Margirtin veha-sevivah*, 6; Korekh, *Kehilat Gelina, 1473–1943: toldoteha ve-hurbanah*, ג.

[431] Menachem Katz, *Bezezani, Narayuv, veha-seviva: toldot kehilot she-nechrevu* (Haifa: Hotsa'ah peratit shel Irgun yots'e Bezezani, Narayuv veha-sevivah, be-Yiśrael uve-Artsot ha-berit, 1978), 10.

[432] As we would probably refer to it today, using psychological terms. No author actually uses the term "therapeutic".

[433] See Ayalon, *Antopol*, 1–2. Author Moshe Pollack emigrated from the community to Palestine in 1921. ; Slutsky, *Babruisk*, foreword by Kaddish Luz, who emigrated to Palestine in 1920. Examples of general mentions of emotional pain without discussing a relation to

"Survivor guilt" is used here as a specific type of emotional pain, often mentioned as a category of its own by the authors. When editors or other authors identify themselves as Holocaust survivors, they often discuss their emotional suffering in relation to their survival, like Katz. It is not just the memory of life during the Holocaust that tortures them. They commonly speak of the burden they are obliged to carry as survivors, to remember and commemorate those who died next to them and would otherwise be forgotten. They see themselves as having a special responsibility derived from their witnessing what had happened to their fellow prisoners. This was often connected to other motives, mainly related to a target audience such as the need to tell the world or future generations what happened. In many cases, however, the focus was on an individual's personal need to commemorate and the specific status they gave themselves as a witnesses to the Holocaust. For example, the Yizkor book on Linsk, Istrik, Baligrod, Litovisk and their surrounding areas was published largely due to the actions of Menachem Aldoby, a Holocaust survivor who passed before the book was published, but who had dedicated his life to preserving the memory of the communities. The book contains three editorials, two of which were written by Menachem's brothers, Avraham and Zvi, in his memory. His brothers describe their grief at his passing and the loss of the community. Thus, the book was published in honour of both.[434]

It is the duty of the survivor to be the carrier of memory. This duty was not usually mentioned as being a holy one. Instead, it was described as a moral imperative. The survivor owed a debt to those who had perished. The price the survivors had to pay for their survival was remembering all those who died around them, who would otherwise be nothing but numbers or names on walls. Through this recollection, the deaths gain meaning and the survivors' lives are paid for. Mordechai Bochner, the publisher and main author of the 1949 Yizkor book on Khzshanov (Chrzanow) in southern Poland, demonstrates this point in the first of two editorials he wrote for the book:

> I close my eyes and see in the darkness – perfect Europe. From Ukraine to France, from Norway to Italy. Thousands upon thousands of cities, towns,

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survivor's guilt, in: Keren, *Yahadut Krim me-kadmutah ve-ad ha-Shoah*, 7; Idan, *Sefer zikaron David-Horodok*, 5; Yehoshua Lior, *Melnitsah* (Tel-Aviv: Yots'e Melnitsah be-Yisrael uva-tefutsot, 1994), 9; L. Losh, *Sefer Zikaron le-kehilat Chorzele* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Chorzele be-Yisrael, 1967), 7; *Pinkas Belitsah*, 5; Walzer-Fass, *Sefer Novi-Targ ve-hasevivah*, 13.

[434] Friedlander and Mark, *Sefer yizkor: mukdash li-yehude ha-'ayarot she-nispu ba-Sho'ah ba-shanim 1939–44: Linsk, Istrik, Beligrod, Litovisk veha-sevivah*, V–X, 466.

villages of Jews. Blood, blood, blood. Pale faces, dying little children and then – ash, ash, ash. Six million murdered Jewish hearts! And in the middle of Europe, Poland! Around and around a large wreath[435] of Jewish ruins, rivers of Jewish tears, voices of Jewish prayers and in the middle of it the great field of Jewish ashes: Poland, the mass grave of millions of Jews.[436]

This emotional and moving excerpt is part of Bochner's explanation of why he was publishing this memorial book. Bochner saw the book, as many other authors did, as the above-mentioned gravestone for his murdered townspeople, his "brothers and sisters", as well as the murdered Jews of Europe, all of whom died as martyrs *al kiddush ha-Shem*.[437] Bochner expresses his deep sorrow and pain over the fate of his fellow townsfolk, European Jewry as a whole, and the state of ruin and despair that the Holocaust had wrought. He lamented the state of things in Europe after Germany's defeat, and the ruined Polish Jewry, the former crown jewel of world Jewry, at the centre of it all. According to Bochner, these feelings were his primary motivation, as one of the few survivors from the community, for publishing the book.

Examining this notion in the context of the condition of Holocaust memory, especially in the early years after 1945, as in the case of Mordechai Bochner, facilitates an understanding of why these survivors felt the way they did – who else would remember those perished individuals if not them? A generic sign containing a few basic details next to the site of a mass killing does not commemorate anyone as an individual. Nor do the later-erected Holocaust memorial monuments. They reduce the victims to numbers, details and symbolic imagery, or a focus on the so-called heroes.

As Primo Levi has eloquently explicated, the survivor can never truly explain the camps, and those who were not there could never truly understand.[438] Similarly, many survivors felt that other kinds of commemoration simply could not convey what truly happened in the camps. One of the most common points on this issue was the judgement on the so-called passivity of the victims, the dismissal of non-armed forms of resistance, and the glorification of those few that took up arms as "heroes", while all the others were "lambs". Those who survived often felt that people who had survived the camps and ghettos day-in

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[435] Could also be translated as: a pillar of smoke.

[436] Mordecai Bochner, *Sefer Khzshanov* (Munich 1949), I. Originally in Yiddish.

[437] Ibid.

[438] Primo Levi, "The Drowned and the Saved", in *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings*, ed. Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2003).

and day-out were just as heroic as anyone else.[439] The survivors were the only ones who knew and understood, and could commemorate those who died in the way they deserved, as heroes and martyrs, even if they never took up arms against the Germans. This commemoration could not be truly understood by others who were not there, but in this context it was not as important as the act of remembering and commemorating itself. David Sztokfisz demonstrates this notion in his introduction to the Rubiz'evits Yizkor book, where he writes of survivors that "…each one of them carries their own cemetery in their heart, within which are etched the names of their dearest-only, for whom their agony and sorrow have no comfort".[440]

Emotional pain is a more general category related to the feelings experienced by individuals when they think about the Holocaust. It does not have to be based on any personal experience of the Holocaust. For example, it is possible to be strongly affected by reading the testimonies without feeling the specific moral imperative of the survivor. Nonetheless, for some authors the effect of their exposure drove them to action in the form of commemoration. I distinguish here between the categories of emotional pain and survivor guilt not as different psychological categories, but from the perspective of the authors. They are presented as somewhat different motivations for publishing the books. At the same time, they are close enough from an analytic perspective to include as two parts of the same category.

Some authors describe restlessness and anxiety related to thinking about the Holocaust, even though they themselves were not there and the struggle, as described by Primo Levi, between the reality of life in the camps and human ability to perceive and describe it was not present. Even if they were aware of it on a theoretical level, as the author of this dissertation is too, they could not grasp the reality of the camps, and therefore could not apprehend the gap between reality and human perception. In his introduction to the 1980 Yizkor book on Wieliczka in Poland, Dr Moshe Yarblum writes:

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[439] As Bochner notes. See other cases of "survivor's guilt" in: Blum, Vagshal, and Vainfeld-Samu'el, *Ayaratenu Baitsh*, 19; Shimon Kanc, *Sefer Ripin* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Ripin be-Yisrael uva-tefutsot, 1962), 13-14; Kressel, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilot Radihov, Lopatin, Vitkov Novi, Holoyov, Toporov, Stanislavtshik, Staromiletsh, Shtrovits*, 1-2; Levita, *Sefer zikaron kehilat Breziv (Bz'ozuv)*, 1–2; Yosef Rubin, *Stavisk sefer zikaron* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Stavisk be-Yisrael, 1973), 10; Efraim Talmi, *Kehilat Sherpts sefer zikaron* (Tel-Aviv: ha-Irgunim shel yots'e Sherpts be-Yisrael uve-huts la-arets, 1959), ו; Yasheev, *Sefer Apta*, 5; *Hurban kehilat Shtutsin* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun Yots'e Shetsotsin ve-kupat gemilut hasadim 'a. sh. kedoshe Shtutsin be-Yisrael, 1954), 3; *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Skarzisko Kamiennah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Skarzisko, 1973), 11.

[440] Sztokfisz, *Sefer Rubiz'evits', Derevnah, veha-sevivah*.

> …the few surviving remnants that went through the trail of torment during the Holocaust, on them the path of torture left a deep mark that cannot be removed, accompanying them as a shadow of horror that they can never detach themselves from.[441]

This editorial delineates the difference between the traumatized (although it does not use the term) group of survivors and future generations. The survivors could never stop remembering the nightmare they had lived through. The author notes that they do not need the book to know everything that happened; but future generations, the children, do not know or understand how it was to live through the Holocaust and must be taught. This connects us back to the previously discussed important Jewish religious imperative to "tell your children".

In sum, any author could potentially experience emotional pain in the context of Yizkor book publication, and this category includes those authors for whom Yizkor book publication was a therapeutic act, a way to relieve some of the pain they felt as a result of direct or indirect exposure to the Holocaust. Within emotional pain, survivor guilt is a more specific category, which only includes those authors who were themselves survivors. As survivors, their pain was not only caused by their experiences, but also came from their feeling that their personal experience allowed them a unique understanding of the Holocaust, and of those who had perished whose memory would otherwise be lost.

Metaphysical Reasons

This section examines the motives derived from or connected to metaphysical, spiritual or supernatural beings and ideas. A secular person would probably dismiss these ideas as superstitious. Since the authors apparently believed that they were real, however, they have been categorized separately. This section includes several reasons that are mostly religious, and perhaps even supernatural to some degree. Some reasons are more "Jewish" than others, that is, they clearly have their roots in Jewish faith, religion, tradition, practices or culture. Some of the motives for publishing Yizkor books presented in this section may be explained through psychological theory and models instead of accepting them as religious or metaphysical beliefs. For example "the dead demand!" could be explained as the result of trauma, while other reasons could be also explained as the coping mechanisms of

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[441] Meiri, *Kehilat Wieliczka – sefer zikaron*, 8.

traumatized individuals. However, this chapter presents, categorizes and analyses these reasons from the point of view of the authors and does not attempt to offer a psychological analysis of the individuals or the reasons they provide. This is done in this way, first and foremost, due to the lack of sufficient data to provide any serious psychological analysis. Moreover, any form of theoretical explanation for religious phenomena involves at least some degree of dismissal of the perception of these people or the world as metaphysical in nature. For a religious person, and most Eastern European Jews during the Holocaust were religious to some degree, God, the souls of the dead and the end of days are real things. Since the authors did not treat these reasons as psychological in nature, but rather as metaphysical, this section, out of respect for their position on the matter, does not try to offer any explanation for these ideas. Instead, it focuses on contextualizing the various reasons, while also relating them to previous research.

The Dead Demand!

Some authors mentioned that the dead had demanded that they remember and commemorate those who perished and what had happened to them. This reason is not particularly common, but does appear in the editorials of several books.[442] This could be seen from some perspectives as similar to "survivor guilt". The authors, however, presented it as an inherently different category. According to those who mention this motivation, it is not the memory of what happened during the Holocaust, or pacts made with fellow prisoners, that haunt them. They describe the dead as present, perhaps as ghosts or revenants of some sort, and assert that their presence and gaze are tormenting the living, so that they could not forget and must remember. In his introduction to the Radzin (today Radzin Podlaski in eastern Poland) Yizkor book, editor Yitshak Zigelman writes:

> And wherever we turned, we felt those pairs of eyes, that in the last moments of their demise, whether in the darkness of the gas chamber or beneath the piles of earth, under which living people had been buried, were asking and begging: build a monument for us.…[443]

This kind of text was not necessarily written by someone who had witnessed the Holocaust first-hand and survived. The souls of the departed could just as

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[442] Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Oshminah*, Introduction; Kressel, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilot Radihov, Lopatin, Vitkov Novi, Holoyov, Toporov, Stanislavtshik, Staromiletsh, Shtrovits*, 1–2; Slutsky, *Babruisk*, Kadidsh Luz Editorial; Moshe Wajsberg, *Tomaszow-Mazowiecki* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun Yotsey Ṭomashov-Mazovitseḳ be-Yiśra'el, 1969), Introduction.

[443] Zigelman, *Sefer Radzin – yizkor-bukh*, 5.

well haunt someone who had not been there. This is an important difference between this motivation and those presented above as survivor guilt and emotional pain. Instead of a debt to fellow prisoners or a personal emotional burden, the author describes the dead as present, as actively engaging with the living. The dead are therefore not only in memories; they are noted by authors as having agency.

The dead were often described as being numerous, a great horde screaming and demanding from the mass graves;[444] even the towns themselves were sometimes mentioned as demanding to be remembered.[445] Thus, this motivation was not about those who were next to the author during the Holocaust, or family members and friends. It was the mass of humanity the authors never knew and would never know, who still haunted them. The only way to appease the dead would be to commemorate them, that is, not only remember them, but pass their memory on to others through commemorative actions, one significant example of which would be the publication of a Yizkor book that names them.

A Holy Duty

In this case, the publication of the Yizkor book is described as a holy act – a duty or the fulfilment of a mitzvah, a command from God. The act of publishing a Yizkor book is seen as having intrinsic holiness. The act of commemoration had to be fulfilled because it was a command from God to remember that which has happened to Israel, and to pass on this knowledge to the future generations of Israel. This knowledge is what has previously been discussed as the Jewish History of Suffering.[446]

This reason is strongly connected to the one mentioned in the section "Remember…and pass it on!". It is often cited in the books as having the same basis – the biblical command to remember Amalek and other times that Israel's enemies descended on it to destroy it, and to pass on that memory to future generations. Here, however, the reasoning is centred on the belief that God has commanded this remembrance, that it is a mitzvah, added to the pre-existing list of 713 mitzvahs that Jews must follow, even if the reason behind the mitzvah is not known. Israel Fleischmann, editor of the book "Nitzotzot", which commemorates several Hungarian communities, writes in his editorial:

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[444] See Chaim Abramson, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Vishnnivah* (Tel-Aviv 1972), 2. *Baranovits – sefer zikaron*, section: Am ha-sefer. Katz, *Bezezani, Narayuv, veha-seviva: toldot kehilot she-nechrevu*, 10. Losh, *Sefer-yizkor li-kehilat Radomsk veha-sevivah*, 7.
[445] Bertini, *Pinkas Britshivah*, 10.
[446] Benbassa, *Suffering as Identity: The Jewish Paradigm*. I expand on this in chapter 5.

He who resides in the heavens on the sanctity of his name may he blessed, and through the compassion of God, who did not let me be prey for their teeth, and I came safely out of the lion's jaws – and so I took it upon myself… to inscribe in a book, in a notebook, to be a souvenir for those who ask about us and for loyal friends, of the chronicles of our dear and crowned communities Siksa Kashoy Santa Torna and so on.[447]

This excerpt exemplifies the difference between metaphysical reasons and personal motivations. Unlike the reasoning expressed in the above sections on survivors' guilt and emotional pain, the author did not express feelings of guilt about surviving or a debt he owed to his fellow Jews who had perished. Instead, he presents a highly religious approach, praising God for keeping him safe and for delivering him out of the Holocaust. His debt is to God, not his fellow humans. He does not express a feeling of guilt, as it was God who chose him and not circumstance, luck or his own actions. The author's debt to God was to be repaid through the commemoration of people and events, and this was to be accomplished through the publication of the Yizkor book.

This reason is interesting because it represents a religious interpretation of the Holocaust by a survivor, an uncommon idea among the surviving remnants of European Jewry. The Holocaust caused a powerful crisis of faith among survivors, as well as among European Jewry at large. The main problem Jewish believers faced, in the context of faith, after the Holocaust was the impossible reconciliation of the idea of a good, benevolent God with the God who brought down the Holocaust on the Jews.[448] Some religious traditions, such as those related to the dead, were preserved even with now-secular Jews, but faith in God and the acceptance of religious explanations for events dwindled significantly.[449] Fleischmann credited God for rescuing him but made no reference to God's decision to bring the Holocaust down on the Jews, thus setting aside this critical issue of the post-Holocaust Jewish crisis of faith.

The above excerpt is from a Yizkor book for Hungarian communities. This dissertation includes several books produced by religious persons commemorating Hungarian communities.[450] This religious reason for publication is significantly more common among Hungarian Jews than among

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[447] Fleischmann, ″Nitzotzot″ me-kehilat Siksa ve-machoz Abauj Torna she-nadamu, ה.

[448] See several excellent examples of this line of thinking in: D. Cohnsherbok, "Jewish Faith and the Holocaust", *Religious studies* 26, no. 2 (1990): 277–280.

[449] Ibid. Jennifer Lassley, "A Defective Covenant: Abandonment of Faith Among Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust", *International social science review* 90, no. 2 (2015).

[450] Aharoni, *Toldot kehilat Rakoshpalotah*. Sofer, *Mazkeret Paks*, 1; *Mazkeret Paks*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Jerusalem: h. mo. l., 1966).

other groups and is another area in which the former differed from other groups that published Yizkor books. As discussed in chapter 6, Hungarian Jews also continued to use the Hungarian language. This stands in stark contrast to Polish Jews' near-complete denunciation of the Polish language, as is evident in the languages of the Yizkor books examined in this study.[451] That said, there are also examples of this reasoning in Yizkor books from other areas, including those commemorating Polish Jewish communities. However, the idea was usually not expressed as strongly as it is in Fleischmann's text. Rather, the production of the Yizkor book was mentioned as "a holy duty",[452] without explicitly noting any debt to God. It would nonetheless be obvious to any Jewish reader that the source of this command, albeit implicitly noted, is God, although this is expressed without the added religious interpretation of the events of the Holocaust, found in Fleischmann's text.

As mentioned above, in Jewish tradition, as in many other cultures and religions, the entire process around the dead is inherently religious, from the moment of passing, through to the preparation of and conduct of the funeral service, and to future memorial services. Not all remembrance, however, is sanctified. The *Pinkasim* were a very important tradition and a basis for some religious prayers, services and traditions. However, they were not sanctified as such, and nor were they inherently holy objects. Yizkor books, on the other hand, were much more than *pinkasim* from the start. They were almost universally understood as gravestones, and often as a place to say *Kaddish* as well. From lists of the dead, they became a replacement for two very important, sanctified physical locations, recreating "places of memory" for family and friends of the deceased.[453] Moreover, as previously discussed, the most common idea behind Yizkor books: that all Holocaust victims, as well as the destroyed communities themselves, became martyrs. Combining these two points – that Yizkor books became replacements for sanctified places of memory and that they contain the names and stories of martyrs and holy communities – better explains why many authors saw publication of their book as a mitzvah or holy duty. This is further enhanced by the above-mentioned biblical command "remember!", which is generally mentioned in

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[451] See table 6.4.

[452] See for example in Y. Bernshtain, Avraham .Rosen, and Hayim Sarig, *Kaminits-Podolsk ve-sevivatah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Kaminits-Podolsk ve-sevivatah be-Yisrael, 1965 (inferred)), 11. Ya'akov Fraind, *Seyfer Zloczew* (Tel-Aviv: ha-va'ad ha-tsiburi she-leyad Irgun yots'e Zloczew ba-arets uva-tefutsot, 1971), 9, 12. Cohen, *Gal-ed le-yahadut Nagybanya (Baia-Mareh) veha-sevivah*, 9. Slutsky, *Babruisk*, Editorial by Kaddish Luz, then chairman of the Knesset and formerly the acting president of Israel.

[453] As mentioned in "Commemoration and Remembrance" above.

the editorials as the long-standing basis for this tradition of Jewish commemoration. Furthermore, where it is sometimes mentioned that the commemorated people were "good ancestors", there was an even stronger command to commemorate them.[454]

Honour the Dead / Dishonour the Perpetrators

Some editorials mention a special role for and function of Yizkor books in ensuring that the world and future generations know what the Germans and their allies did, so that their actions would never be forgiven or forgotten. In their editorial for the 1972 Yizkor book on Tomaszow-Lubelski, a town in today's south-eastern Poland, the members of the publishing committee wrote:

> This book will commemorate the memory of the heroes and martyrs, both those who passed away, and those who were murdered, or buried alive by the Nazis and their helpers – honour and glory in memory of our dearest… and contempt and infamy for the despicable murderers.[455]

The Nazis are not ordinary villains or sinners here, but have a special status: the perpetrators, dead or alive, must continue to exist in infamy. In traditional, or "classic" Jewish theology,[456] there is no heaven or hell in the way they appear in Christian or Muslim theologies. Since the banishment from Eden, the gates of heaven have remained closed. They will only reopen once the Messiah has come and according to Jewish theology, this has not happened yet. The souls of the departed do not go to heaven, hell or purgatory. Instead, at the end of days, after the war between *Gog* and *Magog* (good and evil), the just will rise in their own bodies and live on earth, while the rest will not. There is no damnation as it exists in Christianity. However, the idea of dishonour ensures that the perpetrators and their helpers will not rise. They are marked as the worst of the worst for all eternity.

On the other hand, the heroes and martyrs will be marked as just for all eternity. This may sound self-evident, but it is not. At the end of days, people

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[454] See for example in the Yizkor book on a community in Slovakia: Alfred Engel, *Sefer ha-zikaron li-kehilat Dunasrdahali* (Tel-Aviv: Va'ad yotse'e kehilat Don'asradahali be-Yisrael, 1975). Referring to a verse from Jeremiah 31:20 (31:21 in the King James Version), further explained, according to Engel, by renowned Jewish thinker Rash"i to mean what has been mentioned here.

[455] Lerer, Gordon, and Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron shel Tomaszow-Lub*, 16.

[456] That is, widely accepted Jewish theology outside of developments in Israeli Orthodox theological thinking of the past few decades.

who died before (and have died since) the Holocaust will be judged according to their deeds in life. In connection with the idea of the martyrdom of all Holocaust victims, they, and the excerpt even mentions those who only "passed away", will not be judged according to their deeds in life. They are marked as holy, as martyrs through their death in the Holocaust and are thus guaranteed to rise at the end of days and inherit the earth. What they did in their lives prior, as well as the individual circumstances of their death, has been washed away and cannot change that. The foreword to the 1970 Yizkor book on Vishnevets (today Vyshnivets' in western Ukraine), probably written by the editor, notes:

> And thus this book becomes the final *pinkas* of *kehila kedosha* Vishnevets so its memory does not end, and [it becomes] a certificate of infamy for those who destroyed and abused the best of mankind for content, pleasure and satisfaction.[457]

Some of the editorials assign a particular significance to honour. Many state that one of the goals of the book is to honour the dead or to dishonour, or bring shame on, the perpetrators. In this context, the perpetrators, usually called *merats'chim*,[458] are not only the Germans, but also their allies or followers – mainly Ukrainians and Croats, but sometimes also others such as Austrians, Hungarians and Romanians.[459] This group can also include nations that were not formally allied with Nazi Germany during the period but whose members sometimes took part in atrocities, such as the Lithuanians and the Poles.[460]

This reason is strongly connected to the basic idea of universal martyrdom of the victims. It adds a theological dimension to the idea, and develops and actualizes it into the religious realm. It also adds a metaphysical dimension, the impact of which could be seen in the production process of Yizkor books, that is, the need to commemorate all victims in an expanded text and the organizational and functional decisions and processes that flow from that need.

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[457] Chaim Rabin, *Sefer Vishnevets* (Tel Aviv: Irgun ole Vishnevets, 1970), 8. See also another example from the editor: *Shumsk: sefer zikaron le-kedoshe Shumsk she-nispu be-Sho'at ha-natsim bi-shnat 1942*, 5,7.

[458] מרצחים a word close to the Hebrew word for murderers – רוצחים, it is sometimes also translated as "marauders".

[459] See *Hurbn Gliniane*, 5–6; Meir Sas, *Korot yehudey machoz Zemplen* (Toronto: Memorial Book Committee, 1986), 7. *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Skarzisko Kamiennah*, 11.

[460] See Yitzhak Alperowitz, *Sefer Telz (Lita)* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Telz be-Yisrael, 1984), 8. Feldenkreiz-Grinbal, *Et azkara*, 10-11. Mishkinski, *Sokolka*, 10. *Kehilat Shepod – kovetz zikaron*, 5.

Nostalgia

Nostalgia[461] differs from the common homesickness that migrants, for example, might experience, in that nostalgia includes a dimension of time – one longs for something in the past but cannot go back to it. In the case of homesickness, the home that one longs for still exists and it is at least potentially possible to return. Nostalgia also involves positive feelings and connotations associated with the period in time for which one is nostalgic. In other words, nostalgia includes a positive embellishment of the time and place to which one feels nostalgic.

The picture painted of the past by the editorials is explicitly positive on many issues: criticism and descriptions of negative behaviour are generally absent from Yizkor books. There is also some exaggeration when it comes to the actual place of some elements of community life, such as the significance and prevalence of Zionism in pre-Holocaust Jewish life. I expand on this in chapters 8, 9, and this section will not pre-empt these points. The focus here is on examining how some editorials describe nostalgia as one of the motivations for publication. In other words, that one of the purposes of that particular Yizkor book is to convey the nostalgic feelings of the editor, and to strengthen the nostalgic feelings of the readers towards their destroyed hometown and towards life before the Holocaust. In their foreword to the 1996 Yizkor book for four towns and their surroundings in today's central Ukraine, west of Kiev, the editors touch on this when discussing the various texts they had received:

> From the writing, from the boxes of words, come up a speech from the heart, a whisper on the lips to the dearest from the past, as they live today in the memory of the author.
>   From the writing also come up the yearning to go back to the family, to go home, to relive those days.[462]

Nostalgia is an aspect raised by many editors, sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly. In a similar way to the example given above, many editors discussed this aspect and were aware of it as an important part of the

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[461] I use the term "nostalgia" here in its common meaning, as "a sentimental longing for the past"; Tim Wildschut et al., "Nostalgia: Content, Triggers, Functions", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 91, no. 5 (2006): 976.

[462] Malka Hagin and Pinhas Hagin, *Sefer zikaron le-zecher ha-ayarot Rafalovka ha-yeshanah, Rafalovka ha-hadasha, Olizarka, Z'alutsk veha-sevivah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yots'e Rafalovka ha-yeshanah, Rafalovka ha-hadasha, Olizarka, Z'alutsk veha-sevivah, 1996), 3.

pieces they received and of the world of their authors.[463] This is what Phillip Friedman called "idealization of life".[464]

There are sentimental longings for the past in many editorials. Using the definition discussed above, it is not possible to define the feelings expressed in the editorials by survivors and other landsleit as homesickness, as their homes and communities had been destroyed and they were expressing longing for a time when they still existed, and a time and place they could not go back to. This was raised in the editorial for the 1963 book on Loshits (today Losice in eastern Poland), signed by *ha-ma'arechet* ("the publishers" המערכת):

> In this book we bring forth notes written by our townspeople. As each one witnessed it and its Jews in their joy and sorrow, in their lives and deaths. So did we see our town, through a lover's tearful eyes, and as is well known, a lover notices not shades and faults.[465]

Nostalgia has a very important place in Yizkor books, which are similar to a commemorative meeting for a person who has passed. When people talk about the loved ones they have lost, they might mention the circumstances of their death, but would probably focus more on their life, and they will mostly mention the positive times and events in the deceased's life, and highlight the positive qualities they found in the person. The same is true of Yizkor books. The Holocaust is the death of the community but one should also talk about the life of the community, and this process would usually involve much nostalgia, such as reframing different aspects of or events in the deceased's life in a more positive way or highlighting the positive parts while refraining from mentioning the negative ones.

One of the most common instances of nostalgia can be found in cases where the editorials contain descriptions of the community before the Holocaust. The majority of the authors describe their community as exceptional – as a world-renowned home for rabbis and religious scholars that produced countless *talmidei Cha'chamim* (bright religious students) and whose name was well-

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[463] See Josef Chrust, *Rudki – sefer yizkor* (Israel: Yots'e kehilat Rudki, 1977), 3. Shimon Kanc, *Pshedboz'* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Pshedboz' be-Yisrael uve-Amerikah, 1977), 6-7. David Sztokfisz, *Sefer Pshitik: matsevet-zikaron li-kehilah Yehudit: a matseyve far a Yidisher kehile* (Tel-Aviv: Irgune yots'e Pshitik be-Yisrael, Tsarefat ve-Ar. ha-B., 1973), 1. Eliezer Tash, *Kehilat Semyatitsh* (Tel-Aviv: Igud yots'e Semyatitsh be-Yisrael ve-artsot ha-berit, 1965), 12. Wajsberg, *Tomaszow-Mazowiecki*, 7.

[464] Friedman, "Landsmanshaftn Literature in the United States During the Past Ten Years", 43.

[465] Mordehai Shinar, *Loshits* (Tel-Aviv: Farband fun Loshitser landslayṭ in Yisroel un in di tefutsot, 1963), 7.

known throughout the Jewish world. Other positive qualities mentioned might include a lower level of antisemitism compared to the rest of the world.[466] Most of the editorials also describe the same town as simple, filled with hard-working, simple folk, who lived an idealized life of hard work and religious devotion.[467] For example, the editorial for the 1977 book on Kaidan (today Kėdainiai in Lithuania) mentions:

> Kaidan itself was one of those thousands of towns in the former *Te'chum ha-moshav* [the Pale of Settlement]. Towns with all their lights and shadows, their geographic and human landscape and their spiritual climate, the Jewish masses that labour and work like an ant hill all week to bring prey for the family and the different and odd characters, the everyday life and dreams about *ge'ulat ha-am* and *tikun olam*, the vibrant community life and public struggles. In short a town like all towns.[468]

The same editorial adds:

> But Kaidan was also unique, and if we can dare say [it] had special lineage. It is sufficient to mention the legends referring to the early days of Jewish settlement, the pride of its Jews, their acknowledgment of the self-worth of its sons, as shown in the famous rebellion against the *parnasim* of the community, which made sure that the best of the diaspora rabbis sat on the seat of the town's rabbi…[469]

This presentation of Kaidan is an example of a recurring pattern in the editorials. On the one hand, the town is presented as an archetypical example of life in the Jewish shtetl – simple and wholesome. The town had many colourful characters, but they were all goodhearted, hardworking and devout Jews. In that sense, the people of that community were the same as all other

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[466] See Dol and Siegelman, *Sefer Yezernah*, 7. Gonda, *Me'ah shanah li-yehudey Debretsen*. Levin, *Ozarkov*, 7–8. Mazor and Fuks, *Sefer Baltsi Basarabia*, 655. Yosef Rubin, *Belz, sefer zikaron* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Belz veha-sevivah be-Yisrael, 1974), 13–14. Dol and Siegelman, *Sefer Yezernah*, 7. Meirovitch, *Megilat Kurenits*, 8. *Le-zecher kedoshey Wielun*, 5. Also in a Sephardic book: *Saloniki – Ir va-em be-israel*, Editorial signed "ha-ma'arechet".

[467] For example, see again in: Dol and Siegelman, *Sefer Yezernah*, 7. Meirovitch, *Megilat Kurenits*. Rubin, *Belz, sefer zikaron*, 13–14. Also in: Abramovici, *Ayaratenu Bivolari*, 5. Gil'adi, *Sefer Silagi*, 13; Abba Gordin, *Smorgon – sefer edut ve-zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Smorgon be-Yisrael, 1965), 3. Eliyahu Porat, *Kotsk* (Tel-Aviv: Va'ad Irgun yots'e Kotsk be-Yisrael, 1971), 5. Tash, *Kehilat Semyatitsh*, 11; Wajsberg, *Tomaszow-Mazowiecki*, 11.

[468] Chrust, *Kaidan – sefer zikaron*, 7.

[469] Ibid.

diaspora Jews. But these same people were also often said to have been exceptionally well-educated, produced numerous rabbis and been well-known throughout the Jewish world. According to the editorials, almost every community in Eastern Europe, no matter its size, contained both the archetypical Eastern-European Jew, a "Fiddler on the Roof" kind of society, but also had made such a legendary contribution to Jewish religious thinking that nearly every single person in the Jewish world had heard of it.

Another aspect of nostalgia that should be taken into account is that many books *explicitly* present an idealized picture of the commemorated community. The editors often mention that criticism, settling scores and accounts of "exceptional events" in the negative sense, have been intentionally excluded from the books.[470] These intentional actions, together with formulaic descriptions of the community and its people, and the nature of human memory to see things as more positive in retrospect, all mean that we get a strongly nostalgic picture when it comes to the depiction of community life before the Holocaust.

This does not, however, apply to all the information contained in the Yizkor books. Descriptions of the Holocaust period and of the publication process seem to be much more accurate. Understandably, there were few nostalgic feelings regarding either period as they were both difficult, although of course to very different degrees. However, the rule of maintaining a positive outlook is explicitly followed even regarding reports of the Holocaust. Thus, reports of heroic acts were generally included as reported by the authors, while negative events, for example perceived collaboration with perpetrators, were not changed but instead largely omitted.

There is one exception to this cardinal rule of editing. In the introduction to the 1993 Yizkor book on Tsoizmir (Sandomierz, Poland), editor Eva Feldenkreiz-Grinbal writes that "loyal to the decision to bring up the whole truth, to reflect reality as it was and with no ethical reflection on human behaviour, I did not remove any of the testimony of those who exposed negative acts".[471] This editorial is the only one I have found that explicitly goes against the trend by refusing to view all victims and survivors as martyrs. The argument she presents to justify this exceptional decision was still in line with previous thinking about the Holocaust. She did not aim to judge these actions or use them to indict the diaspora. Instead, she reiterated the common

[470] Omer-Lemer, *Sefer Yozefof*, 12; Dov Shuval, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Shebreshin* (Heifa: Irgun yots'e Shebreshin be-Yisrael uva-tefutsot, 1984), 13; Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Zborov*, 9.
[471] Feldenkreiz-Grinbal, *Et azkara*, 10–11.

idea in Yizkor books that these actions could not be judged from our current point of view. Nonetheless, she extended this principle to argue that she could not therefore judge the victims to be martyrs.

The books were not just written by people who had nostalgic feelings about the community. Some were also explicitly intended to help the old reminisce and experience nostalgia; that is, to remember not only the terrible Holocaust period, but also the good times of their childhood prior to the genocide. In the Baltsi (today Balti in northern Moldova) Yizkor book editor Yosef Mazor writes for example that:

> The vision of a Balti man who left the town before the coming of the Holocaust would be different from that of one who had experienced the Holocaust of Jewish Balti first-hand. "The world of Yesterday" would look idealized in the eyes of the latter, perhaps because of nostalgia for the time of youth, related to the town, but in the eyes of the former it would look bleak and terrifying.[472]

Mazor explicitly brings up nostalgia and adds another dimension to it – that for a Holocaust survivor, nostalgia is much more difficult to experience, as they have lived through the horrors of the Holocaust and witnessed their town and community in ruins. Mazor did not go into the causes behind this effect, which can plausibly be connected to areas such as trauma. Like Mazor, however, most editors rarely discuss these issues from a psychological perspective. We should also remember that the old, those born well before the Holocaust and who were old enough to remember the town, were the people who most commonly produced Yizkor books. The publishing committee of the 1959 Orhiyov (today Orhei in Moldova) book writes in its editorial about how nostalgia is an intentional component of Yizkor books:

> Our ambition has been to provide the image of our city of origin in its life and ruin. We wanted this book to serve as a mirror, reflected in which would be the lives of our ancestors, the lives of brothers and sisters, life that flowed in its traditional path, like any other Jewish town in the diaspora.[473]

As this example shows, awakening nostalgia in their readers was an explicit goal of many editors. Older generations did not need to be taught about the

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[472] Mazor and Fuks, *Sefer Baltsi Basarabia*, 3.

[473] Mordekhai Frank, Mordekhai Rotkov, and Yitshak Spivak, *Orhiyov, be-binyanah uve-hurbanah* (Tel-Aviv: Vaʿad Yotsey Orhiyov, 1959), 3.

events of the Holocaust, which they or their relatives and friends witnessed first-hand and lived through. They did not need to be taught about the negative parts of the history of the community; they knew them all too well. Instead, the goal was to connect them to the time before, to make them feel as if they were in a better, simpler time prior to the Holocaust and the war.

Another area where nostalgia comes up is in relation to editing decisions on the language of publication. As nostalgia was aimed at those who lived in the town before the Holocaust and remembered it, editors mention many times that individual entries were either left in or translated into the languages of the old, who were the specific target audience for nostalgia. As many Jews had detached themselves from the languages of their home countries, there were only two "languages of the old" in Yizkor books: Yiddish and Hungarian. Polish, Romanian or Russian, for example, were never used in the context of nostalgia.[474] Many of the editorials include a section on the language choices made, and it is often explicitly noted that some texts were kept or translated for this specific reason.[475]

Nostalgia as a goal or a reason for publishing a Yizkor book also strengthens the claim made in this dissertation that the books, as eulogies for a community, are not just "Holocaust memorials". The books function in the same way as people behave in a memorial service for a loved one; the main topic discussed in not the death of the person, but his or her life and this is usually done in a positive way, even if only in retrospect. People repeatedly describe the happy events they shared with the deceased and their longing for those events. The books similarly serve as a venue for a gathering of people, and a space for remembrance and commemoration. The book itself is the ongoing memorial service, where people share their stories of the life of the deceased. After publication, the books also serve as a focus for people to gather around and reminisce. Since the Holocaust was the death of or the end of all these Jewish communities, and in itself was such a traumatic event, it is only natural that it is given a significant place in the books. However, the most important part, with few exceptions, is people's lives.

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[474] The background to which has been discussed in chapter 6.

[475] See for example regarding Yiddish: Bertini, *Pinkas Britshivah*, 10-11. Feldenkreiz-Grinbal, *Et azkara*, 12. Yitshak Ganuzovits, Aba Lando, and Alexander Manor, *Sefer Lida* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yotse Lida be-Yiśra'el u-va'ad ha-'ezrah li-yehude Lida be-Artsot ha-Berit, 1970), 8. Chanoch Swironi, *Ayaratenu Svir* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Svir bi-Medinat Yiśra'el, 1959), 5. Regarding Hungarian: Gonda, *Me'ah shanah li-yehudey Debretsen*, 9. Dezső Schön, *Oradea* (Tel-Aviv: Kiadta a Nagyváradról Elszármazottak Egyesülete Izráelben, 1981), 7.

Resurrection

The resurrection aspect of Yizkor books is a fascinating one, and in many ways the most complex of the motivations mentioned in the sources. Nonetheless, the idea is explicitly mentioned in some editorials. The resurrection in question is not of the victims: they are dead and cannot come back. It is the community that is to be resurrected and, when mentioned in the editorials, this could mean one or both of two things. First, it could mean that the description and stories in the book are intended to be so vivid that the readers feel as if they are in the town as a part of the community as it was before the Holocaust. Second, it could mean that by coming together after the Holocaust, and by publishing the Yizkor book through collective action, the community has been resurrected by its surviving remnants. This act was not only about the revival of the community, but also an act of defiance, of proving that the Nazis had failed in their attempt to completely destroy the Jews. The community was resurrected in a different place, but nonetheless existed once more. Editor Ze'ev Igeret opens his personal introduction to the 1954 book on Sekuryan (today Sokyryany in Ukraine) with this description of the town:

> Still today she stands before us, as if it were fourteen years ago. She is fresh and full of life, blooming and prosperous, nestled with love on her public and cultural institutions, still making plans for the future, with no knowledge at all that the storm of the Holocaust is fast approaching in giant steps, and that her future is already determined by cruel history.[476]

Igeret's words are an example of this kind of thinking as it appeared in the editorials. One of the goals of the Yizkor book is to take us back in time, to see our loved ones and the community in the time of their greatest beauty. At this point, resurrection differs from nostalgia. Nostalgia is reminiscing, usually through a positive lens, about a time and place that are gone and that we cannot go back to. In this case, the writer describes an attempt to bring the object of our reminiscence as it was in the past into our present, so it will come alive again. The resurrection of the community as it was just before the Holocaust is not "real" but imaginary. The future of the community is set and cannot be changed. We can only resurrect a small slice of the town's history, a snapshot of the town as it was at a specific moment, but we cannot change

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[476] Ze'ev Igeret, *Sekuryan – be-beinyana uve-hurbana* (Tel-Aviv: Va'ad ha-irgun shel yots'e Sekuryan, 1954), 5. A community in Hebrew is female. In English, it should be neutral, but in the spirit of the text, which speaks of the community as a woman, I used female form in English as well.

what has already happened. In other words, we can imagine that the essence of the community at a specific moment has been frozen and brought to the present. It can be resurrected today as it was at the moment that it was frozen, but this does not change anything that has happened since. In the introduction to the 1975 Yizkor books for Svir, a town in today's northern Belarus, editor Hertzel Weiner adds an additional element:

> In this book I wish to contribute my part to keeping the memory of our town Svir alive; and reviving its impression in the hearts of the survivors of Svir and its townsfolk, wherever they may be, and in the hearts of the second generation of Svir's descendants, who are unfamiliar with its name, only as rumour, from their eldest of family members.[477]

Weiner adds to the idea expressed by Igeret that the goal of the Yizkor book is to resurrect the town so that the generations born after the Holocaust will be able to meet it as it was, not as it is in the present. The town and its Jewish community are gone. They are now in oblivion. They are forgotten. People born after the destruction of the community cannot reminisce, they cannot be nostalgic. They barely know that the community even existed. At the time of writing, they could not even visit whatever was still there, as the borders of the Eastern Bloc were sealed for most Jews until the late 1980s. So the goal of the Yizkor book was to show the community and town as they were when alive, so they could know it and remember it as the old could remember it.[478]

The other aspect of resurrection was achieved through the commemorative acts of landsleit organizations. A new community was formed around the memory of the one that had been destroyed. The new community was also seen as a community of landsleit, even if they were born after the destruction of the original community. Thus, second and third generations were still considered landsleit. The new community was therefore also a community of people from the original town and community. By coming together in the organization, and holding events such as memorial services, planting trees and putting up plaques and monuments, as well as publishing their Yizkor book, the new community became the reincarnation of the old one. This act also had the symbolic value of proving that the Nazis had failed to destroy the

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[477] Hertzel Weiner, *Hayo hayta ayarat Svir* (Kefar Saba?: Irgun yots'e Svir be-Yisrael, 1975), 5.

[478] See also in: Abramson, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Vishnnivah*, 2; Asher A. and Gidron Y., *Ner tamid le-zecher yahadut Ipolysag veha-sevivah* (Kfar Vradim1994), 3; Kressel, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilot Radihov, Lopatin, Vitkov Novi, Holoyov, Toporov, Stanislavtshik, Staromiletsh, Shtrovits*, 1; Ravitch and Montreal, *Dos amolike yidishe Varshe*, Editorial titled "A word from the Farband of Jews in Montreal" ; Rubin, *Belz, sefer zikaron*, 14.

community. Multiplied by many similar acts, it became the resurrection of the Jewish world, albeit in a different geographical location. In this context, Yizkor books were not just the item around which the community was resurrected. They often also included contact details for community members, helping to strengthen connections between different landsleit. As discussed above, they were used as items around which to conduct memorial ceremonies.[479] They therefore became the anchor of the new community, but also the axis around which the community could continue to exist. They became a substitute locality for the community to inhabit.

To save from Oblivion

The main goal of commemoration through Yizkor books was that the victims – the people as well as the community – and the events would not be forgotten or lost to posterity. The commemoration usually aspired to commemorate a larger scale of events, commonly referred to as: the despicable deeds of Germany and its allies; the betrayal of locals and neighbours such as by the Poles; life in the camps and ghettos, and in hiding and in the Soviet Union; the general plight of the Jews; and the overall apathy demonstrated by the rest of the world regarding the fate of the Jews. The purpose of commemoration, in other words, was to prevent memories from being lost. The focus was therefore on the preservation of information through the book, and not necessarily that someone would actually read it immediately. In the Stashov (today Staszow in south-eastern Poland) book published in 1962, for instance, editor Elhanan Ehrlich begins the introduction, "Forever Candle", in the following way:

> The pages of this book on our townspeople that we present here to the reader, have, folded within them, an attempt to rescue from the pit of oblivion[480] the image of the Stashov community, as it was seen by us, a community that once was, is gone and shall never be again.[481]

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[479] Baumel, "'Lezikron olam': Holocaust Commemoration by the Individual and the Community in Israel".

[480] The phrase "save them from oblivion" (in Hebrew: להציל אותם מן השיכחה) literally means save them from the place of forgetfulness. Alternatively, תהום הנשייה literally means the pit, or abyss, of oblivion. It appears in several editorials. See Friedlander and Mark, *Sefer yizkor: mukdash li-yehude ha-'ayarot she-nispu ba-Sho'ah ba-shanim 1939-44: Linsk, Istrik, Beligrod, Litovisk veha-sevivah*, V. Moisheh Grosman and Shemu'el Kalisher, *Sokoli ba-ma'avak le-hayim* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Sokoli be-Yisrael, 1975), 7; Klepner, *Zikhronotai me-Banfi-Hunyad*, second part, 20. Shaiak, *Lovitsh*, 11. Wajsberg, *Tomaszow-Mazowiecki*, 11.

[481] Elhanan Ehrlich, *Sefer Stashov* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yotse-Stashov be-Yiśra'el, 1962), 13.

History played a different role in this context. For the authors, the history of the Jewish people is a burden, while for others, the authors feared, it would be too easily forgotten. Rabbi Yoseph Schick demonstrates this in his editorial in the 1971 book "Nitzotzot", which covered several Hungarian communities:

> The world of the 20th century has brought on us, our people, the calamity of the Holocaust, the worst of all times. From the entirety of European Jewry, and Hungarian Jewry within it, only remnants remain. Six million martyrs enrich the hall of the people of Israel's long history. But the blood of the six million was not spilled for nought. Their holy memory and bringing up their memory over and over reinvigorates us, reinvigorates those who remain, our children and grandchildren.[482]

This contradiction between the individual author's feelings about his own history, that is, Jewish history in general, and his feelings about the rest of the world being willing to let go of it too easily, lies at the base of this urge to commemorate. History burdened the authors more because they felt that they represented a group that carried a heavy and terrible memory, one that the rest of the world did not want to be bothered with. This forgetfulness was for three reasons. First, that the Jews were not important enough, and therefore their history, plight and fate were not important enough to remember. Second, that the peoples of the enlightened world did not want to be reminded of their own actions during the Second World War and the Holocaust. Third, that those who committed the atrocities had continued their attack on the Jews and aimed to have the memory of the Holocaust forgotten. The latter connects us back to the History of Suffering and the eternal war between Israel and Amalek. History and oblivion serve as counterparts here, and they are not merely memory constructs; that is, they are not only what people do or do not remember. They have a special status in this context, and they have a real world, albeit metaphysical, place and meaning.

"History" in this context is used to mean "everything that is remembered" and not "everything that has happened". Oblivion is where that which is not remembered ends up – the gap between the two meanings of history. Bringing in the other metaphysical motivations discussed in this section, it becomes evident that that these two places of memory have great importance for the authors. If a Holocaust victim was completely forgotten, that person could be neither commemorated nor honoured and marked as a martyr, and could not rise at the end of days with the other just people. If a whole town or community

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[482] Fleischmann, *"Nitzotzot" me-kehilat Siksa ve-machoz Abauj Torna she-nadamu*, ו.

was forgotten, then that community could not be resurrected, and future generations would lose any contact they had with their roots. If the fate of the Jewish people during the Holocaust was forgotten, then the Nazis would have won, as they would have succeeded in their attempt to completely erase the Jews and the memory of them from the world. The role of Yizkor books in this context is therefore twofold. By ensuring that everyone is mentioned, they are at the heart of the effort to honour all victims and make certain that they are noted as martyrs. Through efforts such as those mentioned in "the dead demand!", the publishers and editors made sure that all those who died were at least remembered by name. The circumstances of death often remained unknown but through the collection of names and by remembering the mass graves, the authors made sure that the victims were not entirely forgotten, and thus saved from oblivion. This is the principle that lies at the base of all of these metaphysical motivations – to ensure, in somewhat different ways, that the martyrs and the holy communities are remembered and commemorated so they can live on in the material world and rise at the end of days.

History

History not unexpectedly constituted a significant proportion of the motivations mentioned in the editorials. Some editors, such as Nachman Blumenthal,[483] were professional historians, but these were in the minority. The Holocaust was generally viewed by the authors as the most significant event in the history of the Jewish people, and sometimes in human history, and as the event that ended the existence and history of the majority of Eastern, Central and southern European Jewries, which at the time constituted the majority of World Jewry, as well as several of the most important centres of Jewish life in the world. The founding of the State of Israel in 1948 was closely related to the Holocaust and was seen as a direct result of and an answer to the Holocaust, and the historical end of and answer to antisemitism.

Some editors present the telling of history as a goal in its own right, not necessarily as the larger "History of Suffering" but instead focused on the Holocaust or Jewish life before and during this period.[484] Others discuss two

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[483] Blumental, *Sefer-yizkor Baranov*; *Sefer yizkor Rozvadov veha-sevivah*; Blumental and Ben-Azar, *Sefer yizkor Maikhov, Kharshnitsah, ve-Kshoinz'*.

[484] See Bernstein, *Pinkes Zshirardov, Amshinov un Viskit: yizker-bukh tsu der geshikhte fun di kehiles ... fun zeyer oyfkum biz zeyer hurbn durkh di natsis yimach shemam*, 15; Moses Joseph Feigenbaum, *Sefer Biala-Podlaska* (Tel-Aviv: Kupat gemilut hesed a.sh. kehilat Biala-Podlaska, 1961), 3; Freidenreich and Yakobovits, *Sefer yizkor li-kedoshe Byalah-Ravska*, 13; Losh, *Pinkas Belitsah*, 12; Shayari, *Sefer Busk*, 8.

significant meta-historical outlooks regarding the relation between the Holocaust and two major periods – life in the diaspora before, and life in the State of Israel after.[485] Finally, some editors directly engage with questions around the status of their Yizkor book as a history book or a historical source.[486]

Tell What Happened!

A major motivation was the need to tell about something specific that happened, which might be an event or a process. This motivation often appeared in tandem with other motives and reasons, such as "tell your children", as an example of a possible target audience. In any case, the main point raised was that knowledge, memory or both should be passed on to others. Whether there was a further goal or target audience mentioned was not as significant to the authors as the act of telling as such. There was something that they needed to pass on in writing so it could be preserved, and other circumstances were of secondary importance. The most commonly mentioned aspects that needed to be told concerned life before the Holocaust, what happened during the Holocaust and the lack of response from the so-called enlightened world. Editor Zvi Yasheev, for instance, wrote in his introduction to the 1966 Apta (or Apt, today Opatów in south-eastern Poland) Yizkor book:

> We hope that the members of the young generation in Israel, for whom the name "Apt" is naturally nothing but the parents' town, read through this book to know their origin and draw inspiration from it. It is also certain that members of the older generation, especially those of the diaspora, who know the town from the 1920s and 1930s, will refresh their memory by reading the chapters of memories in the book.[487]

We find here an example of a Yizkor book that, according to the editor, aimed to introduce and recall life before the Holocaust. Yasheev also discusses two target audiences: the young, who had no experience of the town before the Holocaust, and the old, who did. For each group, the book also fulfilled a

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[485] See A. and Y., *Ner tamid le-zecher yahadut Ipolysag veha-sevivah*, 5; Adini, *Zikaron le-kehilat Bihavah*, 11; Carmilly, *Cluj*, י,יג; Drori et al., *The Tree and its Roots – sefer korot Sofivka Igantovka*, 11; Hayim Rubin, *Yizkor le-kehilat Svislots* (Tel-Aviv: Ole Svislots be-Yisrael, 1961), 5.

[486] See Bar-Ratson, *Yizkor le-Krivits – ner tamid*, 8; Blumental, *Sefer Mir*, 19-20; Ehrlich, *Sefer Stashov*, 14; Fraind, *Seyfer Zloczew*, 9; A. Wolf Jasny, *Sefer Klobuck* (Tel-Aviv: Aroysgegebn fun "Irgun yots'e Klobutsk be-Yiśra'el" un Klobutsker landsmanshaftn fun Frankraykh un fun Ostralye, 1960), 7.

[487] Yasheev, *Sefer Apta*, 3.

second purpose beyond generally telling them what happened. For the old, Yasheev hinted at nostalgia, while for the young the book served to help them to get to know their parents' town, while also bringing them into the community as it had continued to exist or been resurrected since. In other words, the point is about the remnants of the community discovering knowledge about it, expanding the community by reconnecting with each other, and creating new connections with those born after the Holocaust. This is also connected to the above-mentioned act of resurrecting the community.

Other editors sought to introduce readers to the community's "beginning and growth through its different phases",[488] or "to shine a light of love and mercy on the lives of the Jews…".[489] The latter takes us back to the discussion on nostalgia, but not entirely. This kind of positive reframing of the past is implicitly related to that idea but it could also be that the author is simply stating his or her position regarding the past and explaining to the younger generation that the diaspora did not sin or go "like lambs to the slaughter". In that sense, it is engaging with the often binary understanding of Jewish history, between the weak diaspora and the heroic *Yishuv*.[490] I expand on the Yishuv/diaspora dichotomy in chapters 8 and 9.

Another significant piece of information some authors seek to pass on is the response of the world to the Holocaust, specifically the lack of willingness by the nations of the world to receive Jewish refugees before the Holocaust and their passivity towards or cooperation with the Nazis during the Holocaust. The editorial of the 1959-60 Baitsh (today Biecz in southern Poland) Yizkor book, exemplifies this idea:

> Due to its special significance, the "Yizkor book" must remain for future generations a "book of protest" and a great cry on the rupture of our people and the cruel and criminal "enlightened world" which watched in cold blood the mass-destruction of six million Jews without responding. Its conscience not shocked and its face not red from shame. And in sadistic pleasure did it fill its mouth with water as if nothing had happened. These memorial books must be published in hundreds and thousands in every place where a Jewish foot

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[488] Sztokfisz, *Sefer Zgyerz': mazkeret nestach li-kehilah yehudit be-Polin = Sefer Zgerzsh: tsum ondenk fun a Yidisher kehile in Poylin*, 6.

[489] Meir Shim'on Geshuri, *Sefer Sosnovits veha-sevivah be-Zaglembiyah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Sosnovits veha-sevivah be-Yiśra'el, 1973–1974), 9. See more examples in: Komemiyut, *Hantsa'hat kehilat Ripin-Polin*; Rabin, *Sefer Vishnevets*, 7.

[490] See examples in: Oshrovits, *Sefer zikaron Ivenits veha-sevivah*, 7; Yitsḥaḳ Zigelman, *Sefer Budzanov* (Heifa: Yots'e Budzanov be-Yisrael uve-Artsot-ha-Berit, 1968), 7; *Hurban Volkovisk be-milhemet ha-olam ha-sheniyah, 1939–1945*, 3.

was set, and express our bitterness, and the rage of the masses of Israel in its diasporas against those responsible for the massacre and those who became complicit through their passivity.[491]

The history that had to be told was that the world stood idly by, that the so-called enlightened peoples acted as bystanders during the Holocaust. Implicit in this is the idea that what happened during the Holocaust would come to light through the stories of the survivors. However, following this line of thought, that would not be enough. Yizkor books also had to tell the part of the story that the survivors did not witness, about the response of the nations of the world (or lack thereof) to the plight of the Jews. Once that was done, the nations of this so-called enlightened world would have to acknowledge what happened, as well as their complicity in the crimes committed by the Nazis and their allies. This is a part of the history of the Holocaust and of the Jewish people that took place outside of the commemorated community and that its members did not witness. A far wider context was added to the story of the life and death of the community. Shlomo Zalman Broyer, a member of the publishing committee, provides us with another example of this thinking in his foreword to the 1975 Dunasrdahali (today Dunajská Streda in western Slovakia) Yizkor book:

> This book will serve as an "indictment" of the "enlightened" world and the "enlightened" peoples who did not say a word, as the malicious hand was raised against the people of Israel to destroy them, and in their encouraging silence they supported the evils of all nations in committing the most heinous crime in human history, and they became accomplices themselves in the crime of destroying the six million Jews in Europe.[492]

The ideas expressed in this excerpt may appear to be part of the idea of the History of Suffering. However, on further reading, the Dunashradali book demonstrates why this point should not be confused with the more current idea that the Jewish History of Suffering means that the world has always been against the Jewish people, and that all gentiles are inherently hostile towards Jews. This is a much later perception promoted today by far-right political parties and politicians, mainly in Israel and the US. Those Jews who had lived in the diaspora, which at the time of publication was the vast majority of world Jewry, witnessed the good as well as the bad in Jewish-gentile relations, and had a more nuanced understanding of those relations. Rabbi Isaschar Dov

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[491] Blum, Vagshal, and Vainfeld-Samu'el, *Ayaratenu Baitsh*, 20. Parentheses in the original.
[492] Engel, *Sefer ha-zikaron li-kehilat Dunasrdahali*, 8. Parentheses in the original.

Halperin, former rabbi of the above-mentioned Baitsh community, for instance wrote about "the army of liberators from the United States", and that he and others survived in the woods during the Holocaust thanks to potatoes brought by a "non-Jew".[493] His narration illustrates that not all gentiles were complicit in the Holocaust, either as bystanders or as perpetrators, and that at least some individuals and groups sought to save Jews, always at great personal risk. That said, the wider point was that the states of the world did stand by and let Jews die for too long before they went to war against Nazi Germany.[494] While the US and its allies should be credited for liberating the camps and rescuing those who survived, their previous responses, such as letting Germany and its allies run rampant before deciding to respond, must never be forgotten.[495]

Some books made the connection between these issues and the History of Suffering. This usually appeared in books published later on. In the 1994 book on Ipolysag (today Šahy in Slovakia, near the Hungarian border), for example, the editorials repeatedly mention that the purpose of the book is "to point an accusing finger" at the "enlightened and cultured world",[496] but also that this same response of the enlightened world should be remembered in the tradition of remembering Amalek.[497] This is a somewhat curious connection as according to the Bible, Amalek sought to destroy Israel, while the argument presented against the "so-called enlightened peoples" is that they stood by, not that they attacked the Jews. This connection exemplifies how Israeli memory culture of the Holocaust had become more right wing, and reflects the idea that the diasporic countries as a whole sought to destroy the Jews, not just the Nazis and their allies.

The State of Israel was the Goal / Is the Answer

As discussed in chapter 5, the Holocaust came to overshadow all the other historical events that preceded it as Israeli memory culture came to be Israeli

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[493] Blum, Vagshal, and Vainfeld-Samu'el, *Ayaratenu Baitsh*, 13–14.

[494] If at all, as most Eastern European states, for example, were either supportive of or allied with the Nazis, and so were many individuals in countries such as Poland and the Soviet Union.

[495] See also See Bilavski, *Sefer yizkor li-kedoshe 'ir Pashyatsh: korbanot ha-sho'ah*, 10; Gal and Bet-sefer mamlakhti yesodi "Savyon"-Gane Yehudah., *Le-zekher Rovnah*, 13; Meirovitch, *Megilat Kurenits*, 10; Mordechai Schutzman, *Sefer ha-zikaron shel kehilat Wierzbnik-Starachowice* (Tel Aviv: Ha-va'ad ha-tziburi shel yots'e Wierzbnik-Starachowice, 1973), XV.

[496] A. and Y., *Ner tamid le-zecher yahadut Ipolysag veha-sevivah*, 3,4,9.

[497] Ibid., 3.

Holocaust memory culture. This change generally included all life in the *Galut*. The Holocaust came to be seen in Israeli society, and to some degree also in US Jewish society, as the culmination of all historical processes in Jewish history, and the expected natural peak of antisemitism. Jewish history came to be viewed as a chain of catastrophic events from slavery in Egypt to the destruction of both temples, the siege of Masada, and various pogroms and attacks against Jews, which were followed naturally by the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. The State of Israel was seen as both the result of and the response to this chain of catastrophes.[498] From this viewpoint on Jewish history, the Holocaust was often seen as the fault of the weak and naive diaspora Jews, and the price they paid for their ill-advised quest for assimilation and willingness to trust the *goyim*. There are thus two parallel, related ideas in Israeli Holocaust memory culture: first, that the founding of the State of Israel was the inevitable result of Jewish life in the diaspora, and the Holocaust the end of that life; and, second, that the State of Israel was the answer to the Nazi attack on the Jews. The existence of the State of Israel serves as the main evidence that the Nazis failed in their quest to eradicate the Jews, as well as a guarantee, through its military might, that the Holocaust could never happen again. Related to these two points are the ideas that diaspora Jews were weak and naive, and went like lambs to the slaughter, and therefore deserved the fate that befell them. Dr Moshe Yarblum writes in his introduction to the Yizkor book on Wieliczka, Poland (near Kraków):

> The failed hopes that accompanied our ancestors through every trouble and catastrophe that "that which has happened will never happen again" – shall not again be as "Will – [is] the father of thought"… the State of Israel today is, to a large extent, a guarantee that Jewish life in Israel and even in the whole world is no longer forfeit, and the tormentor of Jews shall not be forgiven.[499]

This quote illustrates an idea that is repeated in many editorials: that Jews in the diaspora could only hope that each pogrom would be the last, and that what they wished (in Yarblum's words willed) became their perception of the world. They wished the gentiles to be friendly and to live in peace among

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[498] See in: Liberles, "Ha-Shoah veha-ha'aracha mechadash shel ha-historia ha-yehudit ba-et ha-hadasha: Shalom W' Baron ve-historionim acherim (The Holocaust and the re-evaluation of Jewish History in Modern Times: Shalom W. Baron and Other Historians)", 76–87; Dalia Ofer, "50 Shanim shel siach israeli al ha-Shoah: me'afyenim ve-dilemot (50 years of Israeli Shoah discourse: characteristics and dilemmas)", ibid., 309–317.

[499] Meiri, *Kehilat Wieliczka – Sefer Zikaron*, 8.

them, and in their naivety they thought that this was indeed the way the world was. However, their hopes, which had failed them time and time again in the past, failed them one final time – predictably, according to Yarblum – and the Jews of the diaspora lacked the strength to make their will a reality, so it remained as only a wish. With the State of Israel, Jews in Israel, and even in the rest of the world, now have the strength to defend themselves and make the Holocaust the last event in the chain. Thus, the diasporic wish to live safely among the gentiles is guaranteed through the military might of Israel, the might the diaspora did not have. The phrase "even in the whole world" (in Hebrew: ואף בעולם כולו) is an interesting one – in Hebrew it could mean that the writer is astonished at the military power of Israel, at its ability to defend Jews all over the world, but could also mean that Israel is defending the Jews of the world even though they do not deserve its protection, because they should emigrate to Israel. Both points could be valid at the same time, and they are both consistent with ideas expressed in other editorials.[500] The former being more positive and the latter more negative towards diaspora Jews.

The idea that the State of Israel is the result of the Holocaust is not merely a description of a historical process. It contains a metaphysical component too. In many editorials this idea is expressed as the convergence point of Jewish history, as the imminent end to it. It is sometimes mentioned as a blessing that was brought forth through the deaths – perhaps even sacrifice – of the six million Jews.[501] In his introduction to the 1966 Augustow (today in north-eastern Poland) Yizkor book, editor Ya'akov Alexandroni adds another component to this motivation:

> From our glorious community there is nothing left but ruins. Even the cemeteries were destroyed and completely erased, and the burial places of the murdered are unknown. The monument to our dearest will be our country that

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[500] See for example also in: Aharoni, *Toldot kehilat Rakoshpalotah*, Author's introduction. Mordekhai Amitay, *Rohatin* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Rohatin be-Yisrael, 1962), 8; Igeret, *Sekuryan – be-beinyana uve-hurbana*, 6; Alexander Manor, *Sefer Sambor-Stari-Sambor* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Sambor--Stari-Sambor veha-sevivah be-Yiśra'el, 1980), 12; Meiri, *Kehilat Wieliczka – Sefer Zikaron*, 8; David A. Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*, vol. 1 (Tel-Aviv: Ha-va'ad le-hotsa'at sefer kehilat Saloniki, 1972), יב; Moshe Starkman, A Binot, L, and Abraham Ackner, *Mosty-Wielkie memorial book* (Tel-Aviv?: Irgune yots'e Mosṭi-Vi'elḵeh be-Yiśra'el uve-Artsot ha-Berit, 1975), 9–13.

[501] See for example in Tsurnamal and Kefar Ganim. Bet ha-sefer ha-yesodi ha-mamlakhti., *Zikhron netsah la-kehilah ha-kedoshah Lask: asher nechrevah ba-shoah*, 5; Ehrlich, *Sefer Stashov*, 13.

has been strengthened and fortified so that it will be a safe haven for our people for all eternity.[502]

Alexandroni presents the proposition that the State of Israel is not only the answer or response, it is a monument to the Jews of the diaspora. However, it is not a monument in the sense of a work of art displaying an image of the Holocaust or containing symbolism. Israel, according to Alexandroni, is a fortress, and its symbolic act of commemoration of the diaspora is in making sure that the Holocaust cannot happen again. This position builds on the idea previously presented in the quote from Yarblum's text that the basic error of the diaspora lay in their inability, or perhaps reluctance, to understand the History of Suffering – they wrongly thought it could end peacefully through coexistence with the gentiles or through assimilation. What Zionists understood, according to Yarblum and Alexandroni, was that the constant stream of enemies rising to destroy the people of Israel would never cease as long as Jews lived alongside and under the rule of the gentiles. The only way to end the History of Suffering according to Zionist thinking was for Jews to have their own state. Israel as an independent and strong state was therefore at the same time the solution to Jewish diaspora history, an ending to it and a monument to the Jews who had to die, so that Jews would finally understand that there is no other solution and fulfil their historical destiny as a people.

A less common idea connected to the idea of Israel as the goal of life in the diaspora was that the fate of the diaspora was a fitting end, or a punishment for its attempts at assimilation, and that its fate should set an example to others. This is a strongly Israel-centric idea based on the above-mentioned perception of the diaspora as passive and of diaspora Jews as those who went like lambs to the slaughter, in glaring contrast to the warring, heroic *Yishuv*. The basic fault of the diaspora according to this notion is in trusting the gentiles. Diaspora Jews tried to assimilate,[503] and even though these assimilated Jews became the same as their gentile neighbours, or so they thought, they were nonetheless singled out and murdered in the Holocaust. Moreover, during the Holocaust period, those assimilated Jews were still fooled by the Nazis and did not resist. So the sins of the diaspora according to this point of view are twofold, and the people of the diaspora deserved what happened to them. This is of course far from being historically accurate. Nonetheless, this myth has not only survived, but grown over time and is still prominent in large parts of

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[502] Alexandroni, *Kehilat Augustow*, 12.
[503] This is of course only partly true for some areas of European Jewry, such as Germany.

Israeli society. As editor Menachem Katz of the Yizkor book dedicated to Bezezani, Nerayuv and their surroundings writes in his introduction:

> Let this memorial book be an everlasting memory for the next generations, a candle at the feet of the Hebrew youth renewing our existence as people free in our homeland, and a warning to the faction of the people, scattered in the diaspora, that still have not learned a lesson from our national disaster.[504]

Katz's message is that the remaining diaspora must never trust the gentiles and to emigrate to Israel, which is the only place where they can be safe and free from the threat of the next link in the chain of the History of Suffering. A more extreme version of this idea is that diaspora Jews *had* to be sacrificed to atone for their sins and to bring about the establishment of the State of Israel, and therefore the sacrifice of the diaspora was worth it. For example, in his introduction to the 1945 "Ketz ha-yehudim be-ma'arav Polin" (The end of the Jews in Western Poland), a Yizkor book focused on the Bendin (today Będzin) area, publisher Aharon Brandes writes that the deaths of resistance fighters and other victims in ghettos were "just as the negation of the diaspora, during its existence, was for its salvation",[505] that is, that the fighters died as they had lived so that Israel would come into being, and that the ruin of European Jewry was a necessity.[506] Those resistance fighters, who according to Brandes were Zionists, fought against the Germans for the diaspora they believed should never have existed. Their act of sacrifice was therefore inherently contradictory in nature. In another example, from the 1970 book on Cluj, Romania (a Hungarian community), the authors write that "the people of Israel began its historical path anew, because God regretted creating them in the *galut*".[507] This quote adds a religious dimension, or point of view, to the idea of the negation of the diaspora. The ideas presented in the editorials on the relation between the State of Israel and the diaspora can be placed on a spectrum. At one end, there was the idea that the diaspora could not have done anything to prevent, or even slow down, the Holocaust. At the other end, there was the idea that the diaspora lived a sinful existence and had to be sacrificed to make the Jewish people

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[504] Katz, *Bezezani, Narayuv, veha-seviva: toldot kehilot she-nechrevu*. See also: Aryeh Avinadav, *Kehilat Ustilah* (Israel: Irgun yots'e Ustilah be-Yisrael uva-tefutsot, 1961), 7.

[505] Brandes, *Ketz ha-yehudim be-ma'arav Polin* 3-4. See on the negation of the diaspora in: Yablonka, "The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Israel: The Nuremberg, Kapos, Kastner, and Eichmann Trials", 10–11.

[506] Brandes, *Ketz ha-yehudim be-ma'arav Polin* 4.

[507] Carmilly, *Cluj*, טו.

pure enough for the state of Israel to be created. The ideas presented in the majority of the Yizkor books are likely to be closer to the former, but there were exceptions.

Yizkor Books as Works of History

As is demonstrated in the editorial of the 2007 Northern Bukowina Yizkor book, the books were said to contain "the chronicles of the community and family".[508] It has also been shown that many of the contributions were highly nostalgic in nature. Moreover, many editorials explicitly mention that the book is not the place to speak ill of the dead or to settle old scores. This attitude to the dead is common in Jewish practice and not unique to Yizkor books. The rather novel idea that all those who died during the Holocaust period became martyrs only augmented these pre-existing traditions. All these factors came together to create a positive and slanted view of the period, the community and the people. At the same time, many of the same books exhibit a clear bias towards Zionism, for example by exaggerating claims about the everyday use of Hebrew in the community and how widespread Zionist ideas were among community members. Some authors even assign a metaphysical, deterministic meaning to the Holocaust as the inevitable end of the diaspora in order to establish the State of Israel, dismissing the diaspora as a precursor to the establishment of the Jewish state and the fulfilment of the Zionist dream in Israel. This point of view also ignored the different types of Zionism that existed in the diaspora, some of which did not see Palestine as necessarily the territory for the Jewish state. Moreover, it simplified the non-Zionist world and presented it as a single entity, ignoring the variety of political and religious values, as well as their varying ideas regarding relations between Jews and gentiles. I expand on all of these points in chapters 8 and 9.

Some historians argue that Yizkor books can potentially be used as historical sources,[509] meaning that individual contributions should be treated as any other testimony – by definition, as neither reliable nor unreliable sources. Each individual entry, like the books themselves, should be treated just like any other primary source – each must be qualified and corroborated individually. The general question of historical validity, that is, whether the specific Yizkor book is a history book, is often discussed in the editorials. As

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[508] Camil and Shertser, *Sho'at yehudey tzfon Bukowina*.

[509] Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*, 38–44. Trunk, *Judenrat: the Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation*.

noted above, some editors were historians,[510] and this question probably came to them naturally. Although not the editor, Holocaust historian Israel Gutman wrote in an editorial for the Rachow-Annopol (today Annopol in western Poland) Yizkor book that the books are an "important source, from which students and teachers can take knowledge and material" regarding the Jewish communities of the diaspora.[511] Editors who were not historians also saw this as an important point for discussion. Since most editors were not professional historians, the discussion was generally not about whether the books contain reliable primary sources, but rather whether they could as a whole be considered "history books". This question is somewhat different from the historian's query, but it is also similar in that both concern questions of source reliability. Nonetheless, in some cases authors claimed that the testimonies were inherently truthful for circumstantial or moral reasons, while historians would not accept that line of argumentation as sufficient insofar as source evaluation is concerned.[512]

From a scholarly perspective, the fact that the contributions were edited makes the discussion about source reliability even more complex. Individual contributions were not always credited to the author. Even if a name was included, no other details were provided, which means that examining the authors is almost impossible. Many individual entries were edited and translated but while this was sometimes noted in a general comment, no such comments can be found with regard to a specific text. It is therefore not possible to know whether a specific text was translated, which language it was originally written in, who translated it if this was indeed the case, and whether parts of it had been edited out, redacted or somehow changed by the editor. In this sense, these individual texts are more problematic than regular testimonies, as they have an added layer of unknown changes. As mentioned above, some editors stated that they had included only one text on each topic (a person, institute or event, for example) and "duplicates", as they were often called, had not been not published. However, the criteria used to decide which text to publish or how similar two texts needed to be in order to be regarded as "duplicates" is never discussed.

Most Yizkor books have a historical background section. These sections are commonly written by historians, or collected using research institutions,

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[510] See for example three Yizkor books edited by renowned historian Nachman Blumental: Blumental, *Sefer-yizkor Baranov*; *Sefer yizkor Rozvadov veha-sevivah*; Blumental and Ben-Azar, *Sefer yizkor Maikhov, Kharshnitsah, ve-Kshoinz'*.

[511] Nitzan, *Rachow / Annopol – pirkey edut ve-zikaron*, 4.

[512] Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*, 42–43.

libraries and museums. The level of historical research and writing varies greatly between different books and authors. While some can be read as historiographical texts in their own right, others contain erroneous comments about historical events in the guise of objective truth. For example, in the editorial for the 1985 Borsah book, the author writes in a historical overview that the Wars of the Roses lasted for more than one hundred years, that the line "my kingdom for a horse" from Shakespeare's *Richard III* is a true historical event that took place during that time, and that the tribes that invaded Europe from Asia at the time of the Roman empire were all descendants of the exiled ten tribes of Israel.[513] Some authors, however, were firmly of the view that Yizkor books were not history books. In his introduction to the 1969 Yizkor book on Sanok, in today's south-eastern Poland, editor Elazar Sharvit writes:

> This book is not meant to be a historical scientific composition, convincing in its accuracy and exhaustive in its scope. The objective conditions do not allow for it, due to the reasons implied earlier… efforts have been made to set goals for this book that are achievable, and to make a book of remembrance and memory, a book of reminding and remembering, a tool for spiritual-experimental communication, to connect us with our former world in our town Sanok and its surroundings and with Jewish life in it, now gone.[514]

Similarly, the editorial for the 1970 Britshivah (today Beiceva in Moldova) Yizkor book insists that:

> [we] do not pretend to be publishing a history book. Everything written here is based on memories, on news articles, that we could reach, on photographs. Perhaps here and there events and situations are mentioned more than once, since the writers are different. Perhaps here and there one can even find contradictions regarding dates or persons. The editor did not know enough to decide between here and there. He also did not take upon himself the responsibility to change [the texts].[515]

The 1977 Kaidan Yizkor book editorial, probably written by editor Josef Chrust (the identity of its author is not mentioned in the text itself), argues that one has to distinguish between history and memory:

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[513] See Stein, *Sefer zikaron Borshah*, 15.

[514] Sharvit, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Sanok vaha-sevivah*, ז.

[515] Bertini, *Pinkas Britshivah*, 10.

Indeed, non-scientific studies are included in this book, but memories, they rise many times to a truly artistic level and, most importantly, they excel at being a pure truth as seen by the writers through their own eyes.[516]

Finally, editor Zevulun Poran and chair of the Jurbarkas landsleit organization, Shimon Shimonov, wrote the following in their joint introduction to the 1991 Yizkor book on Jurbarkas in Lithuania:

This memorial book is not a documentary/historical book, but a collection of authentic words of testimony by survivors of a magnificent community gone in the smoke of the Holocaust. The memories, impressions and experiences of the life and being of the community, preserved from the writers' time of youth, make up the core of the book.[517]

These four excerpts are representative of the kind of arguments set out in the editorials. All of them clearly state that their Yizkor book is not a scientific history book. Raising this point for discussion shows that this was widely viewed as a significant issue. None of the authors mention their professional qualifications, but it seems implicit in all of the editorials that the editors did not want to evaluate their sources, and nor could they if they wanted to as they lacked the relevant expertise. The Britshivah editorial, for example, even notes that contradictions might possibly be found in the details, and that there was no way to resolve them.

The editorials make the argument that their particular book is not based on facts, but on recollections, which they all see as standing in contradiction to objective truth. These memories are not lesser than truth, however, but are said to have their own value derived from them being first-hand testimonies. The feelings that were often included in these memories were seen as a benefit, probably in contrast to what the authors saw as cold, detached scholarly research. At the same time, they still note the problematic nature of memory. According to the authors, an eyewitness account is unreliable historically and inherently undeniable at the same time. In the eyes of the authors, different accounts of the same events could not be all true, but were nonetheless all acceptable.

Some editors made the claim that their Yizkor book was indeed a history book. The introduction to the 1987 book on Miechow Lubelski, a community in today's south-eastern Poland, signed by the Miechow landsleit organization, notes:

[516] Chrust, *Kaidan – sefer zikaron*, 7.
[517] Poran, *Sefer ha-zikaron le kehilat Yurburg-Lita*, 5.

> In the book of Miechow we have documented the horror of the Nazis with full responsibility and truth, for anyone that comes and says that the scope of the Holocaust and its horrors have been inflated without truth or fact.
>
> Our book is meant to set facts alongside the other books on the Holocaust so the world would know that we demand reparations…[518]

According to the Miechow landsleit organization, the edition contained absolutely reliable information about the Holocaust and life before it.[519] The truthfulness of the book's content is specifically asserted in order to contradict the arguments of Holocaust deniers, and also to support a legal action for reparations, most likely from Poland. The editors do not mention what their "full responsibility and truth" actually means; in other words, what measures had been taken to ensure the veracity of the content and who exactly was responsible for fact-checking, but the argument is made nonetheless. There is a possibility that they were referring to the same kind of "authentic words of testimony by survivors" mentioned in Poran and Shimonov's text,[520] but assigning historical accuracy to them as testimonies, unlike Poran and Shimonov, and the other three authors. In the Rachow-Annopol editorial, Nitzan claims that a particular book is a valid historical document since all Yizkor books (he uses the term "pinkasim") are such by definition.[521] They are all reliable sources for students and authors as a means for learning more about the Jewish world before the Holocaust. This is clearly a circular definition: the book is reliable because all Yizkor books are reliable, and they are all reliable because each one of them is individually reliable. On both of these issues, authors were therefore reassuring their readers that their book was reliable and accurate. However, an author insisting on the accuracy and reliability of his text does not add to its reliability. The problems described above regarding individual texts as primary sources are still present in these books. Apart from a general assurance, we have no explanation of how, for example, the testimonies were corroborated, what actions were taken to ensure the authenticity or truthfulness of the texts, and so on.

The issue of the historical validity of the content of Yizkor books, as an entire field or as a specific book, came up repeatedly in the editorials. Of course, the opinions of the authors of the editorials do not significantly affect a historian's decision on whether a text can be used as a historical source.

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[518] Rabin, *Mikhov (Lubelski)*, 5.

[519] See also examples in: Amitay, *Rohatin*, 8. Kaganovits, *Sefer zikaron Le-kehilat Ivyeh*, 15. Starkman, Binot, and Ackner, *Mosty-Wielkie memorial book*, 9. *Hurbn Gliniane*, 3.

[520] Poran, *Sefer ha-zikaron le kehilat Yurburg-Lita*, 5.

[521] Nitzan, *Rachow / Annopol – pirkey edut ve-zikaron*, 13.

From the historian's point of view, if one starts from the position that any testimony must be qualified and verified, then the different or contradictory positions expressed in the editorials make no difference. The editors were, as noted, mostly not historians, and their positions on the historical validity or usability of the contributions were mostly personal opinions. From a historiographic point of view, a collection of sources in a book constitutes a historical analysis. It is an edition of testimonies, and possibly other types of historical documents as well, and these should be treated as any other primary source of that kind. They should be qualified and corroborated using historical methodology. I agree here with Jacob Shatzky that "…the books are more useful as source material for history than as definite monographs".[522]

Even as sources for what is often generally referred to in the editorials as "folklore" – Jewish life before the Holocaust, including politics, different institutions, youth movements, religious life, and so on – everything must be taken with a grain of salt, as these texts are mostly based on memories rather than documents.[523] There are many obvious discrepancies between witness-based descriptions and what we can plausibly say about the factual situation in the communities, many of them probably unintentional. The most obvious example is the clear exaggeration of the place of Zionism (notably, the idea that Palestine was the only possible site for the state of the Jews) in the Jewish world in Eastern Europe, as well as the place of Hebrew and of Zionist youth movements. Many books note how very Zionist their community was and we know from other sources that this was often not the case. Zionism was of course present, but not to the degree many editorials like to claim. The same approach should be applied to the "historical background" sections. Some can be used as reliable secondary literature, while others include tales, folklore and opinions that are difficult to corroborate as facts.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the motivations for publishing a Yizkor book, as discussed in the editorials; presented a typology of these motivations; and discussed them in relation to previous research, theory, and historical and current events. Publishing a Yizkor book was a difficult and costly process.

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[522] Shatzky, "Review of Yizker Books – 1953", 55. This is also Browning's position on witness accounts. Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*, 42–44.

[523] Which of course have their own potential problems too.

Authors chose to take part in it for a variety of reasons, and not only as a means by which to cope with trauma or as a result of the "missing grave syndrome". Some felt compelled to contribute for personal reasons. Some felt that publishing a Yizkor book would provide them with a way to alleviate their excruciating emotional pain. Some felt this was a holy duty that must be fulfilled. Others felt that sharing with their children or with the world the story of what happened had its own value. Most authors express a combination of motivations. Every single Yizkor book, according to the editorials, was first and foremost an item of commemoration. Every Yizkor book was published to commemorate a community and its people, their lives and deaths. However, Yizkor books were not meant to serve just as mere *pinkas*, as a list of victims. Yizkor books were supposed to be more than that: to be "places of memory".

The goal of the authors was to create in and through Yizkor books a space for remembrance, commemoration and nostalgic recollection. Yizkor books serve as replacements for the markers for the Jewish graves of unknown Holocaust victims. They mark the grave, they tell the story of the deceased and they provide a place and time for the victims' relatives to perform the Jewish rituals of mourning and bereavement. Yizkor books were not meant to be symbolic gravestones, but monuments in book form. Prior to the Holocaust, these commemorative traditions would take place in the community of the victims. As the communities themselves were destroyed in the Holocaust, Yizkor books were assigned the added function of commemorating the community itself. The rituals of commemoration and bereavement were now performed in memory of the community as well. The book served as a gravestone for the community, and the *yahrzeit* of the community became a sacred date for all its landsleit.

Some authors mentioned the role of their book as a memorial candle. In Jewish tradition, this is a long-burning candle lit on specific dates in remembrance of the dead. Like the memorial candle, the books themselves could serve as a reminder of the deceased and an anchor for conversations between the bereaved to take place. The books also created a place around which people could meet and reminisce about the people and the community. In this sense, the book is a forever souvenir from the town, the community and the people.

Many publishers and editors dedicated their work to their families or to specific persons. The act of publishing a Yizkor book was seen in itself as honouring those people. These different motivations could all be seen as related to the biblical command to remember the plight of the Jewish people through their history (zachor!), and to pass it on to future generations (*ve-*

higadeta le-bincha). This command was perceived to extend beyond one's own community and into the surrounding villages, or even the entire region. Many took part in the commemoration of communities they were not landsleit of. If those communities had no survivors of their own to take on the task of commemoration, others took up the burden of commemoration to ensure that those communities and people remained part of Jewish history and were not lost to oblivion. Those who died at the hands of Amalek would always be seen as part of the eternal struggle of Israel against its enemies. The Holocaust, even as the greatest catastrophe, is still a link in the chain of Jewish suffering. We must tell our children, so they can pass it on to theirs, and so on, so that the story is not forgotten.

There were many answers to the question of what should be commemorated in the book: the history of the community, and its life and death are the most common. It is for the old to reminisce and for the young to know and not forget.

Finally, the discussion around the books as historical sources and historiographical works is an interesting one and different authors had different opinions on the matter. Some stressed the problematic sides of recollecting events years or decades later, while others assigned a special "truth value" to a witness testimony. Most editors kept to the rule of "not speaking ill of the dead" and stressed that the books were not a place for settling scores. Two other common ideas further complicate this discussion: first, the vast majority of Yizkor books maintain that all Holocaust victims became martyrs in death, regardless of their actions in life; and, second, Zionism was generally presented as far more significant in the diaspora than it actually was. Overall, the contributions in Yizkor books are difficult to evaluate as reliable primary sources. This does not mean that they cannot be used as such; only that the answer is not conclusive, and the texts should be treated by historians like any other source – carefully corroborated and qualified.

Chapter 8: "Ours was a Special Town…"
– Memory: Themes and Events

This first section of this chapter is a thematically organized analysis of the various areas, or themes of memory, presented in the books. The themes analysed are: (*a*) martyrdom, including "a mention to those who were not mentioned"; (*b*) resistance; (*c*) politics; (*d*) ethnicity; and (*e*) Jews and gentiles. The analysis examines which areas of life are perceived as important to remember, commemorate and mark according to the editorials and, to a more limited extent, individual entries in the Yizkor books.

The second section examines how events considered in previous research to be significant to Holocaust memory are addressed in the editorials, and how the relationship to these events changed over time. I relate these changes to Rüsen's model of meta-historical change, which is discussed in chapter 4.

Themes of Memory

Martyrdom

Martyrdom is by far the most prevalent notion in the editorials, and the authors clearly regard it as having the utmost significance. The designation "martyr" was important to all the authors. All those considered "victims of the Holocaust" in the wider sense of the term became martyrs.[524] As is noted above, and is expanded on below, the designation martyr had both a practical meaning and a metaphysical reason in Yizkor books. According to Jewish tradition, all martyrs deserved to be commemorated by a longer text rather than just an entry in the necrology. Furthermore, martyrs, regardless of their actions in life, deserved to rise at the end of days. On the other hand, in Israeli

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[524] That is, not only Jews murdered in the ghettos, camps and other Nazi actions, but also anyone who died during the Second World War and Holocaust Period, for example those murdered by their neighbours in Poland or those Jewish refugees who perished in the Soviet Union during that period.

Holocaust memory culture, and to some degree also in US Holocaust memory culture,[525] 'martyr' became a far more restrictive category, which included active physical resistance and a negative, dismissive stance towards the rest of the diaspora. This tension between the two commemorative ideologies is palpable in many Yizkor books. Many authors participate in the discussion surrounding this tension and explicitly set out their position in relation to it.[526]

As discussed above, the idea of complete martyrdom of the victims of the Holocaust created a unique situation for the authors of Yizkor books, which differed from that of the previously published *Pinkasim*. The events, institutions and communities were almost countless, but the sources – witnesses, documents and archives – were few and hard to come by. At the same time, all the martyrs had to be commemorated in at least some detail. The combination of these issues brought about the need for a collective grassroots effort – Yizkor book authors needed a great deal of information about many people, and living landsleit were by far the best and most available source to which they had access.

Yizkor books express a unique point of view on martyrdom in both Israeli and US Holocaust memory culture; the near-universal approach expressed in the editorials is that every single Jewish person who died in the Holocaust was a martyr: they all died *al kiddush ha-Shem*. By contrast, outside of Yizkor books, before and after their main period of publication, this term was and is generally reserved for Jews who chose death over conversion, alongside some other specific cases such as the rebels in Masada. Heroes, who are defined slightly differently in Israeli and US Holocaust memory culture, are in any case seen as a special few who stand out against the background of the so-called lambs,[527] and the only ones considered worthy of individual commemoration. Other victims are only worthy of commemoration as a group.

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[525] "Martyr" was never an important concept in US Holocaust memory culture. There was nonetheless some focus placed on heroism and armed resistance as important elements of Holocaust memory, alongside others such as the universal nature of the event. I expand on this in chapter 5.

[526] See Blumental, *Sefer Mir*, 24; Rabin, *Shumsk: sefer zikaron le-kedoshe Shumsk she-nispu be-Sho'at ha-natsim bi-shnat 1942*, 7; Rubin, *Yizkor le-kehilat Svislots*, 5; Sztokfisz, *Sefer Pshitik: matsevet-zikaron li-kehilah Yehudit: a matseyve far a Yidisher kehile*, 1.

[527] As discussed in chapter 5. See for example in Lederhandler, "Be-tzel ha-Shoah: ha-shoah be-einei ha-tzibur ha-americani veha-yehudi ha-americani be-shenot ha-hamishim veha-shishim", 454–455; Allen Mintz, "Me-shtika le-havlata: ha-Shoah ba-tarbut ha-americanit", ibid., 474–475; Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood*; Zerubavel, "The Death of Memory and the Memory of Death: Masada and the Holocaust as Historical Metaphors".

A Mention to Those who were not Mentioned

Rivka Parciak has argued that "the others", as she calls them – men and women who were marginalized for different reasons – are presented in an exceedingly negative light in Yizkor books.[528] Her conclusion is rooted in the theoretical idea that regardless of who they were, "the others" were always presented in the texts in a negative light.[529] This section examines how different groups, including those Parciak labelled "others", are presented in the editorials and in individual entries. I argue that Parciak's claim is incorrect, and that all groups are presented in a positive way in a vast majority of of both the editorials and the contributions by individual authors.

Yizkor books are full of examples of positive portrayals of people with very low social status, including women. The book on Tomaszow Lubelski (now in eastern Poland), for example, contains a four-page story about Nachum the Blind, a man who slept in the street and barked like a dog, but who is said to have been loved by his community, while many other people of higher social status are given a single paragraph. He was said to have provided an important service; he had an extraordinary memory for important dates and times for which the townsfolk paid him, as a sort of *tzedaka* (charity). According to the story, an SS soldier murdered Nachum and he died with a prayer on his lips.[530] According to the authors, Nachum was not only as important as anyone else in the community, but also died a martyr by his own actions (the prayer) rather than the circumstances of his death – a Jew killed during the Holocaust. As is demonstrated below, this moving story is one example of many included in Yizkor books. The author clearly cares about Nachum, first and foremost by taking the time to write four pages, but also stylistically – the text paints a vivid and affectionate portrait of him.

Nachum the Blind belonged to the lowest social strata; he was a homeless person and had no money or influence. Nonetheless, he had four pages written in loving memory of him, and the editor apparently found him important enough to include such a long text. The publishers and editors of the book on Tomaszow Lubelski are not alone in taking such a position. The contribution

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[528] Parciak, "The Others in Yizker Books", 223, 225–227, 231.

[529] This also takes us back to Robert Rozett's criticism of historical research using non-historical methods (in Parciak's case, sociological theories used to analyse the books as works of fiction) and Alon Confino's criticism of the field of Memory Studies, see: Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method". Rozett, *Approaching the Holocaust: Texts and Contexts*, 93–124.

[530] Lerer, Gordon, and Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron shel Tomaszow-Lub*, 476–479.

is emblematic of the kind of affectionate, nostalgic story found in Yizkor books.[531] The book on Lipkany, for example, contains an entire section on "Characters, types and figures",[532] which includes texts about a wide range of men and women, from a rabbi to a teacher, a butcher and a woman named "Rivka'le di meshugene" (little Rivka the mad), all of whom are given their own text and presented in a positive manner. In the introduction to the Jozefow (Poland) Yizkor book, the book committee explicitly states that the book will include everyone, "be it the wagon owner, be it the craftsman, and so with the rest of the townspeople, those who worked the spinning wheel, those on the farm and those in the market – all shall be remembered".[533] The 1967 book on Zolochiv (today in western Ukraine) contains a chapter called "People and characters in Zolochiv", in which forty-three texts spanning 158 pages take up around a quarter of the book.[534] The editorial in the 1975 book on Trisk (now Turiis'k in western Ukraine) has a paragraph dedicated to "…all those just men and women… who did their best".[535] Among them are three men and two women, all described as simple and poor, who helped those less fortunate than themselves by housing the homeless, loaning small sums of money and providing blankets and food in the winter. Editor Nathan Livneh, the author of that editorial, describes these mentions as "small gravestones" for those people.[536] In the editorial for the book on Zgyerz' (Poland), signed "in the name of the book committee and the editorial committee", Ze'ev Wolf Fisher writes:

> Let it be that this book would be a forever-memory for all those people who through their initiative, their courage and vision – all those honest, naive and shy, and for those *amcha*, the labouring and the simple people – that together made the diverse human mosaic of the Zgyerz' community.…[537]

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[531] Other examples: The chapter "Characters from Rovneh" in Aryeh Avatihi, *Rovneh sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Hotsa'at yalkut Vohlin, irgun yots'e Rovneh be-Yisra'el, 1956), 431–513; Geshuri and Silberberg, *Sefer Ostrovtsah*, 187–212. The section "Characters, Types and Figures" in Gershon Sapoznikow, *megiles Ger* (Buenos-Ayres: Gerer landsleit-farayn in Buenos-Ayres, 1975), 211–240. The section "From its Characters" in Sztokfisz, *Sefer Rubiz'evits', Derevnah, veha-sevivah*, 97–144.

[532] Zilberman-Silon and Berger-Tamir, *Kehilat Lipkani – sefer zikaron*, 151–188.

[533] Omer-Lemer, *Sefer Yozefof*, 12.

[534] Boneh, Karu, and Lask, *Sefer kehilat Zlots'ov*, 381–538.

[535] Livneh, *Pinkas ha-kehilah Trisk*, 8.

[536] Ibid.

[537] Sztokfisz, *Sefer Zgyerz': mazkeret nestach li-kehilah yehudit be-Polin = Sefer Zgerzsh: tsum ondenk fun a Yidisher kehile in Poylin*.

This is perhaps the most striking element of commemoration in Yizkor books. In stark contrast to earlier commemorative books ("memorbikher"), Yizkor books expanded the definition of *kaddosh* (martyr) and of *kehila kedosha* (literally, holy community) to include everyone, not just those who died *al kiddush ha-Shem*.

This translates into choices made by both editors and contributors, as is demonstrated by the example of Nachum the Blind. Editors dedicated whole sections to those who belonged to the lower echelons of society. Individual contributors sent in texts about people who in pre-Holocaust commemorations would not have been deemed worthy of such attention in a text dedicated to them. Moreover, editors actively included these people in their requests for material.[538] The idea seems to have resonated through all levels of the book production process.

The transformation of all victims into martyrs also meant that the term *kehila kedosha*, which had previously been a common synonym for "Jewish community", was altered to mean a Jewish community destroyed in the Holocaust or, in other words, a community of martyrs or a martyrized community.[539] The editorial for the 1956 book on Kurentis, Belarus, includes a paragraph that represents this idea of universal martyrdom:

> And the Jews of Kurenits also contributed, during the days of the Holocaust – to *kiddush ha-Shem* and *gevurat Israel*, which came to be in many ways: shall the girl Haya'le Susansky be forgotten, who, as she was being taken to death, on the day of the slaughter, scratched the faces of her murderers with her soft fingers, and on her grave, cursed them and prophesized that the voice of spilled blood shall scream from the earth and the day of reckoning and retribution shall indeed come. Shall the boys' actions, children of Kurenits, in the ranks of the partisans, be forgotten? Shall the cry of Leibe Matusov be forgotten? An old Jew who demanded action, who warned and even predicted day after day the bitter end and on the day of killing jumped wrapped in a *tallit* into the fire, before the bullet of the murderers hit him. And can we forget the story of the torture of Israel the butcher, a god-fearing Jew, who roamed the woods, starving, as for reasons of *kashrut* he only fed on fire-grilled potatoes, until death came and relieved him of his suffering. And last, could the story of the

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[538] Gelernt, *Pitshayever yizkor bukh*, 9; Shinar, *Loshits*, 8–9; Stein, *Sefer zikaron Borshah*, 21-23; *Hurban Volkovisk be-milhemet ha-olam ha-sheniyah, 1939–1945*, 96.

[539] See Bernshtain, .Rosen, and Sarig, *Kaminits-Podolsk ve-sevivatah*, 11; Blumental, *Aleksander (al yad Lodz')*, 10; Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Tlushtsh*, 3; Israeli and Livneh, *Pinkas ha-kehilah Aleksandria*, 7; Levin, *Sefer zikaron shel kehilat Lipnishok*; Losh, *Pinkas Belitsah*, 11–13; Omer-Lemer, *Sefer Yozefof*, 12; Moshe Sommerstein, *Sefer Zbaraz'* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Zbaraz' ṿeha-sevivah, 1983), 7.

torture and death of Feige Leah-Serle, which is reminiscent of the *aseret harugei malchut*, be forgotten? She was caught by the oppressors while living in the forest and withstood all torture, but refused to divulge from where the Jews of the forest got their food.[540]

This excerpt presents us with a selection of cases that the author considers died *al kiddush ha-Shem*. With the exception of the boys of the community, who interestingly are not mentioned by name, the other cases are all examples of non-physical, mostly passive resistance. Little Haya was probably a child, and her resistance had no effect on her murderers. Leibe Matusov warned others but it is not clear if anyone listened, and his death was through what could be considered suicide, reminiscent to some degree of the rebels of Masada who chose suicide over death by Roman hands. Israel the butcher kept kosher in the face of horrific conditions and potential starvation, and Feige Leah-Serle resisted torture – both passive responses instead of armed or physical acts of resistance. Under the above-mentioned narrow definitions in Israeli and US Holocaust cultures, none of the above-named landsleit of Kurenits were "heroes" and they should not have been individually commemorated. The author of the text is clearly speaking out against such definitions through the repeated use of the phrase "shall they be forgotten?" in different forms, while also equating their acts to *kiddush ha-Shem* and to the *aseret harugei malchut*.[541] He is clearly saying that these *are* heroes, that passive or unarmed resistance is just as worthy as active or armed resistance, and that all of these individuals, as well as many others mentioned in the book, deserve to be remembered by name, as all heroes and martyrs do. The text is not about marking these individuals as heroes and martyrs, but uses them as examples to make the argument that many other community members would be forgotten if the narrow definition of "martyr" were to be applied.

In another example, the book on Stashov (Staszow in south-eastern Poland) contains an eleven-page chapter: "A mention for those who were not mentioned", the source of the name of this dissertation, in which many people of low and high social status are each given an equal, short text. These are

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[540] Meirovitch, *Megilat Kurenits*, 9–10.

[541] Ten Jewish religious leaders from the Roman occupation of the Land of Israel period who were executed during the great rebellion and during the reign of Emperor Adrian (first and second centuries BCE) for continuing to teach the Torah and practice the Jewish Mitzvahs. The names of these leaders vary slightly between different sources. As a group, they are nonetheless considered as the highest level of martyrs and comparing one to them is a sign of great honour and respect.

individuals who no one had sent in other texts about. The short texts are on men and women – rabbis, widows, traders, shoemakers, tavern owners and many others – who form a collection of many different kinds of people that had perished in the Holocaust. What they all also have in common for the author is that they are all important enough to be mentioned, that they were all good people – there is not a single bad word said about anyone, and gender and class do not seem to matter here.[542] The title of that chapter is elucidatory, as the author clearly intends to stress the point that these individuals would otherwise not have been mentioned.

The book on Pruz'ani (today in western Belarus) and its surroundings includes an eight-page text about Doctor Olia Galdfin, a female physician, political and social activist, and Holocaust survivor,[543] who the editor refers to in his introduction as "the most impressive personality to come out of our town in the past fifty years of its existence".[544] This brings us to a bigger discussion around the concepts "Amidah", "Kiddush ha-chaim" and "Kiddush ha-Shem"[545], which are all very important concepts in Jewish thinking around the topics of martyrdom, resistance and heroism, and the discussion around which of these behaviours rewards one with the title "hero" or "martyr". I expand on this below under resistance. In the context of commemoration, it is worth noting that the position of the vast majority of Yizkor books is that these categories of response are unnecessary for an individual to be designated a martyr. There is a general lack of knowledge regarding the circumstance surrounding the death of most Holocaust victims, and therefore even performing "Amidah" is not necessary for one to be worth commemorating. No action, either passive or active, is required from any victim of the Holocaust for them to be worthy of commemoration. They are *all* worthy, no matter how they went to the slaughter.[546]

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[542] Ehrlich, *Sefer Stashov*, 406–416.

[543] Joseph Friedlaender, *Pinkas Pruz'ani veha-sevivah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Pruz'ani veha-sevivah be-Yisrael uve-Artsot ha-Berit, 1983), 278–286.

[544] Ibid., 16.

[545] Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale Nota Bene [Imprint], 2000), 119–166; Robert Rozett, "Jewish Resistance", in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). This discussion builds on Raul Hilberg's comments on the Jewish victims of the Holocaust in: Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), 1104–1118.

[546] See for example an explicit discussion on matter in, mentioning different types of heroism by book committee member Mendel Honig in: Sztokfisz, *Sefer Pshitik: matsevet-zikaron li-kehilah Yehudit: a matseyve far a Yidisher kehile*, 1–2.

Resistance

As is noted above, resistance is one of the cornerstones of Israeli and US Holocaust memory culture. It is also closely tied to martyrdom. It is not straightforward to translate this English term into Hebrew or Yiddish, where *hitnagdut* (התנגדות) has a more complex set of meanings. When examining the different behaviours described in the sources, we should first distinguish between armed and non-armed resistance. According to the books, almost everyone can be found in the category of non-armed resistance, which brings us back to martyrdom and to the history of Yizkor books. As noted in chapter 5, *Memorbikher* paid special tribute to important figures and martyrs, and "martyr" was a highly specific and narrowly defined term. In Yizkor books, armed resistance is definitely given its own place, especially in a kind of argumentative manner, through mentions of how some community members, often the young, *did* take up arms against the Nazis.[547] These statements sought to contest the assumption that the diaspora as a whole did not resist. That said, while Yizkor books generally make a special note of armed resistance, this is done concurrently with the above-mentioned commemoration of armed fighters as the equal of all other victims, as both heroes and martyrs.[548] Returning to the above excerpt from the Kurentis book, the child Haya'le ("little Haya") is mentioned side-by-side with those who joined the partisans. Her scratching and cursing as she was murdered is presented as an equal kind of resistance to taking up arms.

Here we should also introduce two other forms of resistance, or resistance-equal responses, into the discussion: *Amidah* and *Kiddush Ha-chaim*. According to the renowned Holocaust historian, Yehuda Bauer:

> [*Amidah*]… is almost impossible to translate. In this context it means literally "standing up against", but that does not capture the deeper sense of the word. When I speak of resistance, I mean Amidah, and that includes armed and unarmed actions and excludes passive resistance, although the term is almost non sequitur, because one cannot really resist passively. When one refuses to budge in the face of brutal force, one does not resist passively; one resists without using force, and that is not the same thing.[549]

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[547] See *Pinkas Ludmir*, 13; Blumental, *Sefer Mir*, 19, 24; Kaganovits, *Sefer zikaron Le-kehilat Ivyeh*, 16; Sobel, *Sefer yizkor li-kehilat Sarnaki*, 15.

[548] See *Skole* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Skole veha-sevivah be-Yisrael, 1986), introduction by Ze'ev Neugbor; Schutzman, *Sefer ha-zikaron shel kehilat Wierzbnik-Starachowice*, XIV; *Hurbn Gliniane*, 5–6.

[549] Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 120.

Amidah is indeed a complex concept. It has at least three different meanings in Hebrew that are relevant to this context. First, it could mean "standing", as in remaining upright instead of sitting or lying down. Second, it could mean "standing up", as in actively rising to your feet, perhaps in defiance of an assailant. Third, it could mean "withstanding", or the act of weathering a storm or a tragedy. Through these three meanings and symbolic actions, almost any action could potentially be included under the concept. "Withstanding" can also be a passive action. Bauer includes food smuggling in *Amidah*, or relinquishing ones food ration for another person, as well as various activities that raised morale in the ghetto or camp, and many other civilian activities, as well as armed rebellion.[550] *Amidah* then becomes an umbrella concept for nearly all Jewish activities during the Holocaust.

Sanctification of life, according to Bauer, denotes "…meaningful Jewish survival and probably includes most of the instances mentioned above [in Amidah], but not armed resistance or the use of force generally".[551] It is thus a narrower concept that comprises, together with armed resistance, the concept of *Amidah*.

A further examination of Bauer's delineation of the concepts finds that both *amidah* and sanctification of life are complex, and that both have many grey areas. They encompass different activities that help preserve the community as a whole during harsh times, but intent must also be taken into account – and that is sometimes a very difficult part of an action to evaluate. One example helps to problematize Bauer's definitions. A couple is getting married in the ghetto and the Rabbi conducts the ceremony free of charge as a service to his community. His actions thus count as *amidah* as they contribute to the mental (and perhaps also physical) well-being of the ghetto community; but what about the couple? We do not know what they know or think about the future. If they know they will die soon, and they are explicitly holding the wedding to cheer up others, then this is *amidah* – but what if they think they will survive? In hindsight, they were wrong, but they could not have known this at the time. What if they are getting married just because it makes them happy and do not care how others feel about it? Should this action then be seen as negative, or not included in *amidah* or the sanctification of life? At what point do we separate individuals from their community? Should actions that benefit a part of the community be seen as benefiting the whole community as well? What if we do not know anything about their intent, but we hear from their

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[550] Ibid.
[551] Ibid.

neighbours' testimony that in their opinion the couple were terrible people? How can an individual point of view be taken into account?

Returning to the description of Israel, the butcher from Kurenits, who refused to eat anything not Kosher and died of starvation in the woods. Who was he opposing through his actions? By keeping his faith, he died from starvation while trying to escape the Germans. Is this somehow better than eating non-Kosher food and surviving? Under which of the previously discussed categories should we place his actions? Moreover, one of the most important halakhic principles in Judaism is *piku'ach nefesh dokhe shabat* (In Hebrew: פיקוח נפש דוחה שבת), which means that one is allowed to not keep the Sabbath in order to save a life, and therefore any other mitzvah that is less important. Keeping the Sabbath is the fourth commandment, and therefore supersedes all Jewish mitzvahs except the first three commandments, all of which deal with belief in God and worship. *piku'ach nefesh dokhe shabat* has traditionally been interpreted as specifically related to saving a Jew from death or conversion. Therefore, according to halakhic law, which Israel the Butcher was undoubtedly at least familiar with as part of his job and role in the community, he was allowed to eat non-kosher food or do almost anything else to survive except lose his belief in God or worship other gods. He nonetheless chose, according to the author, to die the horrible death of starvation. This is similar to the case of the rebels in Masada, who chose death by their own hands over death by the hands of their oppressors. Suicide is a sin and forbidden in Judaism; it is not even allowed in this case as the *piku'ach nefesh dokhe shabat* principle supersedes it. Why not attempt to survive then? His death obviously had no impact on the Germans. Nor did it help anyone else. In a similar fashion to the rebels of Masada, however, the author presents Israel's decision to die as an act of resistance, of martyrdom, and not as a sin.

Two further examples of problematic areas come to mind when discussing these concepts. First, children – especially babies – are unable to actively resist. Until a certain age, young children may sometimes survive, but lack the capacity to do so actively and without help from their environment. Babies cannot do anything in this context. The Holocaust, unlike previous events, included a massive death toll of children and babies. Should they be counted as unworthy of mention because they did not actively resist?

Second, the members of the *Judenräte*, as well as other Jewish institutions forcibly appointed by the Germans or used by the Germans to further their extermination efforts. How can we evaluate certain actions that they took? If they sent 1000 children to their deaths, but did so in the hope that it would

save the rest of the ghetto inhabitants, how do we judge this action or evaluate it morally? The intention was to help; the result the opposite. Looking at Bauer's definitions, under which category does it fall? Israeli Holocaust memory culture has generally regarded members of the *Judenräte* as traitors to the Jewish people.[552] In most Yizkor books, however, they are included in the "martyr" category without exception.[553] Often this is not even mentioned as a controversial issue.

Bauer's is not the only definition of these concepts. However, the definitions themselves are not the point here, but the complexity of the concepts. These vague definitions are what the Yizkor books must contend with and resolve in the simplest of ways, by including everyone in the same, highest category, regardless of the circumstances of their life or death, beyond that their deaths occurred during the Holocaust. The 1961 book on Kaluszyn exemplifies this approach. The publishers' preface states:

> We must learn a lesson from every failure and mistake from those chaotic days, to never be tempted into collaboration with cruel rulers under the illusion that this is supposedly for the greater good of the Jewish people, and be prepared for the only honourable solution: resistance and heroism.[554]

At this point, it seems that the authors are accusing the people of Kaluszyn of surrendering and failing to take up arms, echoing the usual "lambs to the slaughter" charge. However, the following paragraph tells a different story:

> It should be told in favour of the Jews of Kaluszyn that for a long time, until the final hour of annihilation, they struggled united, supporting each other, for their existence, and those of them who, under tragic circumstances, were fated to lead the public – Moshe Kiszlinitzki and Abraham Gamzo, *zichronam li-vracha* – were both murdered by the Nazi rulers because they would not follow the decree to send many Jews to slave labour and destruction.[555]

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[552] Michman, "Jewish Leadership in Extremis"; Trunk, *Judenrat: the Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation*; Yablonka, "The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Israel: The Nuremberg, Kapos, Kastner, and Eichmann Trials". As discussed in chapter 5.

[553] See for example mentions: Ganuzovits, Lando, and Manor, *Sefer Lida*, 10; *Hurbn Gliniane*, Editorial titled "Three Years of Nazi Rule in Gliniany"; Tash, *Kehilat Semyatitsh*, 16; Yosef Zelkovitsh, Avraham Kahlshiner, and Yehoshuʻa Aibeshits, *Virushov – sefer yizkor* (Tel Aviv: h. mo. l., 1970), editorial titled "the gravestone".

[554] Arie Shamri, *Sefer Kaluszyn* (Israel: Kaluszyner landsmanshaftn in Amerike, Argentine Frankraykh un andere lender, 1961), 11.

[555] Ibid.

Thus, while the authors mention resistance and heroism, terms strongly connected with armed resistance, they go on to praise the Jews of Kaluszyn for their *amidah* and passive resistance, mutual support and refusal to follow German orders. Thus, they use the highest term of commemoration, but in fact include the entire Jewish community in it without exception. Even the leaders forced to deal with the German authorities were deemed worthy of commemoration as martyrs, even though they did not take up arms. Furthermore, the next paragraph lists those worthy of commemoration, noting that all types of people deserve to be forever honoured.[556]

According to the vast majority of the producers of the books, the answers to the questions regarding the understanding of resistance and who should be considered worthy of individual commemoration provided by the wider public and the state memory culture in Israel and the US were wrong. The answer to all of these questions, as well as any other examples of grey areas, was simple: Everyone from the chairman of the *Judenrat* to the last baby had become a martyr. They had all been cleansed of sin and made pure by the wider circumstances of their death. Going back to the example of the couple getting married in the ghetto, the answer, according to the Yizkor books authors, would be that none of the circumstances of their actions mattered. They became martyrs when they were killed, regardless of how they lived their lives before, how they faced death or what they thought their chances of survival were. The discussions around the different concepts, the answers to the questions mentioned above, and the categories related to and derived from those answers are important to understand as the backdrop to the points made in Yizkor books, and for scholars, even today, to understand the uniqueness of the position presented by the authors on these matters.

Many editors explicitly mention these preconditions for the complete martyrdom of the Jews, and some also expand on them by explicitly stating that the Yizkor book is not the place to settle scores or pass judgement on the actions of others, as the Jews of the diaspora were mostly unable to resist, due to their lack of training and resources, the might of the German army and their allies,[557] the general hostility of most non-Jewish neighbours,[558] and the antisemitism of many resistance organizations, who refused to accept Jews

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[556] Ibid.

[557] Alexandroni, *Kehilat Augustow*, 12. See also: Brodski, *Sefer Pruszkow*, 14; Tash, *Kehilat Semyatitsh*, 15–16.

[558] See Me'ir Aibshits, *Kehilat Bacau* (Tel-Aviv: Hasofrim, 1990), 9; Mazor and Fuks, *Sefer Baltsi Basarabia*, 12; Lerer, Gordon, and Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron shel Tomaszow-Lub*, 15; Poran, *Sefer ha-zikaron le kehilat Yurburg-Lita*, 5.

into their ranks or protect them in any way.[559] In the editorial for the 1965 Smorgon Yizkor book, the authors strongly underscore these notions by referring to the Holocaust period as "another planet",[560] echoing the testimony of author and Holocaust survivor Yehihel De-Nur (known by his pen name K. Tzetnik) in the Eichmann trial, in which he noted about his writings that "this is a chronicle from the planet Auschwitz".[561]

This martyrdom extended to all Jews and thus nullified the pre-existing rivalries between different towns, regions and so on, such as the well-known animosity between Polish and Lithuanian Jews. These rivalries and the different negative stereotypes attached to them are almost completely absent from the texts. Instead, many editorials include positive words about the town without saying anything about other places; and the larger community, up to the level of European or world Jewry, is also sometimes mentioned in memorial texts and prayers.[562]

There was one notable exception to this view on resistance. In his foreword to the Yizkor book on Svintzian and its surroundings, editor Shimon Kanc writes:

> And if your son were to ask you: how did it happen that a whole people went like lambs to the slaughter? Answer him: The opposite is true, open this book and read in it, the people of the Svintzian region fought a war of bravery. The heroes of Svintzian, Novo- Svintizian, Koltinian, Ingelina and Haydutsishok received glory and admiration for their heroism in the partisan brigades, in the Lithuanian brigade and the rest of the Soviet fighting units; Read in it descriptions of battles, ambushes, blowing up the enemy's main traffic routes and strategic sites, besieging and hunting down the Germans, revenge operations on collaborators and murderers of Jews.

> Let it be that this book shines a light on the historic past of the Jewish Svintzian area, on the turns of its economic, religious, public and national life, which has brought back to us that which is dearest to any people – our self-respect.[563]

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[559] See Feldenkreiz-Grinbal, *Et azkara*, 10; *Pinkas Ludmir*, 13.

[560] Gordin, *Smorgon – sefer edut ve-zikaron*, 3.

[561] The Trial of Adolf Eichmann, Session 68, 7 June 196. https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn1001698

[562] See Bilavski, *Sefer yizkor li-kedoshe 'ir Pashyatsh: korbanot ha-sho'ah*, 8; Fleischmann, *"Nitzotzot" me-kehilat Siksa ve-machoz Abauj Torna she-nadamu*, ז; *Shorashim shelanu*, 4 vols., vol. 2 (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Hrubieszow be-Israel, 1992), 141.

[563] Shimon Kanc, *Svintizian Region – Yizkor Book in Memory of Twenty Three Jewish Communities* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yotz'e ezor Sventzian b'Israel, 1965), 18.

This text is particularly interesting for two reasons: First, it is the only claim I have found that a whole region resisted. Many editors certainly mention resistance where it happened, but nothing even comes close to the extent described in the quote. Second, the author of this text makes the claim that the rest of the diaspora *did* go "like lambs to the slaughter", that the diaspora lost its self-respect as a result, and that the resistance of the "Jewish Svintzian area" was the only act that brought it back. Kanc not only grossly exaggerates the armed resistance of the Jews of his region, but also claims that the actions (or lack of) by the Jews in all other areas of the diaspora were disgraceful. Kanc at the very least ignores cases of resistance such as the well-known Warsaw ghetto uprising. There are other editorials in which the authors mention that their community or region were "morally superior" or resisted more compared to others, but not to this extent.[564] In other editorials, the prevalent point of view is that resistance was notable, but by no means affected the martyrdom of others who did not take up arms. Kanc took an opposing position that strongly echoed the predominant Israeli attitude to the diaspora, while at the same time completely exempting his own communities from it.

Politics

This section examines references to general political organizations, movements, groups and parties, as well as to youth organizations.[565] The latter were almost always political in nature in the pre-Holocaust Jewish world. Youth organizations were very popular and highly involved in general political, social and cultural issues and activities in the community.[566] Most of the editorials specifically mention youth organizations separately from other political organizations.[567]

With regard to politics, the analysis of the editorials found a generally skewed picture. First, it seems clear that communism as a political movement in Jewish pre-Holocaust Europe was something that many editors did not want to mention or even acknowledge the existence of. Many editorials, when introducing the community in overview, note that it contained a variety of political currents, and sometimes even that they were those normally present

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[564] See Zelkovitsh, Kahlshiner, and Aibeshits, *Virushov – sefer yizkor*, ha-matseva.

[565] In Hebrew, the word for youth organization is tenu'at no'ar (תנועת נוער) meaning "youth movement", however, since these were in fact organizations and not a movement, I use the term "youth organization".

[566] Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P, 1983), 48–49.

[567] See Brodski, *Sefer Pruszkow*, 13–14; Shlomo Bachrach, *Sefer zikaron, kehilat Proshnits* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Proshnits be-Yisrael, 1974 (inferred)), 5–6; Ben-Shem and Gelber, *Z'olkiv*, 16.

in the Jewish world.[568] However, even this kind of phrasing most often omits communism and the authors present only the various Zionist movements and organizations, as well as the Bund, the secular socialist Jewish party in Poland, Lithuania and Russia.[569] However, the Bund is not always mentioned by name, but instead appears under the wider tag of "non-Zionist" or "anti-Zionist".[570]

Where the letters sent out to the community requesting contributions for the publication process are reproduced in the books, they often present the political movements using the phrase "from Zionists (or in some cases "from Beitar")[571] to the Bund", the latter being the representatives of the non-Zionist side of the Jewish political spectrum.[572] This means that the parties to the left of the Bund, the communists, are left out, and this was probably not a mistake. Even though communism was outlawed in parts of Eastern Europe in the interwar period, including in Poland,[573] it continued to exist as a movement and, through different organizations, was certainly also present in Jewish communities prior to the Holocaust. Nonetheless, communism had become unacceptable in Yizkor books and in some books even the Bund was omitted. For example, in their letter to community members asking for material, Yehudah Lundner and Kalman Barkai, members of the Dombrovah Gurnits'eh Yizkor book publishing committee, specifically asked for material about "Zionist parties up to the Bund",[574] thereby ignoring anything to the left of the Bund. They also requested information on "all Zionist youth organizations",[575] thereby implicitly informing community members that they were not interested in texts on communist or socialist youth organizations, since the Bund was usually regarded as non-Zionist. None of the editorials displays an unequivocally positive attitude to the communists and their organizations, but some authors included them when listing the political movements in the community or displayed a more neutral position.[576]

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[568] For instance: Fraind, *Seyfer Zloczew*, 8; *Le-zecher kedoshey Wielun*, 5–7.

[569] Nora Levin, *Jewish Socialist Movements, 1871–1917: While Messiah Tarried* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 261–279, 301–320.

[570] See Heller, *Sefer Lukow*, 10; Shraga Yeshurun, *Gurah Humorah* (Israel: Ha-amutah le-hantsahat kehilat Gurah Humorah veha-sevivah, 1992), 11; *Le-zecher kedoshey Wielun*, 6.

[571] The far-right Jewish youth organization, founded by Ze'ev Jabotinsky. In this context, *Beitar* signified the right-most marker of those organizations under the "Zionist" tag.

[572] See Adini, *Zikaron le-kehilat Bihavah*, 13–14.

[573] Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*, 15.

[574] Gelbart, *Sefer kehilat yehude Dombrovah Gurnits'eh ve-hurbanah*, Letter to the community, second page.

[575] Ibid.

[576] See Mosheh Derug and Nachman Tamir, *Ratnah* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Ratnah be-Yisrael, 1983), 7.

Overall, political entities of different kinds were always included as important parts of Jewish life, commonly with a separate mention for youth organizations. The general political atmosphere in the Jewish community was commonly referred to as lively and vibrant.[577] This was probably not an exaggeration, as politics in general, but especially revolving around Zionist issues (including anti-Zionism), were hot topics in pre-1939 Jewish society, in the diaspora as well as in Palestine. The increased popularity of Zionism in combination with an increase in antisemitism in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s contributed to a highly energetic debate on all political issues.[578] This is evident from the Yizkor books, as political matters take up several paragraphs in the letters sent out through, for example, separate mentions of individuals, organizations, parties and youth organizations from different parts of the political spectrum, with additional specific references to Zionist ones. These ideas about the centrality of politics and political discourse in the community are also given numerous explicit mentions in the editorials.[579]

The second aspect of the skewed picture is the clear exaggeration of the place and significance of Zionism in relation to other political ideas. One of the editorials in the Yizkor book on Ḳamenits de-Liṭa, Zasṭavyah and their surroundings[580] contains this paragraph as part of a memorial page structured similarly to the Yizkor prayer:

> We shall not forget the youth organizations, who in spite of the ideological and political disagreements between them, were loyal sons to their people who aspired to emigrate to Israel, to take part in its building and secure its independence.[581]

[577] See Adini, *Zikaron le-kehilat Bihavah*, 13; Shemu'el Aizenshṭadṭ and Mendl Gelbarṭ, *Sefer yizkor li-kehilot Kamenits de-Lita, Zastavyah veha-kolonyot* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Kamenits de- Lita ve-Zastavyah be-Yisrael uve-Artsot-ha-Berit, 1970), 11; Alexandroni, *Kehilat Augustow*, 12; Bachrach, *Sefer zikaron, kehilat Proshnits*, 3–4; Stein, *Pinkas Bendin*, 6; *Kartuz-Berezeh – sefer zikaron le-ayaratenu*, 7.

[578] Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*, 81–82, 107–112, 189–192, 227–229.

[579] See Blumental, *Aleksander (al yad Lodz')*, 9–10; Chrust, *Kaidan – sefer zikaron*, 7–8; Derug and Tamir, *Ratnah*, 7; Ben-Shem and Gelber, *Z'olkiv*, 11–12; Geshuri, *Sefer Sosnovits veha-sevivah be-Zaglembiyah*, 9; Heller, *Sefer Lukow*, 10; Rubin, *Belz, sefer zikaron*, 13–14; Yitshak Zigelman, *Turkah: sefer zikaron* (Hefah: Irgun yots'e Turkah, 1966), 7; *Le-zecher kedoshey Wielun*, 6.

[580] Called "colonies" (קולוניות) in the title of the book.

[581] Aizenshtadt and Gelbarṭ, *Sefer yizkor li-kehilot Kamenits de-Lita, Zastavyah veha-kolonyot*, 11.

The text then makes a claim similar to the above-mentioned Dombrovah Gurnits'eh Yizkor book, that all youth in the town, regardless of ideology, were in essence Zionists and aspired to emigrate to Palestine. This is a radical and erroneous claim. It is simply impossible that the Bundists and communists of that area were also avid Zionists. One of the key ideas of the Bund was limited Jewish autonomy wherever Jews resided, while communists were not interested in any differentiation based on religion or nationalism. This particular editorial is signed by the landsleit committee of the communities in Israel and the US, that is, in the US case by landsleit of the communities claiming that their younger generation were all Zionist, while at the same time apparently not being Zionist enough themselves to move to Israel.

There is another example in the 1977 Klosovah (today Klesiv in northern Ukraine) Yizkor book, in which editor Haim Dan stresses that the purpose of the book is to commemorate how Zionist the town was. Moreover, Dan claims that the role of Zionism, specifically *ha-halutz*, in Polish Jewry had been "intentionally ignored"[582] by some writers, and he now aimed to correct that wrong. Indeed, the introduction to this particular book exclusively traces developments in the history of the town related to Zionism.[583]

Overall, while politics are truthfully represented as a central area of pre-Holocaust life in the diaspora, it is also clear that, generally, Yizkor books stress the place of Zionism in the communities while at the same time ignoring or understating the place of non-Zionist movements.

How can we explain the inclusion of socialist ideas, sometimes even listing them as Zionist, alongside the negative attitude to and sometimes obliteration of communism? One possible explanation is that Bundism, as well as other Jewish socialist movements, aspired to an autonomous Jewish existence, similar in some ways to Zionism, while communism sought to abolish national identities. Thus, in this matter, Zionists could find common ground for communication with non-Zionist socialists, but not with communists. Moreover, socialist movements and organizations constituted a significant part of the Zionist movement. A second possible explanation is that in the post-Holocaust, post-founding of Israel period, the argument by communism that Jews could assimilate with all other people and live among them peacefully probably seemed absurd. Moreover, communist ideas were hard to reconcile with the existence of the State of Israel, which was exceptionally significant in the vast majority of Yizkor books, especially after the Holocaust,

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[582] Ḥayim Dan and Aryeh Fyalḵov, *Sefer Klosovah* (Lohame ha-geta'ot: The Yitzhak Katzenelson Beit Lohame ha-geta'ot, 1978), 14.
[583] Ibid., 13–15.

and these communist positions on nationhood could not be tolerated by many publishers and editors. A third possible explanation is that the escalation of the Cold War, and the suffering of Jews living (and essentially trapped) in the Eastern Bloc, especially in Poland (until 1968) and the Soviet Union, led many Jews in Israel and the US to have negative attitudes to communism. We should also take into account the regional history of the community in relation to communism. Most communities were found in Eastern Europe, in areas liberated and then occupied by the Red Army. Some regions, such as Bessarabia, were occupied by the Soviet Union as part of its expansion before and during the early years of World War II (taken from Romania in the case of Bessarabia). Their hostility towards the Soviet Union and communism was due, at least in part, to the oppression they suffered from the Soviet authorities, as Jews and sometimes as Zionists. I expand on this point in chapter 9.

It is not surprising to see politics represented as one of the central areas of Jewish life in the diaspora before the Holocaust. With Zionism becoming such an important issue before the Holocaust, and retroactively being assigned even more significance after the founding of the State of Israel, politics, including both Zionist and non-Zionist ideas, took centre stage in Jewish life as it is presented in the editorials. However, as we have seen, the picture for different political ideas and their place in the community was often skewed, Zionism was presented as more significant than it was, and communism as far less significant.

The exaggerated significance of Zionism could also be related to the effect of the Holocaust on European Jewry. Many Zionists emigrated from Europe before the Holocaust, while Bundists and communists did not. Thus, the Holocaust probably destroyed Eastern European Jewish socialist and communist movements, while Zionism survived outside of it. Thus, the majority of landsleit who were alive to participate in the publication process were probably Zionists, at least to some degree.

These ideas about the place of Zionism also connect with the Zionist dismissal of diaspora life, as is shown in chapters 5 and 7. This reimagining of the diaspora as a hotbed of mostly Zionist ideas was part of the historical foundation of the myth that saw the diaspora merely as a precursor to the State of Israel, and the Holocaust as a means to an end – that Holocaust victims died as part of the struggle for the foundation of Israel. This connection is strengthened when we see that, in some books, Holocaust victims are presented side-by-side with landsleit who died in the wars of Israel. This point is elaborated on below and in chapter 9.

Ethnicity

This section deals with ethnicity in the Jewish context, that is, the differences between Jewish groups, an issue that has generally been central to Jewish life. These differences are seen within Judaism as an issue of ethnicity, although the term "ethnicity" is not used as such, but more commonly replaced with "origin" (in Hebrew: motsa, מוצא). Origin also affects, and is related to, religious, as well as cultural domains of life. The different groups within the Orthodox denomination are entirely based on geography. Orthodoxy dominated among observant Jews in both Europe and Israel during the Holocaust period.[584] Within the Orthodox denomination, there are noticeable differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews, for example, in the way some prayers are ordered or how some religious traditions are interpreted. (Ashkenazi interpretations of these traditions tend generally to be stricter.) There are also differences between different sub-groups within Ashkenazi and Sephardic Judaism. Most synagogues in Israel, for example, belong to a specific sub-group,[585] and conduct services and prayers as is traditional within that sub-group. Thus, the vast majority of Yizkor books commemorate Ashkenazi communities, the exceptions being the few books published for Sephardic communities in Greece, Macedonia and Bulgaria.

The most notorious rivalry between two Jewish ethnic groups in the pre-Holocaust period was between the Polish and Lithuanian Jews. Leading up to the Holocaust, this had been a bitter rivalry. However, these inter-group differences within European Jewry were formally disposed of in Yizkor books. While there is still a notable pride in one's own group, no more insults are directed at other Jewish groups. This change is likely to be connected to three contributing factors.

First, the Holocaust was the fate of all European Jews, Ashkenazi and Sephardic. The Nazis aimed to destroy all Jews, with no regard for internal differentiation, and this shared fate created a closeness among the different groups. This is especially true for Polish and Lithuanian Jews, as well as Romanian Jews outside of Bucharest. All three groups saw the complete ruin of their communities.[586] This joint fate brought groups together and eliminated old rivalries.

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[584] Safran, "The Jewish Diaspora in a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective".

[585] This could be a state or a large area within the state with its own traditions, such as Tripoli in Libya.

[586] This is partially true for Romanian Jewry. The Jews of Bucharest mostly survived the Holocaust, while the rest of Romanian Jewry was destroyed. Jean Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust in Romania* (Lincoln; Jerusalem; University of Nebraska Press, 2011); Radu

Second, the above-mentioned idea that all Jews became martyrs by the circumstances of their death, regardless of how they acted in life, also played a role. This idea includes *all* Holocaust victims, and all those "other" Jews who were the target of ridicule and contempt now became martyrs as well, and thus could no longer be criticized or ridiculed as before.[587]

Finally, the common idea that the books are no place for criticism or settling scores, and the editorial practices that emanated from this idea led to the omission of any such texts from the published books.[588] These ideas were expanded beyond the framework of the commemorated communities into the wider Jewish world. This is of course strongly connected to the previous point regarding universal martyrdom.

Jews and Gentiles

Naturally, Jewish-gentile relations have been an important issue in the post-Holocaust Jewish world when discussing day-to-day relations prior to the Holocaust, and the events of the Holocaust, as the lives of diaspora Jews were constantly intertwined with their non-Jewish neighbours.

Theological differences are rarely discussed in the editorials. It is well known that for many Eastern European Jews, "Christian" was the one of the worst insults a Jew could use about someone, especially a fellow Jew. Most Jews came into daily contact with the *goyim*, however, and religious differences were a non-issue in most matters, with a number of exceptions that I discuss in this section.

In most of the European countries whose former communities generated Yizkor books, antisemitism was a constant part of life. There was always at least some measure of negative sentiment expressed by gentiles towards their Jewish neighbours. While most Yizkor books suggest that this sentiment did not usually result in violence, in some cases the antisemitism was said to be severe. The book on Antopal, Poland, mentions that the Jews had lived "in a

Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania: The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu Regime, 1940–1944* (Chicago, Ill.: Ivan R. Dee, 2000).

[587] This is demonstrated in some memorial pages that mention all Jewish victims and not just from their own community: Moisheh Grosman, *Yizkor-buch Sokoly* (Tel-Aviv 1962), 2; Shimon Kanc, *Vlodavah veha-sevivah Sobibor* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Vlodavah veha-sevivah be-Yiśra'el, 1974 (inferred)), 10; Talmi, *Kehilat Sherpts sefer zikaron*, ה.

[588] Omer-Lemer, *Sefer Yozefof*, 12; Shuval, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Shebreshin*, 13; Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Zborov*, 9.

sea of goyim arelim[589]… in the midst of a mass of clumsy sons of Ham, stupid in heart and soul, sunk in ignorance, faces disgusting and unholy, mouths filthy…".[590] The book on Wielun, also in Poland, mentions several serious attacks during the 1910s – a Jewish family burned alive and another attack on Jews on a market day.[591] Most books, however, maintain the above-mentioned view that antisemitism was constant but not severe, and remained a sentiment that was not translated into actions.[592] Generally speaking, in states such as Poland and Romania, Jews were allowed to live their lives and to keep their own religious laws and holidays.

Things were somewhat different in Western Europe. Jews were more assimilated, less religious and overall not as separated from the general population as a group as they were in the East. Antisemitism obviously existed, but was far less likely after the mid-19th century to manifest as significant, organized, systematic physical violence until the Nazis rose to power.[593]

The strongest expression of pre-Holocaust Jewish sentiment towards gentiles in Yizkor books is the intense feeling of betrayal by the *goyim*. After the war, many Jews felt that their neighbours, most notably the Poles, Ukrainians, Romanians and Croats, had betrayed them, and that their actions during the Holocaust were even worse because of the previous relationships of peaceful coexistence. This sentiment speaks volumes as to how Jews perceived life before the Holocaust. Life overall was good and relations with the gentiles were positive, even though those same gentiles were generally

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[589] In Hebrew, "arelim", ערלים , means both "uncircumcised" and "evil", and the author explicitly notes that both meanings were intended.

[590] Levin, *Antopal*, 3. This book was published in Israel but antisemitism in Poland had reached its peak in the years this book was produced, which undoubtedly affected the author. It is also interesting to note that the author calls the poles "sons of Ham" as commonly white Europeans were seen as the sons of Yeffet, and Ham was seen as the ancestor of black people.

[591] *Le-zecher kedoshey Wielun*, 5. See also in: Brodski, *Sefer Pruszkow*, 14.

[592] See for example, in Poland: Bachrach, *Sefer zikaron, kehilat Proshnits*, 5–6; Meir Shim'on Geshuri, *Sefer Turbin* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Turbin be-Yiśra'el, 1967 (inferred)), 10; Sztokfisz, *Sefer Pshitik: matsevet-zikaron li-kehilah Yehudit: a matseyve far a Yidisher kehile*, 2; Ephraim Zoref, *Gal'ed le-kehilat Racionz* (Tel-Aviv: ha-Irgun shel oley Racionz, 1964–65), 2–3. In Romania: Aibshits, *Kehilat Bacau*, 9. In Hungary: Aharoni, *Toldot kehilat Rakoshpalotah*, 7; Gonda, *Me'ah shanah li-yehudey Debretsen*, 8; Jehuda-Gyula Lang, *Sefer Zikaron Papa* (Tel-Aviv: Izráelben élő Pápai Zsidók Emlékbizottsága, 1972–1974 (approximate)), ו.

[593] Jeffrey Veidlinger, *In the Midst of Civilized Europe: The Pogroms of 1918–1921 and the Onset of the Holocaust*, First ed. (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2021), 307–376.

antisemitic; that is, that from the Jewish point of view there had always been a component of duplicity or hypocrisy in Jewish-gentile relations. As a result, many Jews expressed a stronger hatred and resentment towards those non-Germans who cooperated with the Nazis, than for Germans. These sentiments were strengthened after the Holocaust, when local populations, especially in Poland, remained hostile, and sometimes violent, towards the Jews,[594] In the Polish case, as mentioned above, this experience led to the abandonment of the Polish language by Polish Jews in Yizkor books.

The 1972 Tomaszow Lubelski book editorial, "Thanks", illustrates this point, arguing that the non-Jewish neighbours "rewarded evil in return for good", that the Poles attacked not only the living, but also the dead, the graveyards and the gravestones, finishing with the words: "Therefore this book will serve as a gravestone and a forever memorial to our dearest who are buried in the earth of Poland and desecrated by its children".[595] As with other books for communities in post-WWII Poland, we should remember that the violence of segments of the Polish population against Jews after Poland was liberated, the general antisemitic atmosphere that continued and the 1968 antisemitic campaign and forced emigration of the remnants of Polish Jewry all undoubtedly affected the way the pre-Holocaust and Holocaust periods were viewed and presented in Yizkor books, especially in those published after 1968.

Thus, the general position regarding Jewish-gentile relations in Yizkor books is that life overall before the Holocaust was fine or even good. At the same time, however, the gentiles harboured antisemitic sentiments that, in the case of ordinary people, did not manifest as actions before the Holocaust period. There were, however, regional differences. Polish Jews exhibited a strong sense of betrayal by their former neighbours,[596] a reaction most likely enhanced by Polish actions during and after the German occupation period. We can find similar feelings in editorials from other Jewries,[597] such as Lithuanian[598] and Romanian[599] Jews. As previously discussed, these feelings affected editorial decisions concerning language, resulting in Polish not being used in Yizkor

[594] Jan T. Gross, *Fear – Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpertation* (University Presses Of Californ, 2006), 31–117.

[595] Lerer, Gordon, and Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron shel Tomaszow-Lub*, 15.

[596] Cohen and Trus, *Braynsk sefer ha-zikaron*, 11; Schutzman, *Czestochow*, 24; Shayari, *Sefer Busk*, 8.

[597] We can find similar sentiments in a book commemorating a Slovakian community: A. and Y., *Ner tamid le-zecher yahadut Ipolysag veha-sevivah*, 4, 9.

[598] See Alperowitz, *Sefer Telz (Lita)*, 9; Poran, *Sefer ha-zikaron le kehilat Yurburg-Lita*, 5–6.

[599] See Camil and Shertser, *Sho'at yehudey tzfon Bukowina*, 26; Mazor and Fuks, *Sefer Baltsi Basarabia*, 12.

books whereas Hungarian was. Hungarian Jews exhibited a more positive attitude to their neighbours and state, which is reflected in the language used. That said, Hungarian Yizkor books mention antisemitic sentiment being expressed by the gentiles before and after the Holocaust.[600] We can find similar sentiments in Sephardic communities.[601] This is consistent with the idea of a Jewish "history of suffering", which connects the Holocaust to the continuous antisemitism of gentiles throughout time, as well as to the dismissive Zionist view of the *galut*. Zionists generally assumed that the governments of the various states and local leaderships had always been antisemitic, and that their laws and decisions were often based on antisemitic motives.

Significant Memory Events

This section seeks to answer two questions: how the books relate to events presented in previous research as significant to Holocaust memory culture in Israel and the US; and which events are brought up in the editorials as significant from the point of view of the authors. According to Rüsen, these are the events or crises that created interest and generated the need in people to orientate themselves in the present world. As discussed in chapter 4, these events caused a shift in the public perception of the world (the bottom half of the model), which meant that previous narrations of the past were questioned. Rüsen calls these shifts "crises". Some crises can be understood using existing forms of representation. The Six-day war was this kind of crisis. Other crises require a change in the forms of representation in order to be interpreted and understood. The Eichmann trial is an example of such an event. Before the trial, the idea that the victims and survivors of the Holocaust were weak and went "like lambs to the slaughter" dominated Israeli collective memory of the Holocaust, whereas the people of the *Yishuv* were strong and would have resisted. These ideas were challenged. More specifically, the trial demonstrated how difficult existence was during the Holocaust, how harsh conditions in the camps and ghettos had been, and how difficult, or nearly impossible, Jewish resistance was. The Eichmann trial thus questioned the previous narrative about the Holocaust and its role in Jewish identity, and brought about a need for a reorientation in society. Specifically, there was a significantly stronger understanding of the conditions during the Holocaust and greater empathy for its victims and survivors. In

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[600] See examples in Aharoni, *Toldot kehilat Rakoshpalotah*, 7; Sas, *Korot yehudey machoz Zemplen*, 7; Szilagyi-Windt, *Az ujpesti zsidóság története*, 9.
[601] For example from Greece: Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*, 1, 12.

Rüsen's terminology, the Eichmann trial created a "critical" crisis as an event that did not fit the pre-existing perception of the *galut*/*Yishuv* dichotomy. It also created a need for a reorientation of Israeli collective memory about the Holocaust that would provide a meaningful basis for a renegotiation of its role and function in Israeli Jewish identity.

As we move to the "level of cognition", or the upper half of the model, this new gap between knowledge and perception in turn created a need for new explanations from history that that would eventually be integrated into a renegotiated Israeli identity as part of that collective memory. As part of the process, scholars and others began working to re-evaluate the Holocaust and its role in society, in the process producing new knowledge and in turn new representations of the past. Two changes in the form of representation strongly connected to the Eichmann trial have already been identified: the overall rise in the publication numbers of Yizkor books and the appearance of schoolchildren as a new type of publisher. Both can be attributed to a rise in the general interest in the Holocaust and in pre-Holocaust life, which led to increased participation in victim-centred commemoration efforts, including Yizkor books, and increased financial donations, which allowed many of the book publication processes that had been delayed to be brought to a conclusion.[602]

According to previous research, two events had a significant impact on Holocaust memory: the Eichmann trial and the Six-day War. These are discussed in detail because of their fundamental importance to the evolution of Holocaust memory in Israel and the US. A study of the editorials and some individual entries provides a different perspective on which events were seen as significant. The focus was on events at the local level, most notably but not exclusively the Holocaust, alongside the founding of the State of Israel, including a general understanding of the wars for Israel as a chain of events rather than a focus on a single war. This section is built around these two types of events. It starts with the events most often mentioned in previous research and moves on to a discussion of the events that the editorials themselves raise.

The Eichmann Trial

The 1961–62 Eichmann trial had an immediate and profound effect on the fields of memory and historiography of the Holocaust,[603] and also on the then fledgling

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[602] The changes in publication patterns over time and the different types of publisher have been discussed in chapter 6.

[603] Arendt and Elon, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil*; Yablonka, "The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Israel: The Nuremberg, Kapos, Kastner, and

field of International Law, specifically as it relates to Crimes against Humanity, Genocide and the relation between them, as well as the relation of both crimes to periods of peace and war.[604] Undoubtedly, the majority of the people involved in the production of Yizkor books followed the trial and were emotionally affected by it. Nonetheless, there is little mention made of the trial in the editorials.

As mentioned above, the editorial of the 1965 Smorgon Yizkor book refers to the Holocaust period as "another planet",[605] echoing the testimony in the Eichmann trial of author and Holocaust survivor Yehihel De-Nur (known prior to his testimony only as his pseudonym "K. Tzetnik") who described his writings as "a chronicle from the planet Auschwitz".[606] This shows that the trial had at least some impact in this context. In the 1966 book on Kaluszyn, the publishers refer to Germans as "the Hitlers and the Eichmanns".[607] The former was a common synonym for Germans, but the latter was an uncommon addition. This addition clearly became part of Holocaust terminology as a result of the trial.

Chapter 6 discusses the Yizkor books published by schoolchildren. Some of these mention that they were primarily the result of the work or inspired by Gideon Hausner, the former chief prosecutor in the Eichmann trial, and a member of the Knesset (MK) in 1965–1974 and 1977–1981. Hausner initiated and held large conferences in Jerusalem, where he spoke to youth from all over Israel about the importance of Holocaust commemoration. In his introduction to the 1971 schoolchildren-published book on Skalat in Galicia (today in Ukraine), Dr Baruch Ben-Yehuda recalls being at one of these conferences organized by Hausner. He mentions that the children were silent, fascinated by Hausner, listening to his every word.[608] He also noted:

> …Gideon Hausner, who in his opening speech for the Eichmann trial infected all of the people of Israel and of the entire world with the feelings of the six million souls who are floating in our world, demanding justice and reward for the evil done, also made the truth in his heart into an educational force.[609]

Eichmann Trials"; "The Eichmann Trial: Was it the Jewish Nuremburg?", *Loyola of Los Angeles International & Comparative Law Review* 34, no. 3 (2012).

[604] William Schabas, "The Contribution of the Eichmann Trial to International Law", *Leiden Journal of International Law* 26, no. 3 (2013).

[605] Gordin, *Smorgon – sefer edut ve-zikaron*, 3.

[606] The Trial of Adolf Eichmann, Session 68, 7 June 1961 – https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn1001698

[607] Shamri, *Sefer Kaluszyn*.

[608] Bronshtain, *Skalat*.

[609] Ibid., 11.

Although Hausner was not mentioned in all the schoolchildren's books, his impact and the impact of the trial is implied by the time of publication of these books. Publication began around 1965 and as a class or school project, the books had a very short publication process compared to books produced by other types of publishers. In another schoolchildren's book, on the Latvian community of Dvinsk, the class teacher notes in her introduction that the project of commemorating the holy communities (she was clearly referring to books collated by schoolchildren) began in the Jewish year 5,724 (התשכ"ד).[610] Every Jewish year is split between two years in the Gregorian calendar, and 5,724 is split between 1963 and 1964. The project probably began close to the start of the school year and obviously after *Rosh ha-Shana* of the year 5,724, which are very close in date. Tishrei, the first month in the Jewish calendar, always falls in September or October. The whole project of schools commemorating destroyed communities therefore started in 1964, according to the teacher.

The publication of the schoolchildren's Yizkor books is thus in line with the period of the Eichmann trial and Hausner following up on the effect of the trial, using his new role as a member of the Knesset[611] to promote Holocaust commemoration in Israel. This is one clear effect of the trial – a new type of publisher, schoolchildren, stepping in to fill the void in Yizkor book publications. Ideally, their books were aimed at communities that did not have enough people to produce a book on their own. However, in reality this was unlikely to be the case, as the initial criterion for schoolchildren publications was arbitrary, such as a personal contact with someone from the commemorated community, in order to be able to quickly and effectively complete the project.[612]

The lack of mentions of the Eichmann trial may seem odd at first, but is in fact in line with the Holocaust memory culture expressed in Yizkor books. The Eichmann trial had, as indicated above, a considerable effect on Holocaust memory culture in Israel and the US (as well as other parts of the world) and brought the individual survivors and their experiences, as well as the inability of those who were not there to comprehend the Holocaust, to the forefront.[613]

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[610] Amarant, *Le-zekher kehilat Dvinsk*.

[611] At least for the majority of the period; he probably began before he became an MK.

[612] See Bronshtain, *Skalat*. The school principle was a landsman of the community. Hagar Parnas, *Sopotskin: toldot imuts 'ayarah ahat* (Kiryat-Yam: Bet ha-sefer ha-tikhon ha-makif Rodman, 1973). The mother of the class teacher was born in the town; Rimon, *Yahadut Tarnov ve-irgune ha-no'ar*, The family of the student who worked on the book is from the community.

[613] Arendt and Elon, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil*; Yablonka, "The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Israel: The Nuremberg, Kapos, Kastner, and Eichmann Trials", 15–22; "The Eichmann Trial: Was it the Jewish Nuremburg?".

The trial thus somewhat dispelled the idea that Holocaust survivors did not want to speak of their experiences, when in fact they had shared their experiences and spoken about the Holocaust before the trial, especially but not exclusively in Jewish circles, but had mostly been ignored by the majority in the societies in which they lived.[614] As is stressed throughout this dissertation, Yizkor books have given survivors and victims their place centre stage since the very first publications, as they have always been based mainly on survivor and eyewitness accounts and not on perpetrator documents. Yizkor books were already part of the above-mentioned Holocaust survivor activities before the Eichmann trial, activities mostly ignored by the general public. Thus, from the perspective of the type and content of memory, Yizkor books would not have changed their position towards survivors following the trial. It was the public perception of the Holocaust that changed not the understanding of it among those who were already remembering and commemorating it by placing the individual survivors and victims at the centre.

Returning to Rüsen's model, we can now see how it works for different groups in society. The model fits the changes that took place in the public understanding of the Holocaust in Israel and the US. One result of those changes was an increase in overall participation in commemoration efforts and in donations sent in to support those projects, including Yizkor books. This resulted in new types of publishers appearing and in an overall increase in publications. Thus, a change in the representation of the Holocaust took place, as the victims and their life before the Holocaust became more prominent in the memory of the Holocaust. However, in the case of the people already involved in the production of Yizkor books, the trial did not have a significant effect. This is reflected in the relatively minor changes to the content of the editorials and of the individual entries. (I return to the latter in chapter 9.) In other words, the perception of the above-mentioned relation between the *Yishuv* and *galut* did not change for the small group already involved in producing Yizkor books, and thus their representation of the Holocaust and pre-Holocaust periods did not change.

The Six-day War
The Six-day war was fought on 5–10 June 1967 between Israel on one side and Egypt, Jordan and Syria (with some support from several other Arab states) on the other. The war ended in a resounding defeat for the former,

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[614] Diner, "The Myth of Silence"; *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945–1962*, 1.

resulting in Israel taking over territories from all three neighbours.[615] Israel's victory over the far larger armies of the three states has been identified in previous research as a turning point in the way Jews in Israel and around the world, most notably the US, viewed themselves and the state of Israel. Jews were transformed from Holocaust victims to warriors and winners.[616] One might expect to see an attitude change in Yizkor book editorials, or at least a mention of an event that had such a profound effect on the Jewish world. The Six-day war was not a singular event in the same way as the Eichmann trial. It is often analysed as such in the literature and, at that moment in time following June 1967, it was indeed seen as a grand and glorious moment – the triumph of the "Warrior Jew" over its enemies, with Egypt even seen as the mythical Amalek. At that moment, it seemed that, in stark contrast to the Holocaust, the people of Israel had crushed Amalek in a resounding fashion.

However, this pride did not last long in Israel. Just six years later, Israel was almost defeated by its enemies in the 1973 Yom-Kippur war against Egypt and Syria. Israel's defences proved utterly ineffective, and the Israeli military was caught completely off-guard and unprepared. Israel survived to win the war through a combination of luck, individual heroic actions and a large US support effort, but suffered a relatively large number of casualties. The Yom-Kippur war is often mentioned in Israeli memory culture as a traumatic point in history. Around and between the two wars, when the vast majority of Yizkor books were published, Israel fought several more wars of different kinds: the long war of independence, 30 November 1947 to 20 July 1949; the 1956 Sinai war, the Suez crisis; the 1967–1970 War of Attrition between Israel and Egypt; and the 1982 First Lebanon War, Operation Shlom ha-Galil.[617]

In sum, the Six-day war was not a single event. It might well be that for US Jews, who did not live through the Yom-Kippur war, the Six-day war had a more lasting effect. For Israelis, however, all of the pride gained in 1967 was wiped away by 1973. While it was a significant historical event, it caused, in Rüsen's terms, a normal crisis – that is, it could be understood and analysed

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[615] Most notably: The Sinai Peninsula (returned to Egypt in the 1978 peace agreements) and the Gaza Strip from Egypt in the south, today's east Jerusalem, as well the Jordan Valley and the areas of Judah and Samaria, from Jordan in the east, and the area known today as "the Israeli Golan Heights" from Syria in the north.

[616] Goldstein, "The Six Day War: The War that no One Wanted"; Navon, "'We are a People, One People': How 1967 Transformed Holocaust Memory and Jewish Identity in Israel and the US: We are a People, One People".

[617] The war itself ended in September 1982. Israel's presence in Southern Lebanon and constant war of attrition with the terror organizations there lasted until the year 2000.

using existing forms of representation. The gap between the Jews' (especially US Jews') perception of themselves as weak due to the Holocaust and the resounding victory in the Six-day war could be understood through the prism of the pre-existing idea of a history of suffering and the eternal struggle between Israel and Amalek. In any case, the effects of the victory on the Israeli Jewish population had largely vanished and confidence levels returned to their pre-1967 state as a result of the events of 1973. Israel was once again seen as vulnerable. Indeed, the Yom-Kippur war is often seen as a loss in Israel, despite its actual result. When examining Yizkor books, with their long production processes, the Six-day war should be seen as a link in a chain of wars, and its perception by the publishers and editors as affected by those other wars, as well as the Holocaust.

In Yizkor books, Israel's wars are generally mentioned in separate sections dedicated to those landsleit who died in the service of the State of Israel.[618] When a version of the Yizkor prayer is included in the book, it is common for it to mention those who died in the wars for Israel alongside victims of the Holocaust. The 1973 book on Ryki, for example, includes this kind of prayer. It mentions nine points or things to remember, each beginning with the word "nizkor" (we shall remember, נזכור). Seven of them are dedicated to the Holocaust and two to post-1948 Israel. One mentions those who fell in the 1948, 1956 and 1967 wars. The fallen soldiers are not as important as the Holocaust in the context of the book. They are given one point compared to six, but they are still included in the same general category of "those who in their death commanded us to live" (In Hebrew: במותם ציוו לנו את החיים),[619] a common phrase used in the context of Holocaust commemoration in Israel that connects the Holocaust, the death of the diaspora, to the founding (and in some contexts, the resurrection) of the State of Israel. The three wars for Israel are mentioned side by side, with no particular mention of the 1967 victory as being more significant than the others. [620]

There is another example in the introduction to the 1971 book on Pultusk, in which Ya'akov Nechushtan, chair of the publishing committee, calls the book a monument also "to the memory of young warriors, descendants of Pultusk or sons of the descendants of Pultusk, who sacrificed their lives to achieve the independence of Israel in our country and who fell in battle in the

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[618] See Sztokfisz, *Sefer Demblin-Modz'its*, 287–300; *Sefer Rubiz'evits', Derevnah, veha-sevivah*, 145–148; Weiner, *Hayo hayta ayarat Svir*, 95–123.

[619] Shimon Kanc, *Sefer Riki* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Riki be-Yisrael, 1973), 5.

[620] Ibid.

wars for its security".[621] This was published before the Yom-Kippur war, but in spite of that does not include any specific reference to the Six-day war. Rather, Nechushtan mentions the war for Israel in general.

As the production period for Yizkor books was generally quite long, and usually took at least two to three years to complete, we should not expect to find a change in books published prior to 1969–1970. In one case, in the editorial for the 1970 Kazimierz Yizkor book, the author Shimon Shlaferman-Halmish writes that his text was signed in "Tel-Aviv, June 1970, on the third anniversary of the Six-day war".[622] Beyond that mention, however, the editorial makes no other reference to events that happened after the Holocaust, and the book does not include a section about landsleit who died in the service of Israel. The introduction to the 1992 Yizkor book on Gura Humorah in Romania states:

> This memorial book is the result of a joint effort of the descendants of the town of Gura Humorah and its surroundings, who wanted to commemorate in this way the memory of the community and to establish a memorial to its sons and daughters who died in the Holocaust, as well as to those who fell in the wars of Israel.[623]

This is another example, albeit from a book published later than most, of the view of the Holocaust as a part of a longer process of Jews dying because they are Jews, which makes the victims of the Holocaust similar to those who died in the wars for Israel. It is important to note that, while all of Israel's wars prior to the first Lebanon war also had considerable civilian casualties, the book on Gura Humorah, as well as other Yizkor books, specifically commemorates only those landsleit who died as soldiers, while the victims of the Holocaust are commemorated regardless of the particular circumstances of their death. This is a significant difference between the two commemorations. Generally speaking, the only post-Holocaust dead worthy of individual commemoration in text are soldiers, following the common definition of heroism. This does not affect the position of the same books on Holocaust victims, who are still all mentioned as martyrs and heroes, even though the vast majority did not take up arms or fight. Even when landsleit

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[621] Ivri, *Pultusk*, 7.

[622] David Sztokfisz, *Sefer yizkor kehilat Kuzmir d'Lublin* (Tel-Aviv: Irgune yots'e Kuzmir bi-medinat Yisrael uva-tefutsot, 1970), 6.

[623] Yeshurun, *Gurah Humorah*, 11.

who died in Israel are mentioned, they are not given the same significance as the victims of the Holocaust.

The peak period of Yizkor book publication (see table 6,5) lasted until 1975, and the Six-day war probably contributed to that peak. Overall, financial support from US Jews to Israel increased as a result of the 1967 victory, and this would have affected Yizkor book publication as well. That said, no noticeable general changes were found in the content of the editorials as result of the Six-day war victory. To take the preface to the 1988 Yizkor book on Kaszony (today Kosyno in western Ukraine) as an example,[624] the book was published in the US, which means that it might be more likely to exhibit a change of attitude as result of the Six-day war, and have a lower chance that this change might be offset by the Yom-Kippur trauma compared to the editorials of books published in Israel. However, it shows stark similarities in style and content to the editorials of older books, published both in the US and in Israel. We find similar results in the editorials of other US-published books.[625] Their introductions may as well have been written 20 or 30 years earlier.

One possible explanation for this could be the source material. This thesis is focused on editorials and, overall, they did not change much, content wise, over the years. It is possible, although unlikely given the results of the study of thirty books presented in chapter 9, that a focus on the individual contributions would have yielded somewhat different results, as the contributors were not as aware of the traditions of Yizkor book publication as the editors and publishers. It seems clear from references in the editorials that most publishers and editors had a strong idea of what was supposed to be included in a Yizkor book, and what they should discuss in an editorial. There are exceptions to this with regard to content, but there is clearly at least an understanding of what was expected. Naturally, the fact that there was a central group of professional Yizkor book editors, most notably David Sztokfisz, contributed to this relative uniformity.

Another possible explanation is that since the idea of the victorious Jew beating Amalek was an important part of the same Zionist worldview that dismissed the significance of the diaspora, it would have probably had a limited effect on the Yizkor book producers. Although strongly Zionist in their attitude to the State of Israel, as the next section shows, the publishers and

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[624] Joseph Eden, *The Jews of Kaszony, Subcarpathia* (Great Neck, NY: J. Eden, 1988), V.

[625] See Cohen, *Zvoliner yizker bukh*, 3–11; Grussgott, *Be-ovdan moladeti*, 6; Saul Miller, *Dobromil* (New York: Loewenthal Press, 1980), 1–2; Rozman, *Sefer shefer harare kedem*, 1, 9–16; Center et al., *Der Bialystoker yizker bukh*, V–VI, IX–X.

editors generally resisted other aspects of Zionist thinking on the diaspora, and were therefore less likely to be as affected by the Six-day war than other groups.

Returning once again back to Rüsen's model, we can see another event that had a significant impact on one group (world Jewry) and caused a shift in its view of its place in the world (from eternal victims to winners), which resulted in certain changes, such as increased contributions from US Jewry to Israel. In the Israeli context, however, this effect was short-lived and the wars that followed had a larger impact on the public. In the US, the effect of the Six-day war was more noticeable and longer lasting. However, when we focus on Yizkor books and on the people who produced them, we can see that none of the wars had any significant effect.

Which Events do the Editorials Mention?

One group of events commonly mentioned in Yizkor book editorials are those directly related to the community and that took place at the local level. The founding of the town is one example, in cases where the Jewish population had something to do with it, for instance if the town was founded through a charter given to the Jews. In other cases, the first arrival of Jews in the town is noted.[626] In the majority of cases, this is based only on archival sources or general knowledge, unless the community was exceptionally young. Other significant events are linked to Jewish life in the town, such as the building of the community synagogue, the founding of an important organization or the life of a significant religious figure, such as a noted Rabbi, as well as cases of violence by gentiles against Jews before the Holocaust.[627] Finally, events and dates related to the Holocaust are always noted. They usually begin with the date the Germans invaded the town, followed by information on whether the area was occupied by German forces.[628] The establishment of the local ghetto and significant German actions,[629] decrees and acts of violence by local

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[626] See Losh, *Sefer-yizkor li-kehilat Radomsk veha-sevivah*, 5; Mazor and Fuks, *Sefer Baltsi Basarabia*, 11–12; Rubin, *Belz, sefer zikaron*, 13–14; Schutzman, *Czestochow*, 27; Taffet, *Zaglada Zydow zolkiewskich*, 15; *Saloniki – Ir va-em be-israel*, Editorial.

[627] See Chrust, *Kaidan – sefer zikaron*, 7; Levin, *Ozarkov*, 7–8; Losh, *Sefer-yizkor li-kehilat Radomsk veha-sevivah*, 5; Meirovitch, *Megilat Kurenits*; *Le-zecher kedoshey Wielun*, 5-7.

[628] See Blum, Vagshal, and Vainfeld-Samu'el, *Ayaratenu Baitsh*, 12; Fraind, *Seyfer Zloczew*, 7. Rarely, we can also find accounts of Soviet occupation during the early Holocaust period: Alperowitz, *Sefer Telz (Lita)*, 8.

[629] German actions See Blum, Vagshal, and Vainfeld-Samu'el, *Ayaratenu Baitsh*, 12-13; Alperowitz, *Sefer Telz (Lita)*, 9; Naphtali Lau-Lavie and Ya'akov Maltz, *Pyotrkov*

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authorities are duly noted.[630] The enumeration ends with the day the community was destroyed (sometimes noted as its "day of death" or "day of passing"), usually the date of the final action or the liquidation of the ghetto, when the last group of Jews was murdered or sent on to a death camp. If a Jewish holiday, mainly *Pesach* or *Yom Kippur*, fell in close proximity to these events, it would usually be specifically mentioned. The community's day of passing is commonly used for later commemorative activities by the relevant landsleit or other organizations, and has thus become significant for the publication process of the Yizkor book. Many publication processes are said to have begun at such annual meetings, based around a memorial for the community.[631] Many editorials also note the community's date of death as the day the book was formally published or at least mention the time that has passed since "that day".[632] This day therefore has a great deal of significance – it is both the day of the community's death, and at the same time the day the new or resurrected community gathers to commemorate the deceased. It also becomes the starting point for the publication process of the Yizkor book, and sometimes also the end date of the process, a highly significant act of commemoration and many times one of the pillars on which the new community is based.

On the day of death of the community, it is interesting to note two editorials in books about Bulgarian Jewry. Bulgarian Jews are primarily Sephardic and were the community in Eastern and south-eastern Europe least affected by the Holocaust. Bulgaria was the only "non-Aryan" ally of Nazi Germany that was not forced to hand over its Jews (as opposed to the Jews in Bulgarian-occupied Macedonia). The very fact that Bulgarian Jewry, which was not destroyed by the Nazis, has had Yizkor books published for its communities is in itself fascinating. The introduction to the 1967 Yizkor book for Bulgarian Jewry (published in cooperation with Yad Vashem as part of the "Encyclopedia of Diasporas" series) notes that "with the mass-migration of Bulgarian Jewry to

Tribunalski veha-sevivah: sefer zikaron (Tel-Aviv: h. mo. l., 1965), 22; Naftali Stern, *Zachor et Satmar* (Bene Barak 1984), 13; Talmi, *Kehilat Sherpts sefer zikaron*, 15.

[630] This is discussed in this chapter in the "Jews and Gentiles" section.

[631] See Gonda, *Me'ah shanah li-yehudey Debretsen*, 9; Klepner, *Zikhronotai me-Banfi-Hunyad*, 20; Kressel, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilot Radihov, Lopatin, Vitkov Novi, Holoyov, Toporov, Stanislavtshik, Staromiletsh, Shtrovits*, 1–2; Omer-Lemer, *Sefer Yozefof*, 11; *Turek – sefer zikaron*, 7.

[632] See Alperowitz, *Sefer Telz (Lita)*, 8; Ayalon, *Sefer zikaron Tutshin-Kripah*, 14; Blumental, *Aleksander (al yad Lodz')*, 10; Grussgott, *Be-ovdan moladeti*, 6; Idan, *Sefer zikaron David-Horodok*, 5; Igeret, *Sekuryan – be-beinyana uve-hurbana*, 6; Meiri, *Kehilat Wieliczka – Sefer Zikaron*, 7; *Hurbn Gliniane*, 6; Sofer, *Mazkeret Paks*, 1, 8.

Israel… ended the chronicles of the community". In the 2002 book on Ruse on the Bulgarian-Romanian border, the editor refers to the Bulgarian diaspora in his introduction as "willingly exterminated",[633] and states that it was "…exterminated… during the Holocaust period, Nazi rule and the communist rule which followed".[634] In both cases the authors make a comparison between the physical destruction of other Jewish communities in the Holocaust and Bulgarian Jews choosing to emigrate to Israel after its founding in 1948. This comparison is made through the kind of publication in which these texts appear – a Yizkor book rather than a regular history book about Bulgarian Jewry. In the case of the 2002 Ruse book, this is also done through use of the term "extermination", the term commonly used to describe the Nazi genocide of the rest of European Jewry, instead of other terms unconnected with the Holocaust.

Bulgarian Jews, moreover, were not only described as victims of the Holocaust, but also as belonging to the strong Jews of Israel and not the weak Jews of the diaspora. The 1967 foreword also states that "the chosen of Bulgarian Jewry…fought and acted in all periods… for the public and for national resurrection of this Jewish diaspora". This text describes Bulgarian Jews as warriors who fought for Zionism, not as the weak lambs of the rest of the diaspora, even though Bulgarian Jews did not need to fight during the Holocaust and were saved thanks to their gentile compatriots. The specific context of Bulgarian Jewry's survival during the Holocaust is not mentioned in either editorial.

Events that happened after the "passing" of the community, such as the day of liberation of the hometown or region or the end of the Second World War, are not commonly mentioned in editorials, but sometimes in the individual accounts of the Holocaust period included in the book as part of the experiences of an individual witness. The liberation of a camp or area is not noted in the context of the community, as those days happened after the community had died, but before the reincarnation of the community through landsleit organizations and commemoration. Thus, the liberation of the community's landsleit from a camp is not part of the history of the community itself.

Cases of resistance were also not commonly mentioned in the editorials by way of a specific date. Acts of resistance were usually individual and therefore mentioned in the individual entries, or noted as general statements, as

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[633] Dagan and Kobo, *The Jews of Ruschuk, Bulgaria*, Introduction.
[634] Ibid.

demonstrated above. There was usually no specific date given in the editorials for either type of resistance, a choice that makes sense in the context of universal martyrdom.

The Founding of the State of Israel

The founding of Israel in 1948, alongside the general idea of its existence as a Jewish state, is by a wide margin the most common event mentioned in the editorials. As shown in chapter 7, the founding, and thus the existence, of the State of Israel was strongly connected to the Holocaust in the editorials. All the books published after 1948 mention this in some form or another. One idea previously noted is that the existence of the diaspora was a precursor to the State of Israel. The Jews of the diaspora tried to live among the gentiles but, ultimately, gentile hatred of them prevailed. The diaspora was wrong to trust the gentiles and it paid a heavy price for its naivety. A far less common but more radical development of this idea was that the diaspora sinned by trusting the gentiles, that it was the diaspora Jews' own fault, and that they deserved the Holocaust. According to this view, the Holocaust paved the way for the creation of Israel, a state of strong Jews who do not trust the gentiles and who possess the military prowess to stop another attack by Amalek.[635] From a meta-historical point of view, this translates to a view of diaspora life as largely meaningless, except insofar as it led to the founding of Israel. This idea, while rare in Yizkor books, is more common in general Holocaust memory culture in Israel. It has also been strengthened by Israel's victories in its wars with its neighbours. According to this thinking, the diaspora has no place in the history of Jewish armed resistance and heroism.[636]

Israel as a safe haven for Jews became a much more attractive idea after the Holocaust, even for Jews who were not avid Zionists prior to 1939. Socialists and even communists were among those who emigrated to Israel on its founding. We have already discussed the exaggerated place accorded to Zionism in the community by Yizkor books. While the books present a very different memory culture to the predominant Israeli and US cultures, they are at the same time supportive of Zionism. It is important to note that in this

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[635] On Amalek see: Kugler, "Metaphysical Hatred and Sacred Genocide: The Questionable Role of Amalek in Biblical Literature", 1–3; Langner, "Remembering Amalek Twice". See examples from editorials regarding Israel as the answer to the Holocaust: Alexandroni, *Kehilat Augustow*, 12; Amitay, *Rohatin*, 8; Slutsky, *Babruisk*, 11; Levita, *Sefer zikaron kehilat Breziv (Bz'ozuv)*, 2; Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*, 1, יב.

[636] Ofer, "50 Shanim shel siach israeli al ha-Shoah: me'afyenim ve-dilemot"; Tossavainen, "Heroes and victims: the Holocaust in Israeli Historical Consciousness"; Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood*.

context we are discussing "classic" Zionism, that is, the idea that Jews as a people deserve a territory of their own, in the vein of common European nationalism, and not the later development of far-right ideas in Zionism. Socialists were the dominant political force in the Zionist movement until the 21st century.

It is no surprise then that all the Yizkor books published after the late 1940s mention the founding and existence of the State of Israel as the most important event of the period after the Holocaust. This could be as a direct mention of the founding as a noteworthy event,[637] or by making a direct connection between the Holocaust and the founding of Israel. These connections are meta-historical in nature, and most do not claim – either explicitly or implicitly – that the diaspora somehow deserved its fate. It is most commonly discussed that Israel is the answer to the tragedy that befell the diaspora and a safeguard against the Holocaust ever happening again, but not that the diaspora had to be sacrificed in order for this to happen.[638] A chain of historical events took place leading to the establishment of the State of Israel, and one of the tragedies of the Holocaust victims is sometimes said to be that they did not get to witness the founding of Israel themselves, something they all, according to most editorials, dreamed of and hoped for their entire lives and for the entire existence of the *galut*.[639]

That said, the majority of Yizkor books, by definition, do not adhere to the idea that the diaspora was just a precursor. In fact, he opposite is true. They maintain the significance and place of Israel in the history of the Jewish people, while at the same time stressing how special, beautiful, lively and worth remembering and commemorating the diaspora was. As chapter 7 shows, common reasons for publishing Yizkor books are, in some form or another, that the life of the town, and not just its death, are worth remembering and passing on. Almost all the editorials stress that the town was a very positive place in many ways, and that the blame for the Holocaust rests with the gentiles alone.

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[637] Founding of Israel See Shaiak, *Lovitsh*, Introduction by G. Sharak; Sobel, *Sefer yizkor li-kehilat Sarnaki*, 15.

[638] See Shuval, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Shebreshin*, 11, 13–14; Slutsky, *Babruisk*, Foreword by Kaddish Luz; Rimon, *Yahadut Tarnov ve-irgune ha-noʻar*, 3; Szilagyi-Windt, *Az ujpesti zsidóság története*, 6.

[639] The dead did not witness Israel references, See Schutzman, *Sefer ha-zikaron shel kehilat Wierzbnik-Starachowice*, XVI.

The Holocaust was the End,
not the Meaning, of Diaspora Jewish Life

What then, according to the editorials, is said to be the place and significance of the Holocaust in Jewish history; and how does it compare to other events? As noted above, the common Zionist view of history was dismissive of the diaspora and the *galut* period. The idea of history as suffering and a constant struggle with Amalek highlights events regarded as exemplary acts of resistance. These included rebellions against occupying forces, such as the so-called Greeks; the Seleucid rulers of the Land of Israel during the 2nd century BCE, in particular Antiochus IV Epiphanes (the Maccabean Revolt, 177–170 BCE), but also the Romans; the Sicarii stand on Masada (74–77 CE); and the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–136 CE). The significance of the Holocaust in the predominantly Zionist Holocaust memory culture was that it was the end of the diaspora and proved Zionist positions on the diaspora to be correct. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the common phrase "be-motam tzivu lanu et ha-chaim"[640] (במותם ציוו לנו את החיים), the state of Israel came to be seen as the natural continuation of Jewish life. Just like a person who has faced a personal loss should grieve and move on, so should the Jewish people. Israel is the good that came out of the loss.

During the Holocaust, it is clear that many Jews did not see the genocide as the end of all things. This is reflected in the various non-armed attempts at survival and resistance (*amidah*), such as maintaining mutual aid, political and cultural activities and other actions aimed at prolonging the life of the ghettos in the hope of a German defeat. Generally, the Holocaust at the time was regarded as another pogrom; by far the worst one to date, but nonetheless one that would eventually come to an end. This thinking has been mentioned as the reason for the lack of armed resistance,[641] on the one hand, and the cooperation of the *Judenräte* with the German authorities, on the other.[642] A quote from the foreword to the 1961 Biala Podolska Yizkor book, signed by "the publishers", is a good example of this point of view:

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[640] Meaning: "In their death they gave us life", or: "in their death, they commanded us to live".

[641] Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*.

[642] Dan Diner, "Why the Jewish Councils Cooperated", in *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, ed. Donald L. Niewyk (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath, 2011); Michman, "Jewish Leadership in Extremis"; Isaiah Trunk, "Why the Jewish Councils Cooperated", in *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, ed. Donald L. Niewyk (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 2003).

> Two events in our generation shocked and changed Jewish history to its foundation – the ruin of the Jewish diaspora in the countries of Europe and the renewal of the political life of the nation in the land of the fathers.[643]

From the religious perspective, the end of days, according to common Jewish belief, would begin after the arrival of the Messiah. After the end of days, the just Jews would be left standing, the dead who were judged to be worthy by God would rise and Israel would be founded. Since, according to all groups in Judaism, the Messiah had not arrived prior to the Holocaust, there was no reason to view it as the end of days. After the end of the Holocaust and the war, this period was viewed as the end of diaspora life. The establishment of Israel became the pivotal moment between two distinct periods in Jewish history, as the centre of Jewish life in the world moved from Europe to Israel.

As mentioned in chapter 5, the Holocaust came to be regarded as a part of a chain of events in both US and Israeli Holocaust memory cultures. In the US case, it became one of a series of cases of human rights violations and universal suffering, which continued after the Holocaust. In the Israeli case, it became another instance of Amalek attacking Israel, and this time succeeding in destroying a large proportion of the Jewish people. Later on, the Arab states around Israel became a new manifestation of Amalek and the chain continued.[644] From both the US and the Israeli perspectives, then, the Holocaust was not the end, but only one link in a chain. From the European Jewish perspective, however, the Holocaust clearly marked the end of diaspora life in those areas most severely affected by the genocide. The editorial of the Yizkor book on Cakovec (today in Croatia) demonstrates the sentiment that the Holocaust had ended Jewish life in Europe as it had been:

> With the annihilation of the Cakovec community *H.Y.D.* in the Holocaust 1944, together with its thousands of sisters all over Europe, ends the "European Era" of two thousand years of Jewish History.[645]

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[643] Feigenbaum, *Sefer Biala-Podlaska*.

[644] Grossman, "Transformation through Crisis: The American Jewish Committee and the Six-Day War", 43; Navon, "'We are a People, One People': How 1967 Transformed Holocaust Memory and Jewish Identity in Israel and the US: We are a People, One People", 349-350, 356.

[645] Grünwald and Etz-Chaim, *Megilat ha-Sho'ah shel kehilat kodesh Cakovec, h.y.d.* Cakovec was in Hungarian-controlled territory. Its Jews were sent to Auschwitz in 1944 alongside Hungarian Jewry, as Hungary was forced by Germany to give up its Jews.

The founding of the State of Israel and the waves of Jewish migration added to this, as the majority of the surviving remnants of Eastern European Jewry emigrated, mainly to Israel, but also to the US and a few other places.[646]

It is clear then that Jews who were in Europe or in Palestine, as well as in any of the other Jewish centres, such as Buenos Aires, did not see the Holocaust as the "end of all things" either during the events or after them. There was a clear understanding that this was the worst attack on the Jews to date, worse than ever before. Jews coming out of the Holocaust period expressed an almost overwhelming feeling of loss in the editorials – that their families and friends, their town and their whole life had been destroyed.[647] Alongside this, there are also strong feelings of having been betrayed by neighbours and former friends, which are further strengthened by the actions of locals after the end of the Holocaust. We know today that many could not hold on to life as a result of the trauma or their loss. The State of Israel, established shortly after the Holocaust, offered the possibility of a Jewish safe haven, free from the threat of the next attack by Amalek.

Thus, the Holocaust, and the terrible destruction it wreaked on the Jewish people, communities and places of Europe, highlighted for many Jews who were not previously Zionist that such an event was possible, and the need for measures to prevent it from happening again. Many of those who died in the Holocaust were non-Zionists, those who were more likely to stay in Europe. The majority of the Jews in Israel at the time of the Holocaust, and certainly after 1948, were Zionists. These two factors led to an increase in the popularity of Zionism, which is reflected in the editorials, particularly in the elevated place Zionism is given in retrospect, and to the spread of Zionist ideas about Israel and the diaspora into non-Zionist circles. Connecting this point back to Rüsen, we can see the effect of two events – the founding of Israel, coupled with the Holocaust – on the representation of the diaspora by the authors of Yizkor books. In the editorials, there is a repeated insistence that the diaspora did not "go like lambs to the slaughter" and that *amidah* or even passive survival are worthy forms of resistance. At the same time, many Yizkor books echoed the idea that Israel is the answer to the Holocaust, but generally did so by maintaining the position that the diaspora did not sin or falter, but instead the Holocaust was entirely the fault of the gentiles – even though the Jews

[646] The founding of Israel did not just signify the end of Eastern European Jewry, but also for other groups, such as the vast majority of the large Jewish communities of North Africa and the Middle East. Jewish communities in other areas, such as in Northern and Western Europe, were less affected and many did not emigrate after the Holocaust or the foundation of Israel.

[647] The Town is gone See Slutsky, *Babruisk*, Foreword by Kaddish Luz.

were wrong to trust them. Gentiles here comprise four groups: (a) the Germans as the main perpetrators; (b) collaborator groups, usually defined on a national basis, Croats, Ukrainians, etc.; (c) local authorities, neighbours and friends, such as Hungarians and Poles who betrayed the Jews they had known for generations; and (d) the nations of the so-called enlightened world, which stood by and let the Holocaust happen – and tried to cover it up after the war.

In sum, in the editorials, the Holocaust is one of the two most significant events in Jewish history, alongside the founding of the State of Israel. It is mostly mentioned as an event preceding the State of Israel, and not as a sacrifice needed to found Israel. The Holocaust is the fault of the gentiles, as perpetrators, collaborators and bystanders. The Jews were wrong to trust the gentiles, but these mistakes do not affect the status of the victims as martyrs. Neither during nor after the Holocaust was the genocide viewed as the end of days. This is made clear by actions taken both during the Holocaust and after it. Yizkor books, for one, would not be needed after the end of days – and nor would one need to collect materials or evidence for future generations.

Conclusions

The idea that all the victims of the Holocaust were martyrs does not mean that some people were not regarded as more important by those who submitted texts. Religious figures and community leaders often received a section of their own in Yikzor books. Communists, on the other hand, were often omitted from the story of the town. At the same time, the editorials repeatedly included statements about the importance of remembering and commemorating everyone, including lower-status groups, the *amcha*. These individuals of low social standing, both men and women, are mentioned as heroes and martyrs even if they did not take up arms.

Thus, the idea of universal martyrdom is not the same as complete equality. It does mean, however, that the differences between the various groups of victims became substantially smaller in Yizkor books, compared to pre-Holocaust commemoration of the victims of disasters. If, before the Holocaust, martyr signified a small, exclusive category, and commemoration through a descriptive text was reserved for a chosen few, after the Holocaust these categories became as wide and inclusive as possible. This is another example of how the Holocaust affected the way people perceived the world and how the representation of those people's world – pre-Holocaust Europe – changed accordingly. As noted in chapter 7, this change in the representation

of the diaspora did not just affect the editorial and technical side of Yizkor books – issues such as space allocation within the book or source availability. This wider designation of "martyr" had a much wider set of effects – the commemorated victims received a Jewish burial, their relatives could mourn them and say the *Kaddish*, they would be remembered and reminisced about by the old, and their memory would be passed on to the young. These nameless, grave-less victims had become individuals, part of Jewish history as individuals, with their own life story, not just statistics. Furthermore, due to the cleansing circumstances of their death, they would be allowed to rise at the end of days, their sins in life washed away. The memory of the diaspora was changed from a precursor to the state of Israel to a meaningful part in the history of the Jewish people.

This individualization of the victims is one example of how the authors of Yizkor books sought to negate the results of the Nazi attack on the Jews. The Nazis made their Jewish victims into numbers, into piles of remains and ashes in unmarked mass graves in desecrated ground. The attack was not only on the physical aspects of Jewish life. It was also on memory. The Nazis sought to wipe away the memory of the Jews as well. Through Yizkor books, the victims were given meaning, and they received a burial. Through Yizkor books, communities were resurrected, both in the books' pages and around them. A community of landsleit came together to work on each book, and through their actions they proved the failure of the Nazi attack.

Chapter 9: "This is a Collective Work!" – Analysis of Full Books

The goal of this chapter is to examine how some of the main ideas found in the editorials are presented in the thirty books that form this part of the analysis. Smaller scale, in-depth research also provides insights into the Yizkor books. In contrast to the editorials, the main part of the text comprises of entries written by many different contributors. We have no personal details on the majority of the contributors, apart from those who are well-known public figures.[648] We do know, however, through information provided in some of the editorials that these authors came from all walks of life and all levels of society. Unlike the editors, however, the contributors were mostly not professionals in any field relevant to Yizkor books.

As is discussed above, most editorials have a format, from a style and content perspective, that was commonly used by the editors and publishers, and that changed little over the years. The texts sent in by individual contributors might be expected to exhibit significantly more variation, as most authors were probably unfamiliar with the traditional formats used by those regularly involved in Yizkor book publication, in particular some professional editors of the genre. That said, it is important to note that some texts went through an editing process before the book was published and some were also translated. Thus, the words in the Yizkor book do not always correspond exactly with the original. Since there is very little information provided on these editing processes beyond general statements that they have been carried out at some point or to some texts, it is impossible to evaluate the degree to which the majority of the texts represent the language and precise ideas of the original authors.

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[648] See for example the texts by Herut Party leader and future prime minister of Israel, landsleit Menachem Begin in: Eliezer Steinman, *Brisk Delita*, Entsiklopedyah shel galuyot (Jerusalem: Entsiklopedyah shel galuyot, 1958), 291–294.

Table 9.1. *List of Yizkor Books Analysed in Full,*
by Location of Community Today.

Book Name	Comm in	Year	Lang 1	Lang 2	Lang 3	Lang 4	Pub in	Pub	Jewry
Hurban Volkovisk	Belarus	1946	Heb				Israel	1	Polish
Vitebsk	Belarus	1957	Heb				Israel	2	Lithuanian
Brisk delita (Brest Litovsk)	Belarus	1958	Yid				Israel	2	Lithuanian
Sopotskin	Belarus	1973	Heb				Israel	4	Polish
Sefer Zikaron le-yehudey Mad	Hungary	1974	Heb		Hun	Eng	Israel	2	Hungarian
Mazkeret Paks, Volume 1	Hungary	1971/72	Heb				Israel	3	Hungarian
Toldot kehilat Rakoshpalotah	Hungary	1989/90	Heb				Israel	3	Hungarian
Vilner zamelbuch - me'asef Vilna	Lithuania	1974	Yid				Israel	2	Lithuanian
Meretsh - ayarah yehudit be-Lita	Lithuania	1988	Heb				Israel	2	Lithuanian
Ir u-shema Monastir (Bitola)	Macedonia	1972	Heb				Israel	3	Macedonian
Pirkey Besarabyah	Moldova	1952	Heb				Israel	2	Romanian
Lodzer yizkor buch	Poland	1943	Yid		Eng		USA	1	Polish
Ketz ha-Yehudim be-ma'arav Polin (Bendin)	Poland	1945	Heb			Yid	Israel	3	Polish
Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Lomza	Poland	1952	Heb				Israel	1	Polish
Kehilat Sherpts - sefer zikaron	Poland	1959	Heb	Yid			Israel	2	Polish
Memorial journal in honor of Jews from Cracow	Poland	1967	Eng				USA	2	Polish
Sefer zikaron li-kehilot Wadowice Andrychov, Kalwarja, Myslenice, Sucha	Poland	1967	Heb			Eng	Israel	2	Polish
Sefer zikaron shel Tomaszow Lub	Poland	1972	Heb	Yid			Israel	2	Polish
Kehilat Hordalah sefer zikaron	Poland	1959/60	Heb				Israel	2	Polish
Gal'ed le-kehilat Racionz	Poland	1964/65	Heb	Yid	Eng		Israel	2	Polish
Zikhron netsakh la-kehilot ha-kedoshot Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah asher nekhrevu ba-Shoah	Romania	1969	Heb				Israel	4	Hungarian
Mi-Shtefaneshti le-eretz Israel	Romania	1989	Heb				Israel	3	Romanian
Kehilat Sombor be-hurbanah	Serbia	1970	Heb				Israel	3	Serbian
Yalkut Novoselytsia	Ukraine	1963	Heb				Israel	3	Romanian
Sefer Kosov	Ukraine	1964	Heb	Yid			Israel	2	Polish
Dubno - sefer zikaron	Ukraine	1966	Heb	Yid			Israel	2	Polish
Pinkas Aleksandria - sefer yizkor	Ukraine	1972	Heb				Israel	2	Polish
Sefer Zilaron Gaboszditz veha-sevivah	Ukraine	1974	Heb	Yid			Israel	2	Polish
Akerman ve-ayarot ha-machoz	Ukraine	1983	Heb	Yid			Israel	2	Romanian
Hayta ayarah (Berestechko)	Ukraine	1960/61	Heb				Israel	2	Polish

Source: Yizkor book database.

Abbreviations:
Heb – Hebrew
Yid – Yiddish
Eng – English
Hun – Hungarian

Numerical codes:
1- Landsmanschaft
2- Other organization
3- Individual
4- Schoolchildren

Table 9.2. *Full books by type of Publisher*.

Publisher	#
Landsmanschaft	3
Other organization	18
Non-organization	7
Schoolchildren	2
Total	30

Source: Yizkor book database.

Table 9.3. *Full books by Jewry*.

Jewry	#
Hungarian	4
Lithuanian	4
Macedonian	1
Polish	16
Romanian	4
Serbian	1
Total	30

Source: Yizkor book database.

Table 9.4. *Full Books by Language*.[649]

Languages	#
Hebrew	16
Yiddish	2
English	1
Hebrew and Yiddish	6
Hebrew and Yiddish and English	1
Other combinations	4
Total	30

Source: Yizkor book database

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[649] Other combinations include one of each: Hebrew with some English, Hebrew with some Yiddish, Hebrew and Hungarian with some English, Yiddish with some English.

The selection of the thirty books done to ensure that a variety of languages and publishers, and locations of both community and publication, as well as Jewries are represented, and to achieve a roughly similar ratio to that of the books included in the full database. In line with the focus of this dissertation, the selection only includes books published in Israel and the US. Within these parameters, the books were with one exception chosen at random – the exception being the 1943 Lodz book, which was included because it is the first Yizkor book.

The selection is not as comprehensive as the analysis of the editorials, but is still likely to be representative of Yizkor books as a whole. The chapter presents an assortment of "collected memories" and provides a sample of how some of the main ideas mentioned in the editorials relate to the contributions of individual authors and editorial decisions. It is probable that an analysis of a larger number of books from the same areas would yield similar results.

Analysis

To what degree can the ideas presented in the different texts be taken at face value? In many cases, the entries were sent in by family members of the deceased. Furthermore, they often mention relatives who it is unlikely the authors would speak ill of, even in cases where those relatives were of low social standing or otherwise marginalized.

Moreover, people chose to contribute to Yizkor books. They would naturally have chosen to send in texts about someone or something that mattered to them; their subject was either something they cared about or something that someone had done that was bad enough from their point of view to be published. In the latter case, editors were unlikely to include such a contribution. People who had no personal affinity with writing would be unlikely to make an effort to submit an entry about something they did not care strongly about. These were not professionals, and it was not their "job" to write. Thus, the choices made by the contributors about which topics were important to them, alongside standard editorial practices, meant that negative texts would not make it to publication.[650]

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[650] Amitai, *Akerman ve-ayarot ha-machoz*, 389–507.This section includes many obituaries for "others", all positive.

General Comments

There is a clear difference in terminology between the editorials and the texts written by individuals who were otherwise not part of the publication process. Most contributor entries are structured as stories, and rarely include explicitly symbolic components; for example, that a certain individual's actions are representative of the Jewish people, or didactic messages such as "remember!". Instead, these stories contain much more detail, which may not be significant for a symbolic text, but seemed relevant to the non-professional writers, who in many cases were themselves witnesses to the events described in their texts.

Generally speaking, individual contributors do not discuss their personal reasons for contributing to the book. It is rare to find references to the contributors' own writing process. It is possible that some individual contributors sent in separate letters alongside their text, which discussed their reasons, but none of these were included in the books examined.

Some books had many individual contributors, while the editor and publishers authored a large proportion of others. It might be assumed that a book with more participating contributors would have a wider variety of opinions or positions, or would perhaps also approach parity between its editorials and the rest of the book, compared to a book where the editor and publisher were more involved in writing the various chapters. However, as we are missing some basic details regarding these texts, such as changes made to the language, style, and so on, we are restricted to examining and describing, rather than explaining, this aspect. As some texts also lack some or all of the identifying details about their authors, this process would at best produce a partial and difficult-to-verify result.

The books published by schoolchildren, two of which are analysed in this chapter, are an exception to the rule. The credited editors of these books were the school principals or teachers of the class that worked on the book. The editors were thus authority figures who held much more power over the contributors, mostly pupils from the class, and are likely to have exerted significantly more editorial power over the texts than was usually the case. Thus, although many pupils, who had had a significantly different experiences to the editor, contributed to the books, we should expect to find more uniformity in opinions and a significantly stronger representation of the official Israeli narrative in these books.

One issue discussed in the editorials is the status of the books as commemorative objects or, in other words, as gravestones, memorial candles, and a place to say the Kaddish. Notably, however, these aspects were almost

entirely missing from the individual entries. As noted above, individual contributions – even those written by editors – did not commonly include the authors' motives for participation unless these reasons were central to the text in question; for example, if the text concerned a deceased parent and its explicit goal was to commemorate that person. Yizkor books as commemorative objects were generally only mentioned in the commemorative sections of the books, or in the obituary section if the book had one. For example, some obituaries included comments such as "a memorial candle for our relatives – our dearest who died during the Holocaust period".[651] A commemorative page titled "Yizkor" at the beginning of the obituary section of the same book, probably written by the editor, notes that "these commemorative pages and this entire book, are a kind of gravestone for their unknown grave…"[652]. The book includes a one-page introduction, signed by the "publishing committee", which is one of the few introductions not to mention that the book also serves as a gravestone. The editor probably chose to make this point specifically for those readers who only read the obituaries – or perhaps he did not feel this was an important matter for the introduction, in contrast to what the majority of other Yizkor book editors apparently believed.

Another place where references to the books as commemorative objects can be found is in texts from commemorative meetings. The book on Berestechko includes such a text, titled "A Memorial Gravestone for the Ruined Holy Community".[653] This text, written by publishing committee member Aharon Kahana, is structured in a similar fashion to an editorial. It contains many references to Zionism in the community, and ends with a statement that the living in Israel must commemorate the martyrs by erecting a gravestone.[654] We do not know if by mentioning a gravestone, Kahana was referring to the book, to a stone memorial, to other forms of commemoration or perhaps to several of these. We know from another text in the book that the meeting in Kibbutz Yagur, where Kahana spoke, was not the one where the organization decided to publish the book.[655] His statement was therefore perhaps part of an effort to convince members of the need to publish a Yizkor book. We can find a similar statement about remembrance by the living (referring to the book) serving as a gravestone for the dead in the transcription

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[651] Ibid., 393. See also in: ibid., 480.

[652] Ibid., 385.

[653] Zinger, *Berestechko, haytah ayarah*, 337–339.

[654] Ibid., 339.

[655] Ibid., 348.

of a speech by Mordechai Kostlitch, deputy mayor of the city of Hadera, in the Halmin-Turts Yizkor book.[656] Overall, references to the books as commemorative objects are few and far between in individual contributions. This is in sharp contrast to the editorials where, as we have seen, these mentions are very common.

With regard to the command "Zachor!" and the story of Amalek, the majority of individual contributions do not engage with issues such as reasons for commemoration or the different symbolic meanings of the books. A contributor's telling of what happened, or description of an event, is rarely connected to the Jewish tradition of "Zachor", which was raised many times in the editorials. That said, remembering the community and everything that came before the Holocaust was important to all the participants, even if it was not explicitly discussed. The very fact that so many different people, many of whom were completely untrained in writing, made the effort to donate money and sources, to send in texts and later on sometimes also to purchase the books, demonstrates just how much it meant to them. Moreover, contributors often articulated the importance of remembering (in our terms, of also commemorating) the community and people, their lives and deaths, in a negative formulation. Common phrases included the rhetorical question "shall we forget?" and the famous Yiddish phrase "Nisht fargesen, nisht fargeven" (נישט פארגעסן, נישט פארגעבן), meaning "never forget, never forgive". Such phrases are strongly connected to the tradition of "ve-higadeta le-bincha" (tell your children).

This takes us back to the discussion on the difference between inductive and deductive approaches. While deductive, theory-based approaches are powerful tools for analysing general phenomena, they often miss individual reasons and motives for actions. In this case, for example, text-form commemoration is clearly a long-standing Ashkenazi tradition, and Yizkor books can and should be analysed in that context. Indeed, these traditions are often engaged with in the editorials by the publishers and editors. This does not mean, however, that every Ashkenazi individual using such forms of commemoration was strongly aware of the whole tradition or explicitly relating to it. Not every individual choice is necessarily a comment on or critique of the tradition. For example, when choosing to engage in a certain form of commemoration, many people could relate to their parents, or their immediate environment, and thus present us with a wide variety of individual

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[656] Schwartz, *Zikhron netsakh la-kehilot ha-kedoshot Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah asher nekhrevu ba-Shoah: hantsahat kehilot ha-kodesh Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah*, 11.

reasons and motivations. A grounded inductive approach to the sources allows us to see this empirical variety first, and later use theory to contextualize and compare it to other instances of commemoration.

With regard to the gender of the contributors, it is noted in chapter 6 that women made up a minority of the editors and publishers. The disparity between men and women was particularly stark with the editor position. There are only a handful of women editors credited in the books included in this research. The situation was better in the editorial committees, given that many committees had at least one or two female members, and some even more.

What is the picture when it comes to the individual contributors? If we look at the texts written by the editors, the majority of the individual entries are written by men, and some of the books contain a relatively large number of texts written by the editors themselves. However, when we consider the overall number of contributors who were not publishers or editors, there are a large number of women. As ever with names in Yizkor books, it is not always possible to discern the gender of a specific author, since Hebrew has many gender-neutral names, and in some cases first names are abbreviated to their first letter (e.g. A. Cohen in the Dubno book). Since Hebrew is a gendered language, it is possible to learn the gender of an author when that person refers to him or herself in the present tense. However, authors as a rule do not make such references, which means that female contributors can be identified only when it is possible to find the gender of the authors through their first names. When the gender of the author can be identified, we do find many female contributors. Generally speaking, both men and women participated in secular political and cultural activities in the diaspora, including youth and sports organizations, and many women therefore sent in texts on such topics.[657]

The Role of the Holocaust

As mentioned above, the Holocaust was not seen as the end of all things, but as the end of Jewish life in the diaspora. This is true of Jewish theology, as well as US and Israeli Holocaust memory cultures. According to the Zionist view of the diaspora, both in the Yishuv and later in Israel, the Holocaust was the result of the weakness and naivety of the diaspora. In some cases, the diaspora was also seen as having deserved the Holocaust, as a lesson that the Jews of the *galut* had to be taught. Yizkor books therefore contain two main perceptions of the diaspora that coexist in time and space. Both agree that the Holocaust ended

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[657] Ezra Mendelsohn, The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars (Bloomington: Indiana U.P, 1983), 48–49.

European Jewry, but not the Jewish people as a whole. I have demonstrated that the Zionist perception was that the diaspora was generally not worth remembering as anything but an arena for gentile attacks on the Jews. It is the history of suffering and nothing more. Only acts of Jewish resistance and self-defence were considered worthy of commemoration, and such acts were often incorrectly attributed to Zionists.[658] On the other side, there is the idea, demonstrated in the majority of Yizkor book editorials, that diaspora life had much more to it than just a daily struggle against antisemitism. It was a vibrant, rich life in itself worthy of commemoration. As discussed in chapter 8, the result of these two seemingly contradictory positions coming together in Yizkor books was an exaggerated portrayal of the place of Zionism in the community in retrospect, while maintaining the position that all life in the diaspora was meaningful and worthy of commemoration.

Most books have a chapter specifically dedicated to the Holocaust period. The ratio in page numbers between the section directly dealing with the Holocaust and other sections is between 1:3 and about 1:10. In other words, the Holocaust is not the main area of Jewish life in the community that the books commemorate. Most books dedicate the majority of their pages to the pre-Holocaust period. The Holocaust is of course mentioned, where relevant, in the other book sections, for example, in the sections dedicated to the "characters" of the community or in texts about social and youth organizations, but this is not always the case. The "characters" sections, for example, include many people who lived and died before the Holocaust, as well as those who emigrated from the community before 1939.

This takes us back to the analogy presented above regarding the books being memorial services for the deceased community. To expand on this a little, the original analogy was of a Christian-style memorial service, such as a wake, for a beloved person who had died a violent death. At that event, people interact with each other, often talking and reminiscing about the deceased. They might mention the circumstances of the death, but mostly people just talk about the life of the person, moments in time where they interacted with the deceased or stories they heard about them. In the Jewish

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[658] In reality, a substantial proportion of Jewish resistance was by socialists, not Zionists. Havi Dreifuss and Itamar Haritan, "The Leadership of the Jewish Combat Organization during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: A Reassessment", *Holocaust and genocide studies* 31, no. 1 (2017); Rachel L. Einwohner, "Leadership, Authority, and Collective Action: Jewish Resistance in the Ghettos of Warsaw and Vilna", *The American Behavioral Scientist* 50, no. 10 (2007); "The Need to Know: Cultured Ignorance and Jewish Resistance in the Ghettos of Warsaw, Vilna, and Łódź", *Sociological quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2009).

context, this is similar to the *shiv'a*, the seven-day period of mourning, during which the close relatives of the deceased (parents, siblings and children) "sit", usually together in one place, and receive visitors. The tradition is similar to the Christian wake, and similar conversations take place. In these situations, people do not bring up the negative sides of the person they are mourning, but nor are they lying. They are likely to omit negative details or to re-contextualize some events as more positive than they originally were. For example, a person who is very argumentative may have been perceived as annoying in his lifetime, but after death this behaviour would be described as "passionate"; someone might even say that they miss arguing with the person. A behaviour which was perceived as negative is therefore recast in a positive light. This analogy is a way to explain how the community, the beloved one who has passed, is described in the books, through the texts of individual contributors and the choices made by the editors. This is generally the way the community is discussed in the books, and how certain aspects of it are highlighted compared to others.

Political Ideas, Movements and Organizations

The political aspect of Jewish life is prominently represented in the books. Most also have a section about youth organizations, which are always associated with a specific political ideology. These findings are in line with what was previously found in the editorials, as well as in letters by editors to community members. Many of the contributors were members of the various organizations in their youth. This is reflected in the wide selection of texts about the youth of the town in general, about youth activities such as the *hachshara* – activities to prepare future emigrants for life in *Eretz Israel* – and about the organizations themselves.

Zionism is given a prominent place in the books. There are pieces about Zionist institutions such as Hebrew schools, various activities, and Zionist youth organizations from the socialist *Ha-shomer ha-tzair* to the right-wing *Beitar* and, most importantly, the *hachshara*.[659] Where personalities or characters are presented, the most common information provided about them, after the strength of their faith, is their Zionist zeal. That is not to say that every person is presented as a Zionist, but this is commonly included in the information provided, and always in a positive light.[660]

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[659] See Israeli and Livneh, *Pinkas ha-kehilah Aleksandria*, 16–19, 50–56, 67–77, 81–85.

[660] See Several texts about each of two important characters, rabbi Moshe Sternberg and teacher Shmuel Rosenhak in:ibid., 105–146.

As mentioned above, editors usually dedicated one or two chapters, or book sections, exclusively to the Holocaust period. Most of the other chapters presented different aspects of pre-Holocaust life. These pre-Holocaust chapters take up the majority of pages in most books. On the pre-Holocaust period, the most frequently discussed subject is Zionism, which was incorporated into all areas of life, such as the history of the town and community, local leaders, organizations, institutions and youth organizations, as well as sometimes one or more chapters dedicated specifically to Zionism or to Zionist aspects and members of the community. For example, the 1952, 141-page book on Bessarabia[661] begins with a large general historical section (sixty-seven pages) about the Jews of the region, which is followed by a twenty-page chapter dedicated to Zionism, "The Role of Bessarabian Jewry in the Construction of Israel". The following chapter is dedicated to the history of the city of Soroki and includes references to Zionism and sections dedicated to Jewish and Hebrew education,[662] as well as Zionist activity,[663] in the city. Next, there is a text about Yehuda Steinberg, a Hassidic man who is said to have played an important role in the development of Hebrew education in Bessarabia and later became part of an activist Zionist circle.[664] Finally, the book contains three shorter texts, two of which are dedicated to Zionist topics: "A Zionist Utopia in Kishinev" and "Marculesti competes with… Bazel".[665] The book contains only a couple of mentions of socialist- or communist-related activity, and even then only as side notes. Another interesting example is the book on Sombor,[666] a community in today's Serbia but formerly in Yugoslavia, a country with a rich socialist history. This small book (twenty-nine pages) makes no mention of socialism or communism, and its only article apart from one section each on the pre-Holocaust and Holocaust periods, is about Zionist youth organizations. Communism was outlawed in Yugoslavia in the pre-war period, but it would be reasonable to expect some mention of such activities.

There are two exceptions to this overwhelmingly pro-Zionist approach. The book on Halmin-Turts, a schoolchildren's book published by pupils in a religious/Zionist school, notes that the majority of the townsfolk rejected

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[661] Yitshak Korn and L. Kuperstein, *Pirk'e Bessarabia: me'asef la-'avarah shel yahadut Besarabyah* (Tel-Aviv: Nativ, nikhse tarbut yahadut Bessarabia, 1952). Another book with a similar ratio of political ideas: Israeli and Livneh, *Pinkas ha-kehilah Aleksandria*.

[662] Korn and Kuperstein, *Pirk'e Bessarabia: me'asef la-'avarah shel yahadut Besarabyah*, 107.

[663] Ibid., 113.

[664] Ibid., 126, 130.

[665] Ibid., 138–140.

[666] Shpitser, *Kehilat Sombor be-hurbanah: dape-zikaron li-kedoshe ha-kehila.*

Zionism.[667] The book of Paks,[668] a community in Hungary, makes no mention of Zionism (or socialism for that matter) and is completely focused on the Jewish religious aspects of the community. Both books take a position on Zionism that contradicts the position in the majority of other Yizkor books.

The book on Dubno provides, somewhat indirectly, an interesting comment about the perceived place of Zionism in the community. In a text on "Youth Organizations in Dubna",[669] A. Cohen raises *ha-koakh*.[670]

> *Ha-koakh* was part of Maccabee in Poland and therefore formally part of the Zionist movement. But it actually brought together all of the youth interested in sports of all kinds, as there was no other sports organization… ha-koakh as a sports society was really the only organized Jewish body that would take part, with its blue and white flag, in all the formal celebrations and performances in the town.[671]

These participation levels could easily be interpreted by someone else as mass participation in Zionist activities and a widespread commitment to Zionist ideas. This is an example of how the political picture of a town could easily appear vastly different than it really was, if one only looked at the membership numbers of these formally Zionist organizations. According to Cohen, however, many of the youth in *ha-koakh* were not there for Zionism, but for sports, and few were avid Zionists.

When discussing socialism, it is important to distinguish between two different ideological movements that authors refer to as "socialist". The first is the above-mentioned socialist flank of the Zionist movement. This was a dominant and popular part of the Zionist movement, which of course included youth organizations. Many of the authors belonged to this branch of Zionism. The Socialist Flank is mentioned in the same manner as other parts of Zionism – it receives a lot of attention and this attention is generally highly positive.[672] Moreover, as this was the largest and most dominant branch of the Zionist

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[667] Schwartz, *Zikhron netsakh la-kehilot ha-kedoshot Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah asher nekhrevu ba-Shoah: hantsahat kehilot ha-kodesh Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah*, 69.

[668] Sofer, *Mazkeret Paks*, 1.

[669] Dubna is the Jewish name of Dubno, and both are used by different authors in the book.

[670] Literally meaning "the strength" or "the power", a Jewish sports organization.

[671] Ya'akov Adini, *Dubno sefer zikaron* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Dubno be-Israel, 1966), 256.

[672] See Amitai, *Akerman ve-ayarot ha-machoz*, 91–93; Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha*, 106, 114–119; Steinman, *Brisk Delita*, 481–484; Talmi, *Kehilat Sherpts sefer zikaron*, 139–140; Zilber, *Sefer zikaron Gabozdzic ve-hasviva*, 73–74; Zinger, *Berestechko, haytah ayarah*, 89–95, 102–104.

movement in pre-war Eastern Europe, it receives more attention than other branches.

The other movement dubbed "socialist" by the authors was non-Zionist socialism. Most prominent in this movement was the Bund. As noted above, the Bund favoured a semi-autonomous Jewish existence in the diaspora rather than assimilation. For this reason, authors generally did not mention it in a negative context. The Bund also supported the use of Yiddish as the Jewish language rather than Hebrew, was opposed to the idea of an independent Jewish state, but was generally regarded as less dangerous than communism. For all these reasons, it seems that the Bund was perceived by the contributors as "not for us, but not against us". It therefore receives relatively few mentions in books belonging to Polish and Lithuanian Jewries, while the few comments given are generally informative and neutral in character.[673] The book on Tomaszow Lubelski, for example, contains many texts about Zionist organizations and activities, and only one single-paragraph text, albeit positive, dedicated to the Bund. None of the three books from Hungarian Jewry or territory included in this analysis[674] make any reference to socialism. The books on Mad and Rakoshpalotah make many mentions of Zionism. The Rakoshpalotah book contains several short, neutral references to communism.

I have stressed that some editors completely ignored communism and communist organizations in their editorials, and in the letters they sent to the community asking for articles and contributions. Communism was undoubtedly a constant presence in Eastern European Jewish life. In the books, however, it is seldom mentioned.

Several books commemorate communities in areas occupied by the Soviet Union between 1939 and 1941, from the start of the war until the Axis invasion. Soviet occupation was a difficult period for many Jews, and this is reflected in the texts of those books.[675] These communities were also in Soviet occupied territories after the war, and the hardships Jews faced in trying to leave these areas for Israel and the West are also noted.[676] These hardships probably contributed to the retrospectively negative representation of

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[673] See Korn and Kuperstein, *Pirk'e Bessarabia: me'asef la-'avarah shel yahadut Besarabyah*, 83; Yom-Tov Lewinsky, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Lomza* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun oley Lomza be-Yisrael, 1952), 28, 45, 47, 56 , 237.

[674] Aharoni, *Toldot kehilat Rakoshpalotah*. Aryeh Levi, *Sefer zikaron le-yehudey Mad* (Jerusalem: ha-Va'ad la-hanysahat zekher kedoshey Mad, 1974); Sofer, *Mazkeret Paks*, 1.

[675] Adini, *Dubno sefer zikaron*, 284; Amitai, *Akerman ve-ayarot ha-machoz*, 204, 217–219; Getzel Kressel, *Sefer Kosov* (Tel-Aviv: Ha-menorah, 1964), 265; Zilber, *Sefer zikaron Gabozdzic ve-hasviva*.

[676] See Amitai, *Akerman ve-ayarot ha-machoz*, 207–210, 247.

communism in the Jewish context before the war. The Soviet regime is said to have been oppressive – arresting many activists from different political groups, but also random Jews – and to have been hostile towards Jewish religious life.[677]

In his text on "Memories", in the Kosow Yizkor book, contributor Yoseph Winter exemplifies this attitude:

> It would be remiss of me if I did not mention that there were also communists in Kosow. I will not dedicate many of my words to them, because there is nothing to say in their favour. They were the first victims of the Soviet regime in Kosow. Many of them paid with their lives and those who stayed alive have returned to the bosom of the nation and are only today Jews. They were our fiercest resistance. They tried to limit our steps and would attack our gatherings and *kibutzei ha-hachshara* in Kosow… many times it came to hard fights… they did not hesitate to call the… Ukrainian communists… to their aid against their Jewish brothers. When the war broke out those [the Ukrainian Communists] were the cruellest and most dangerous butchers of the Jews.[678]

Winter presents several key points here that exemplify the common view of communists, in the cases where they were even mentioned at all: they were very hostile and often violent towards other political groups, in particular Zionists; they denounced Judaism, even though Zionists still saw them as their brothers; and they were so naive, or perhaps stupid, that they collaborated with the Ukrainians, one of the peoples that, as noted above, came to be viewed as the worst collaborators with the Germans during the Holocaust. Undoubtedly, this view of Ukrainians has retroactively affected Jewish memory of them and perhaps also darkened the image of the Jewish communists there.

In these same books, from communities that were occupied by the Soviet Union until 1941, we can also find a different opinion. In his text titled "The Youth that is Gone", Shim'on Oz writes about communists in pre-war Poland:

> Even with our objections to the political stances of the communists and their negative attitude towards Zionism, we can only appreciate the courage of their youth, which operated in hiding under terrible conditions, and suffered the oppression of the regime that was then in Poland.[679]

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[677] Kressel, *Sefer Kosov*, 265.

[678] Ibid., 186–187.

[679] Adini, *Dubno sefer zikaron*, 274.

His text is mostly about Zionist youth organizations, one of several texts by different authors on this subject, but Oz nonetheless took the time to mention the communists and while not agreeing with them ideologically, apparently appreciated them as dedicated people, perhaps in a similar way to Zionists, and also recognized that they lived under harsher conditions than those faced by Zionist organizations in pre-war Poland, as communism was outlawed in Poland during that period.

With all its many faults, the Soviet regime was less oppressive and far less lethal towards the Jews than the Nazi occupation. One book that contains texts that reflect on that point is the 1946 book on "Hurban Volkovisk". The town in today's western Belarus was the first to be occupied by the Germans, who were then replaced by Soviet troops. The account of survivor Eliyahu Kushnir notes:

> There was great joy when the Soviets entered the town. The Jews were happy and even the sworn haters of the communists, the *gevirim* [the wealthy], the factory owners, were satisfied: for them it meant that the death sentence – the German entrance – was replaced by a life sentence…a Soviet way of life began, and except for the *gevirim*, who were sent to Siberia, the Jewish population was satisfied.[680]

Kushnir defined himself as a "proletarian", as he was a hired worker in a pharmacy. He was not a communist, however, and his words do not reflect any love for communism. Nonetheless, he is expressing the honest opinion that the Soviet regime, as bad as it perhaps was, was still far better than the German occupation when it came to the treatment of the Jews as a group. According to Kushnir, the Soviet Union oppressed its religious and ethnic minorities, but did not seek to destroy the Jews as a group as the Germans had done. A similar attitude to the Soviet regime is expressed in another witness account, titled "The hardships and stories of the heroism of 'hero of the Soviet Union' partisan Eliyahu Kovanski". Kovanski notes that the "Soviet way of life" had its "upsides and downsides" and that the Jews got used to it.[681] Unlike the Germans, the Red Army did not bomb the town before occupying it, and the Soviets did not particularly target the Jews.[682]

One book that includes only neutral or positive representations of communism is the 1952 book on Lomza. It includes a four-page section on

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[680] *Hurban Volkovisk be-milhemet ha-olam ha-sheniyah, 1939–1945*, 54.
[681] Ibid., 62.
[682] Ibid., 63–65.

"The communist movement in Lomza".[683] The text, written by a former member of the movement, recounts its history, its main figures and its end under German occupation. The text seems on the whole balanced and partially positive. It seems likely that the presence of such a unique in-depth text about communism would be linked to the author submitting it and insisting that it should be included. That is certainly one plausible explanation. However, there is also another. The book contains several more references to communists. In one, they are mentioned as having been members of and guides in youth movements, "like all other groups". In another, the communists were said to have paid their respect to a deceased rabbi, even though they disagreed on everything. A third tells how the communists held a feast in honour of a member released from prison, and how a non-communist Jew snuck over and removed all the non-Kosher food, to make sure they did not sin.[684] The communists are presented in a neutral or positive light in all of these examples, unlike in the examples seen in other books. This might lead us to surmise that in this case the editor himself had a neutral or even slightly positive stance on communism, and thus chose to include these texts in the book. The author of the text, G. Yelniak, sent the text from Poland, so the editor probably made further efforts to have it translated into Hebrew (from Polish or Yiddish). Overall, however, the Lomza book still includes many more texts about Zionism and its overall attitude is pro-Zionist, just like the other books examined here.

In other places, communism is presented as enticing and deceitful. In her text "About the Youth of Horodlah", contributor Rachel Plut writes about a Hebrew teacher, Kolodnitzki:

> Supposedly, he came to our town to teach Hebrew; but it seemed like he had completely different intentions. He held communist views. Instead of teaching Hebrew he filled his students with communist ideas and, without noticing it, some students were hurt by his views. When we learned of his true intentions, a large proportion of his students abandoned him and a small group stayed. Finally, he had nothing to do and left Horodlah.[685]

The most consistent point made by contributors about communism, as represented in this excerpt, is that communism is unnatural and foreign to Jews. Communists could only use deception or violence to take over the minds

[683] Lewinsky, *Sefer zikaron li-kehilat Lomza*, 259–262.

[684] Ibid., 271, 275, 307.

[685] Yosef Ḥayim Zavidovits, *Kehilat Horodlah sefer zikaron* (Tel-Aviv: Va'ad yots'e Horodlah be-Yisrael, 1960).

of Jews. Communism stood against the true nature of the Jews, from both a religious and a political perspective. It is commonly noted regarding communism, with the exception of the above-mentioned Volkovisk and Lomza books, that becoming a communist was done for immediate gain, or because people were naive, and in either case it always ended badly – either for the communists, as was the case with the teacher Kolodnitzki, or for the Jews, as was the case in Kosow.

Texts in books for communities that were not under Soviet occupation also display a hostile attitude to communism. The book on Sopotskin has a short mention of communism in a text titled "The National Awakening", which is mostly dedicated to Zionism. It notes that in the town: "Communist youth organizations did not exist because there were no factories and no employers and no proletarians…".[686] The book was published by schoolchildren, and the authors of these texts were around the age of sixteen. This kind of statement, which is theoretical rather than empirical, is representative of the kind of texts found in schoolchildren's Yizkor books. This book represents an extreme pro-Zionist position compared to the other books analysed here, and some statements, like the one above, do not seem reasonable when thought about in detail. It represents a rudimentary understanding of communism. Are we expected to believe that the community had no socio-economic classes? As can be seen in other sections of this chapter, in contrast to the majority of Yizkor books published by other groups, the schoolchildren's books examined present a Holocaust memory that strongly echoes the state memory in Israel, most notably, perhaps, in their previously discussed position on the town's *Judenrat*. A short text on "the Russian occupation"[687] notes that some Jews tried to pretend to be communist when the Soviets took over, but they were betrayed by others (probably fellow Jews) and executed by the Soviets.[688] The schoolchildren's book on Halmin-Turts includes a single reference to communism, in which it is referred to as "heresy". Those who "fell into its web" became devout followers who committed dangerous acts with no regard for themselves.[689] Communism is thus portrayed as a cult whose members blindly and needlessly risked their well-being. However, the authors do not expand on the risks taken by the communists. As noted above, a religious-

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[686] Parnas, *Sopotskin: toldot imuts 'ayarah ahat*, 68.

[687] The error of using the term "Russian" instead of "Soviet" is in the original text, and is repeated several times throughout it. The Soviet Union is also referred to as "Russia".

[688] Parnas, *Sopotskin: toldot imuts 'ayarah ahat*, 73–74.

[689] Schwartz, *Zikhron netsakh la-kehilot ha-kedoshot Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah asher nekhrevu ba-Shoah: hantsahat kehilot ha-kodesh Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah*, 69.

Zionist school published the book, so its focus seems to have been on communism's attitude to religion. This book made a similar claim as the Sopotskin book, that there were almost no communists in the town. However, while the Sopotskin book displays a political bias – the town was claimed to be mainly Zionist – the Halmin-Turts book takes a religious stance – most residents were devout Jews so they stayed away from anti-religious communism.

The strong presence of politics in the books is not a surprising finding. The period immediately before the Holocaust was a politically tumultuous time in the diaspora. Zionism, as an example of nationalism, socialism and communism were all commonly and strongly represented in Jewish communities, and all three were powerful forces in Europe after the First World War. Politics were part and parcel of Jewish youth organizations, a popular movement that included many different organizations and ideologies. Moreover, the Holocaust was followed by the most important political event in modern Jewish history – the founding of the state of Israel. This event brought Zionism to the forefront of the political debate and re-contextualized the memory of the pre-Holocaust and Holocaust period to highlight Zionism, as well as different and opposing ideologies.

Zionism remained popular over time and in all of the different groups, with the exception of the religious-affiliated Halmin-Turts and Paks books. This included socialist organizations within Zionism. Non-Zionist socialism and communism generally received significantly less attention. In the rare cases where non-Zionist socialism was mentioned, the authors were usually quite indifferent towards it. When communism is discussed, this is commonly done in a negative light. The two exceptions are the books on Volkovisk and Lomza, published in 1946 and 1952, respectively. It seems that when communism was presented neutrally or positively, this was early in the Yizkor book period. This could be due to Israel not being affiliated to any of the blocs at that time, or to these books having authors who witnessed the period in person. Later books are more likely to have been affected by Israel's increasingly close relations with the Western Bloc during the Cold War, as well as the ongoing struggles of Jews in the Soviet Union, which resulted in a more anti-communist collective memory of the Holocaust.

Characters and Martyrs

The majority of the books analysed here have a section on "characters" or "personalities". These sections introduce different people who often were not

the most famous or prominent in the community. The latter would usually receive their own separate texts in a dedicated section about notable rabbis or other figures. However, the format of the characters section differs between the various books. The Brisk delita book, for example, contains three sections in a "Personalities" chapter: one for "scribes and scholars", one for "businessmen" and one for those "wise in the *Torah*", such as rabbis and other religious figures.[690]

At one end of the spectrum regarding the descriptions of the people included in the "personalities" or "characters" sections, we find the Halmin-Turts book. As mentioned above, this book was published by children in a religious school, and this aspect is apparent in the strongly patriarchal approach to the characters section. It includes texts or brief mentions of sixty-three people, all men. Every man's name is printed in bold letters, even in the middle of a text. When a woman's name is mentioned, it is never highlighted in any way. There is only one section dedicated to a woman, entitled "The image of my mother *z. l.*, my aunt, the grandmother or any other Jewish woman", which describes all women in the community as "Yidishe Mames".[691] The men in the section are all generally said to have been god-fearing and just in one way or another, but they were not all rabbis or leaders; among them there were for instance also the owner of a soda factory, a book binder, a carpenter and even a vintner.[692] The circumstances of their death are not given for any of the men commemorated. All the members of the community, men and women, are noted as martyrs, with the difference that men are commemorated as individuals and the women as a group. (It is noteworthy that the school that published the book was not ultra-orthodox, so it had female students as well.) Women and girls from the community also appear in some of the photographs included in the book and are listed in the book's glossary of names. Four women are also credited as contributors to the volume.

We can find another example in the Novoselytsia (Ukraine) book, in the section "Drawings and Characters".[693] This includes nineteen texts, some of which are about named persons, and some about characters who have a title

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[690] Steinman, *Brisk Delita*, 299–424.

[691] Schwartz, *Zikhron netsakh la-kehilot ha-kedoshot Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah asher nekhrevu ba-Shoah: hantsahat kehilot ha-kodesh Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah*, 54-55. "Jewish mothers", meaning in this context a god-fearing, modest woman who stays at home and takes care of her family.

[692] Ibid., 48–50.

[693] Kafri, *Yalkut ayarat ha-te'omim, Novoselitsah*, 64–85.

or description instead of a name, such as "the manufacturer". Those commemorated are mostly men. There is no text devoted specifically to an individual woman. However, unlike in the Halmin-Turts book, when women are mentioned in the texts, they are mentioned as individuals of different kinds – as housewives, but also as members of a Zionist group, such as women who trained in agriculture and went on to emigrate to Israel in 1919–1921. A photograph of the group shows it had four women and five men. The rest of the commemorated are a very mixed group. Among those specifically mentioned are a rabbi, a cooper, a tailor, a *melamed* (a teacher of young children), a deserter from the army, and the rich son of the mayor who was also a self-proclaimed socialist. It is a very diverse group, and everyone is described in a positive and affectionate tone. Editor I. Kafri wrote the majority of the book, including most of the texts discussed here. An affectionate tone is consistent throughout the book. The names of many of those mentioned in the texts and photographs, both men and women, are missing or listed as 'unknown'. It is clear that Kafri wrote his texts from memory, and could not recall many names or the identity of most of those photographed.

In the book on Racionz is the story of "Wolf the Fool", sent in by Hanna Klofman.[694] Wolf was "thick", Klofman tells us, so his parents sent him to live on the street as a child. He made his living delivering water, running small errands for the townspeople, and cleaning the water of the *mikveh* (a large bath, used for ritual immersion). He slept in the *beit-midrash* (a place dedicated to the study of the Bible). One night, a fire broke out and "all the Torah books burned together with him".[695] This is another example of a story about a man who received a commemorative text even though he was of the lowest social status in the community. Moreover, unlike the above-mentioned Nachum the Blind, or some of those mentioned in the text from the book on Kurenits, according to Klofman Wolf did nothing remarkable in life or in death. He was nonetheless part of the community, and was commemorated alongside other community members. Wolf is an example of what Rivka Parciak called "others", a man of very low social status. Paricak specifically discusses a water carrier as an example of an "other" who physically and symbolically lives on the edge of town.[696] Wolf was, contrary to Parciak's general claim, not presented in a negative way, and his story does not seem to serve any ulterior motive[697] beyond the commemoration of a fellow landsman.

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[694] Zoref, *Gal'ed le-kehilat Racionz*, 274.
[695] Ibid.
[696] Parciak, "The Others in Yizker Books", 226.
[697] Ibid., 223,225,234.

In the 1972 Tomaszow Lubelski book, in a text entitled *The Jewish Youth in the City of Tomaszow-Lubelski*, Pinchas Erlich wrote:

> And how could we forget the *haredi* youth that suffered so much and carried God's name in pride. Under the German fiery hits their call "Shema Israel" ruptured the heavens and shocked their torturers. There should be no criticism spoken of our *anusim*, who wore crosses on their necks on Sunday and whispered a prayer for Hitler's demise on *Shabbat*.
>
> How could we forget the daughters of *Ha-halutz*, *Ha-shomer ha-tzair*, *Beitar*, the Bund, who followed [in the footsteps of] the unknown martyrs of the crusades.[698]
>
> (…)
>
> All those prosecuted, exiled, tortured, killed – the youth whose memory has been brought up here – theirs is the place at the head of the pantheon of martyrs from the days of Hitler and his collaborators.…
>
> Yizkor! Let us remember this youth. A youth of holiness and heroism, who welcomed death together. All their names shall shine brightly forever.[699]

This is the same book in which we also find the previously discussed story of Nachum the Blind, although this text was written by a different author. Both Ya'akov Schwartz, who wrote about Nachum the Blind, and Pinchas Erlich, were only contributors, and not part of the publishing team. Erlich refers to four groups in his text. The first is the ultra-orthodox, who did not take part in any armed resistance but only prayed. The second group is "our *anusim*", those forced to convert to Christianity. Erlich notes that they were still considered Jews, part of 'us'. Never having lost their loyalty to Judaism, they were forced to hide among the gentiles and so they did. The third group is the daughters (or girls) of the youth organizations. Erlich mentions four different organizations: The Zionist *Ha-halutz*, the socialist-Zionist *Ha-shomer ha-tzair*, the far-right *Beitar* and the non-Zionist, socialist Bund. His reference to the crusades is a hint that those young girls were raped and murdered by the Germans and their collaborators. This excerpt connects us back to the discussion regarding resistance in the Israeli context, in chapter 8. These three groups are brought up because according to some Zionist or religious perceptions, they were 'tainted' and thus not worthy of commemoration. Erlich makes sure to state that all of

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[698] Lerer, Gordon, and Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron shel Tomaszow-Lub*, 365.
[699] Ibid.

them must not be forgotten. The fourth group is different; these are the general Jewish youth, who are often mentioned as heroic in Yizkor books (as discussed in chapter 8). Erlich argues that while *all* Jewish victims are martyrs, with everything that definition entails, the youth hold a special status within that group as, he implies, they were Zionists and took up arms against the Germans. Moreover, the youth are said to have "welcomed death together" in a manner that is reminiscent of the rebels on Masada. Although the armed resistance is not explicitly mentioned, it is obvious from the context; Erlich is thus singling out the youth when implying armed resistance. We find a similar sentiment in the book on Volkovisk. Holocaust survivor Shaine Lifshitz writes in the final paragraph of her text, "Memories":

> Yes, there once was the town of Volkovisk. Among us there were different people. Good, better, bad and so on. But on the verge of death, of the crematoria and of all kinds of different deaths luck found us, the few survivors, to see the devotion, generosity and self-sacrifice of our martyrs of Volkovisk.[700]

Lifshitz is displaying the same attitude to Holocaust victims as we saw as commonly found in the editorials: that regardless of the circumstances of their lives, all the victims of the Holocaust became martyrs by the circumstances of their death. Lifshitz explicitly notes that everyone, even those who were "bad" in their lives up to that point, were loyal to each other at the end. She also adds that even those who could escape destruction through work chose to go to their deaths together with their families.[701] Both Erlich and Lifhshitz intentionally raise the so-called bad, tainted or passive victims and make a clear statement that they are all worthy of commemoration as martyrs.

We find another example in the Mad Yizkor book. A short text fittingly titled *al kiddush ha-Shem* writes about Rabbi Moshe Yehuda, a young rabbi who was sent to a labour camp in Germany. While he was optimistic, Yehuda was physically weak and was murdered by the German guards. Yehuda is not said to have done anything remarkable. He did not take up arms or fight back, and his death was not courageous. Nonetheless, he is said to have died *al kiddush ha-Shem*.[702]

In the book on Aleksandria, there are several texts about women in the characters section – one about Leah-Breindel, the mother of the author (a man); one about Feige Bluma, a wealthy woman who owned a number of

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[700] *Hurban Volkovisk be-milhemet ha-olam ha-sheniyah, 1939–1945*, 70.
[701] Ibid., 68–70.
[702] Levi, *Sefer zikaron le-yehudey Mad*.

properties in the town; and one about Beyle Ita the Florist, a small flower shop owner. We also find the text dedicated to Itsik-Wolf the water carrier.[703] They are all described in a positive manner, as possessing qualities such as a strong faith, honesty and a simple manner. Of these four, only Itsik-Wolf died in the Holocaust, "among the rest of the Jews of Aleksandria".[704] Only one of the four – Leah Breindel – is mentioned as being a Zionist.

The book on Dubno also has a large characters section. It covers a diverse group of commemorated individuals, including several women. Hanna Kagan (Cohen) worked with orphans and later with refugees from Poland, in the pre-Holocaust period. She was also involved in supporting some Zionist activities. Her family situation is only mentioned in one short sentence about her being married.[705] Sara'ke Dubtsis was another *askanit* – a social activist, a kind and generous person who helped everyone in the town. The author tells us that she was "seemingly a Jewish woman like all Jewish women – but not", referring to the contrast between her traditional outfit and her extraordinary work in the community.[706] We also find Esther Pfefer, a music teacher who studied at a university in Belgium but chose to return to the town. The author tells us that when she became very sick, she asked for an autopsy to be performed after her death, hoping that it could help others with the same disease.[707] Autopsy is forbidden according to traditional Jewish law, but this point is mentioned in a positive way to demonstrate how altruistic Pfefer was.

Among the men, we find Leib Lucnik, a tailor's apprentice and autodidact, who became a fighter for workers' rights, went to prison and lost his wife because of his political activity. He is noted to have died in the Holocaust, but the circumstances of his death are not mentioned.[708] Shmuel'ik the clockmaker, who was a master of his craft, worked for all the *pritisim* (rich gentile men) but still lived in poverty because he spent all his time and money, and used his connections to the *pritisim,* to help down-on-their-luck Jewish townsfolk. Later, he became a communist, rose to the rank of Commissar under Soviet rule but saw the error of his ways, abandoned communism and became a Zionist.[709] We also find, for example, Hershel the *Shamash*

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[703] Israeli and Livneh, *Pinkas ha-kehilah Aleksandria*, Leah-Brenidel: 171–172, Feige Bluma: 189–190, Beyle Ita: 190–192, Itsik Wolf: 193–194.

[704] Ibid., 94.

[705] Adini, *Dubno sefer zikaron*, 401–404.

[706] Ibid., 411–412.

[707] Ibid., 415–416.

[708] Ibid., 407–410.

[709] Ibid., 419–422. This connects us back to the above discussion on how communism was often presented as deceitful, and as causing harm to those who fell into its trap.

(synagogue caretaker), Benedik who escorted the deceased to the cemetery and Valadia Frenkel, who lived in the backstage area of the theatre and wrote poetry. The author notes that his poem shows Frenkel "did not have any special poetic talent",[710] but the poem is still included in the book.[711] Hershel, Benedik and Frenkel are all lovingly described even though they belonged to the lowest social strata of the town. They are not said to have been particularly faithful Jews or to have had any relation to Zionism. The section contains many more texts about a variety of men – from doctors to rabbis, social and political activists, day labourers and craftsmen.

The commemorations presented in the Yizkor books were mostly gendered. This is probably a reflection of how gendered life was in those communities: there was certainly a gender division of labour. For example, women could not fill any position around the synagogue – the rabbi, the *gabay* (the one who calls believers to prayer) and the *shamash* could only be men. Men would not usually be involved in certain social activities, such as running a soup kitchen. There were many occupations available to all, such as teachers, bakers, tailors, and so on but physical work, such as the carrying of water, was generally performed by men. The memory of the community found in the Dubno and Aleksandria books is gendered, but reflects the gender roles in place in Eastern European Jewish society before World War II. The book on Halmin-Turts, on the other hand, is an example of a gendered commemoration that did not accurately portray the reality it commemorated. It is simply not possible that not a single woman in that community was socially or politically active, much as we cannot accept the claim that the town had no communists because "there were no class differences" there. In other words, the memory of the community presented in the Halmin-Turts book is a gendered representation of life in the community, through the eyes of the editor and the authors, while the memory in the Aleksandria and Dubno books is a much more loyal representation of a gendered aspect of Jewish community life.

Turning to the topic of martyrs and martyrdom, we encounter several categories of people described in different ways. Resistance during the Holocaust was a much more diverse aspect of community life. Many women took part in the armed fight against the Germans and their allies, and this is reflected in some books. In the Cracow book, for example, there are six pages, with thirty-five photographs of young men and women who were part of the

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[710] Ibid.
[711] All three texts at ibid., 421–424.

resistance movement. Nine of the thirty-five photographs are of women (for an example see figure 9.3).

As previously discussed, another group that was sometimes added to the ranks of the martyrs was those landsleit who died while serving in the Israeli army (the Israeli Defense Forces, IDF). These were also described as *kedoshim*, and sometimes also that they died *al kiddush ha-Shem*. This is an interesting connection made between Holocaust victims and Israeli soldiers. I have previously discussed that while the biblical command "Zachor" and the story of Amalek are rarely mentioned in the entries by individual contributors, they appear quite often in the editorials. Both are strongly connected to the idea of the 'Jewish history of suffering', as noted throughout this dissertation. Seemingly, the individual contributors did not share the same view of Jewish history as the authors of the editorials. However, by labelling both Holocaust victims and Israeli soldiers as *kedoshim* who died *al kiddush ha-Shem*, the contributors are making an implicit statement that both were killed because they were Jews by an enemy that attacked them because they were Jews. This is the same idea of the eternal struggle of the Jewish people against their enemies encapsulated in a history of suffering, as expressed in the command "Zachor" and the story of Amalek, even though the two terms are not explicitly mentioned.

The book on Racionz contains a section on "mekadshei ha-Shem",[712] a phrase meaning people who honoured God by dying *al kiddush ha-Shem*, and that they were active in their actions. The seventeen-page section contains six texts – three texts each – about two young men, Amnon Avukay and Amos Zoref, who were killed during their military service in the IDF. They were born in Palestine, and only their parents (at least one of them) were born in Racionz. Nonetheless, they had a significant section dedicated to them in the community's Yizkor book. One of the texts commemorating Avukay includes a photo of his maternal grandparents, who both died in the Warsaw ghetto.[713] This further strengthens the connection between grandparents and grandchild, both generations killed in the eternal struggle of the Jewish people against those who wish to destroy them.

In the Vitebsk book one text takes this expansion of the term martyr even further. In a section on "Heroes and Martyrs",[714] there are five texts. One is about a young man who died in the Holocaust, the kind of text one would expect to find in a Yizkor book. Three others are about young men who died during their military service, described in a similar way to other Yizkor books.

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[712] Zoref, *Gal'ed le-kehilat Racionz*, 277–298.

[713] Ibid., 280. Raciaz (the Polish name of Racionz) is quite close to Warsaw, and the book contains many mentions of residents of the town who died in the Warsaw ghetto.

[714] Baruch Karu, *Vitebsk* (Tel Aviv: Irgun ol'e Vitebsk veha-sevivah be-Yisrael, 1957), 431–438.

The last one, however, is about David Shembdl, a landsman of Vitebsk who worked for the electric company in Palestine and was murdered at work in 1936. The text does not provide the reader with any details about the circumstances of his death, except that it was in a neighbourhood of Yaffo (Jaffa), currently part of Tel-Aviv.[715] This is an exceptional case of martyrdom. The author has expanded the definition of "martyr" to include a landsman who died in Palestine before the Holocaust, in circumstances that seem to be irrelevant to any definition of *kiddush ha-Shem*. Such a definition of martyr is so wide that it could be used to include almost any Jew who has died anywhere, at any time and under almost any circumstances. I have not found any other cases of this kind in the other books examined.

The overall sentiment towards the victims is consistent with the perception that all of them are martyrs. That said, within the highly inclusive group of "martyrs", some are described as exceptional. Departing from Erlich's reference to the place at the head of the pantheon of heroes, it is possible to imagine martyrdom as a long table. Everyone gets a seat at the table and, in that sense, everyone is equal. No one is left standing in the background and everyone at the table deserves to be remembered and rise at the end of days. There is however a seat at the head of the table, and that seat, according to some authors, is reserved for the youth, who are described as having been the best generation, Jewish, Zionist, and having led the resistance against the Germans while exhibiting the best of qualities.[716] Young men who were killed in the IDF, even if they were not born in the community, are sometimes also seen as part of this group at the head of the table, as is shown above in the example from the book on Racionz.

When assessing how authors decided who to write about and how different people were represented in the texts, the relation between the author of the text and its subject should be taken into account. Individual contributors often wrote about people they knew personally, and the most important individuals within that group were family members. There are many more texts about the authors' fathers than about their mothers, and this is true of both male and female contributors. Another group is people about whom the authors heard from their own parents or grandparents, or well-known characters in the community. These could have been anyone from the town Rabbi to a Zionist activist or an "odd man" that everyone in the town ran into every day.

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[715] Ibid., 433–434.

[716] See Kafri, *Yalkut ayarat ha-te'omim, Novoselitsah*, 81-82; Lerer, Gordon, and Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron shel Tomaszow-Lub*, 364–365.

The 1967 book on Cracow, published in the US, has a very large obituary section; of its 183 scanned pages, 132 contain obituaries, between one and four obituaries per page. What is interesting about this particular section, beyond its exceptional size, is that it includes seventeen full-page obituaries of general groups. All of them begin either "in memory of Jews from Cracow" or "from the city of Cracow", followed by a description of a group. These groups include those:

…who perished in exile, wherever their cruel fate had reached them

…perished in Ghetto of Cracow and in the suburbs of Cracow

…perished in concentration camp Plaszow-Jerozolimska – in concentration camp Julag I. – in concentration camp Bierzanow Prokocim and Arbeitslager Lagiewniki

…tortured to death in the streets of the city – in the dungeons of Montelupich – in torture chambers of Gestapo and in the basements of the buildings of NSDAP and SD

…perished in fight against the German aggressor as soldiers of the Polish army

…heroic fighters – members of Jewish underground in Cracow – Akiba – Histadruth Hanoar Hechalutzi – Hashomer Hazair – Hashomer Hadati – who sacrificed their lives for freedom and dignity

…who perished in forced labor camps of Russia

…Jews *deported* from Cracow who perished in concentration camps Auschwitz – Janow – Belzec – Maidanek – Bergen-Belsen – Mauthausen – Pustkow – Brunnirz – Skarzysko – Dora – Sobibor – Gross Rosen – Szebnia – Treblinka

…who sacrificed their lives fighting in the Jewish Brigade

…who perished deported to concentration camps – names of which are unknown to us

…perished while fighting for freedom as partisans

…5000 Jewish women from Cracow loaded forcibly on a defective ship and drowned at Stutthoff

…who have been sent to their death from transit concentration camp Drancy, France

…who perished in emigration 1939–1945

…Jewish *Soldiers* from Cracow who fought and sacrificed their lives in Allied armies – army of general Anders – Army "Tadeusza Kosciuszki" (division of USSR army)

…who perished in Hungary, Roumania and other countries in their quest to reach the promised land

…betrayed caught and killed while trying to save their lives by using Arian identification papers.[717]

Various individuals and companies signed the books, and some included the phrase "at the suggestion of…", after which several names are mentioned. These obituaries are likely to have been the initiative of the publishers, sold as a form of sponsorship for people and companies who wanted to contribute to the book but had no specific individuals to commemorate. Beyond their economic significance, these obituaries were clearly intended to cover anyone and everyone who were not mentioned by name in another obituary, and to erect a gravestone in their honour. All the obituaries in this book were designed in a uniform style, resembling a memorial or gravestone (see figures 9.1 and 9.2). As can be seen from the list above, the intention of the publishers was to comprehensibly cover everyone in the community, including several highly specific sub-categories of victims, such as the final text which commemorated those Cracow Jews who died "while trying to save their lives by using Arian identification papers". By going into such specific categories, the publishers made sure that any living relative of any victim could at least have a place to say the *Kaddish* on the deceased (see chapter 7).
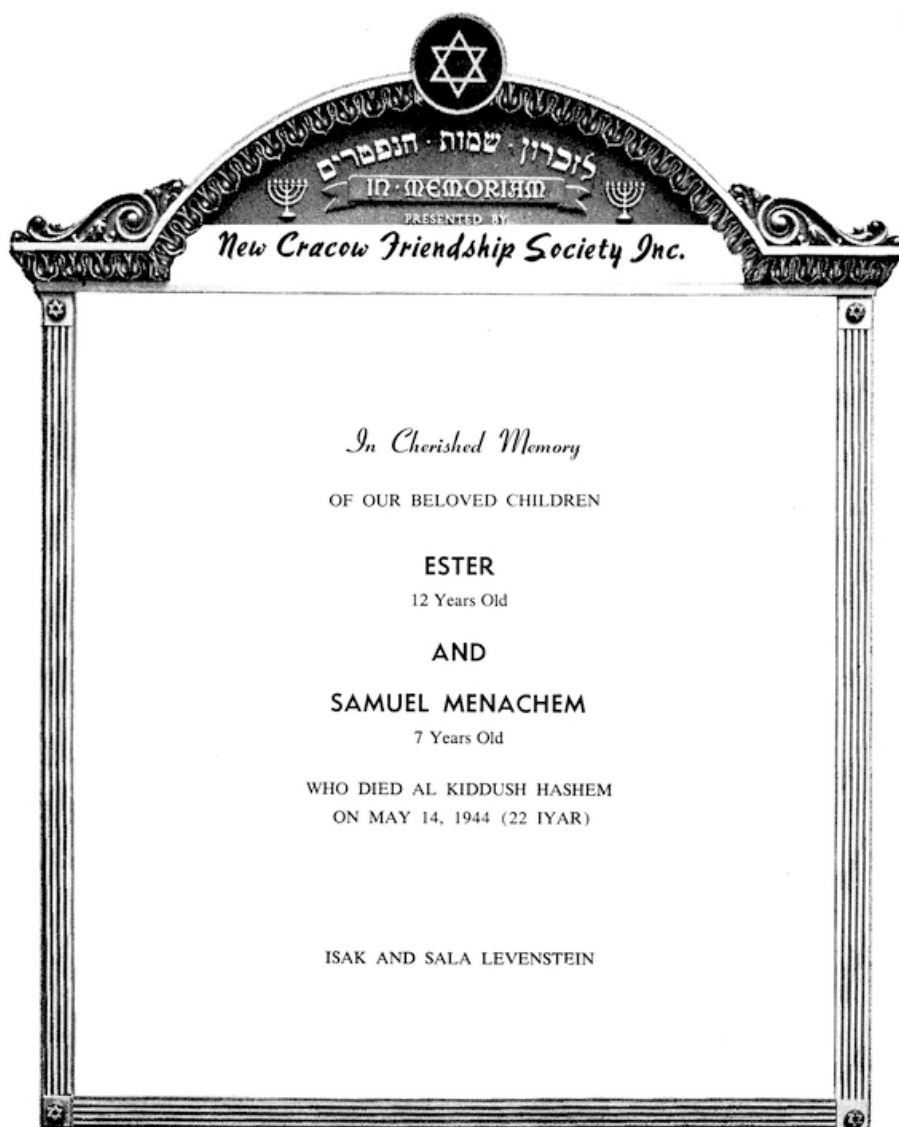
Another group previously discussed is the Jewish councils or *Judenräte*. They are portrayed in several different ways: in some cases as traitors and collaborators who facilitated the destruction of their fellow Jews; in other cases as victims, forced into a terrible and impossible situation. When the *Judenräte* are brought up by contributors, the latter position is commonly expressed. None of the books examined here includes any explicit discussion of the role of the *Judenräte*. In the book on Horodlo, for example, the *Judenräte* are said several times to have been forced to collaborate by the Germans for Germany's labour needs and extermination goals, and in one place it is also noted that the members of the council went to another town to try to mitigate a German decree.[718]

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[717] New Cracow Friendship Society, *Cracow* (Jamaica, NY 1967), 60–76. Originally in English. All spelling and grammar errors are in the original.
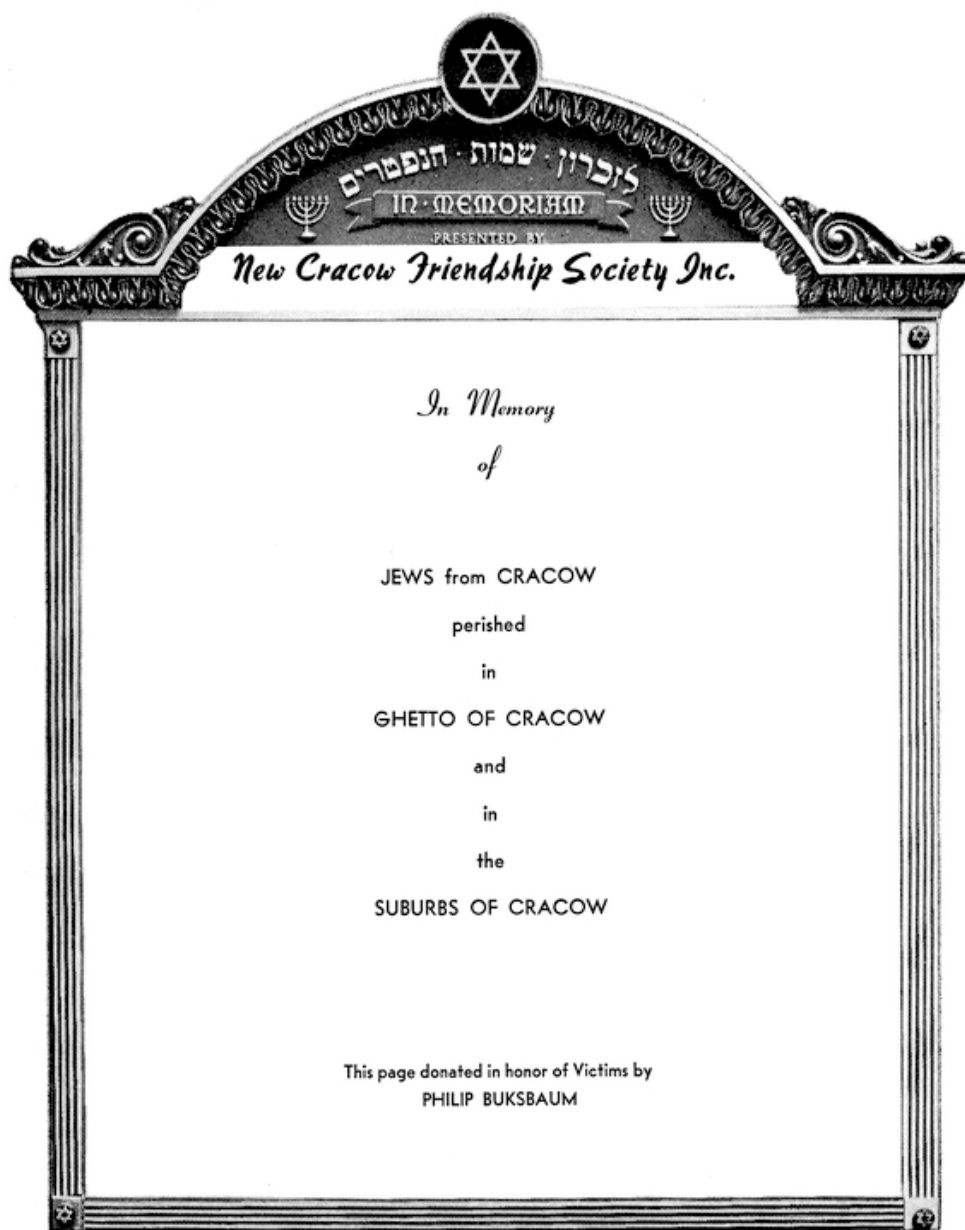
[718] Zavidovits, *Kehilat Horodlah sefer zikaron*, 106, 109, 112, 125.

Figure 9.1. *An Obituary for two Named Children.*

In Cherished Memory

OF OUR BELOVED CHILDREN

ESTER

12 Years Old

AND

SAMUEL MENACHEM

7 Years Old

WHO DIED AL KIDDUSH HASHEM
ON MAY 14, 1944 (22 IYAR)

ISAK AND SALA LEVENSTEIN

Source: Society, Cracow, 59.

Figure 9.2. *An Obituary for a General Group.*

In Memory

of

JEWS from CRACOW

perished

in

GHETTO OF CRACOW

and

in

the

SUBURBS OF CRACOW

This page donated in honor of Victims by
PHILIP BUKSBAUM

Source: Society, Cracow, 66.

Figure 9.3. *A Page with Photographs of Resistance Fighters.*

Source: Society, Cracow, 45.

Eichmann

As discussed above, while the Eichmann trial caused a seismic shift in the Holocaust memory culture in the US and Israel, and had a noticeable impact on the publication patterns of Yizkor books, it had little notable effect on the editorials. From the analysis of the full books, it appears that this is also the case for the individual entries. Eichmann's name was searched for in all the books, not only those published after the trial. This was done not to compare the periods, but to examine whether Eichmann was ever mentioned prior to the trial.

   When Eichmann's name is mentioned, it is done in several different contexts. Commonly, the trial is referred to as a source of historical knowledge. For example, in her 1988 text "From the Killing Pit to the verge of the Homeland" (מגיא ההריגה אל סף המולדת) in the Yizkor book on Meretsh (Lithuania), Malka Shmueli-Pogetski writes:

> The takeover by the Nazi beast brought with it acts of murder, torture and robbery. Baby and elderly, man and woman, strong and weak, healthy and sick, all mercilessly murdered and tortured. Planning was felt in all of the Germans' criminal acts. "There must be order", "the work needs to be clean and perfect"… later we found out that there was a guiding hand, that it had all been planned there, in the office of Eichmann in Germany.[719]

Following his own line of defence in the trial, Eichmann is seen as the organizer, the great bureaucrat. He is not mentioned as an ideologue, as someone who motivated the German troops to murder, but as the one who orchestrated the killings. Eichmann represents order in German actions, even from far in away Germany (in this case from Lithuania). A similar perception of Eichmann can be found in the Monastir (Bitola, Macedonia) Yizkor book. The section about the Holocaust states that "a special Nazi expert, one of Eichmann's assistants, was put in charge of the incitement against the Jews".[720] Later in the same chapter, the author (uncredited, so possibly the editor Uri Oren) writes that the Jews' attempts to appeal to the Bulgarian government, which was in control of Macedonia, failed and that "everywhere the trained hand of Eichmann's men was felt".[721] Thus, it appears that the trial, and Eichmann's representation of himself as a bureaucrat, merely carrying out the orders of the ideological higher-ups, affected the perception of the events

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[719] Uri Shefer, *Merkine – Meretsh: ayarah yehudit be-Lita* (Tel-Aviv 1988), 156.
[720] Oren, *'Ir u-shemah Monastir*, 126.
[721] Ibid., 137.

the survivors witnessed. Eichmann's role was mostly unknown to the victims during the Holocaust, with a few specific exceptions, namely in Hungary and in the Theresienstadt Ghetto and concentration camp. Both accounts, from Lithuania and from Macedonia, have been reframed – the precise form in which violence was performed came to be seen as the work of Eichmann, who was such a great organizer that he orchestrated these actions from Germany. Interestingly, these two accounts represent two different kinds of memory. Shmueli-Pogetski from Lithuania is a witness who is recollecting her personal experiences, and reframing them through the lens of the Eichmann trial. Oren, the editor of the Monastir Yizkor book, is neither a landsman nor a witness. He is presenting a collective memory, a single narrative of the events made up of a mix of historical sources and eyewitness accounts, transmitted in different ways, that he had no part in before passing them on to the readers. In other words, Shmueli-Pogetski's recollection is an act of remembrance and Oren's is an act of commemoration. In both cases, we can see the effect of Eichmann's defence strategy in that he was added to both individual and collective memory as a type of "elite organizer", as if the Nazis had no other bureaucrats capable of such a high level of coordination.

The book on Wadowice et al. (Poland) contains several references to Eichmann. Most notably, in a text about the liquidation of the Wadowice ghetto (author not credited),[722] the author writes in the section "Reasons for the Total Holocaust of the Wadowice Ghetto":

> People who have never been to the ghettos sometimes make comments about Polish Jewry and ask: why did they go like lambs to the slaughter? Why did they not defend themselves? Why did they not run away?
> The reasons that made uprising against the Nazis and fleeing to the Arian side nearly impossible were discovered in the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem…[723]

The author proceeds to list the reasons, from physical exhaustion to the horrible conditions and the fear of retribution against that person and others.[724] This text represents an actualization of the effect of the Eichmann trial. The author illustrates the meta-historical process discussed in Rüsen's model. The reasons for the inability of European Jewry to resist were not discovered in the Eichmann trial. They were known previously, including to the very same

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[722] Most of the other texts in the book have a credited author, including those written by the editor. This particular piece, "In the Ghetto", does not.
[723] Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha*, 214.
[724] Ibid.

people who testified in the trial. Their witness accounts were also not formally on trial, so they were not somehow proved right by Eichmann's conviction. As shown in previous research, the trial brought the experiences of the survivors to the forefront, and in this way changed the way people perceived life during the Holocaust. The author is using the trial as a tool to counter the common idea in the *Yishuv*, and later in Israel, that the victims went to their deaths like lambs to the slaughter. This is the only example in the books analysed for this chapter where this use of Eichmann appears. As previously noted, some authors attempted to engage with the "lambs to the slaughter argument". This is one example of how the trial was used to better connect readers with the experiences of Holocaust victims.

In another part of the same book, in a different text where the author is also uncredited, the Eichmann trial is used in a different way to explain the Holocaust to readers. In a footnote (probably added by the editor) to a section about the specific circumstances of the deaths of the Wadowice Jews sent to the Belzec death camp, it is noted that "Belzec camp was the cruellest, of its 600,000 victims only one survived…and therefore the prosecutor in the Eichmann trial could not provide the court with witness accounts, and had to read a book about Belzec…".[725] The fact that prosecutor Gideon Hausner could not present witness accounts of Belzec is used to strengthen the readers' understanding of the victims' experience there. It is another way in which the effect of the Eichmann trial on the public was used to better explain the Holocaust to those who were not there, and to change their perception of life at that time. In the case of Yizkor books, these were landsleit born in the community who emigrated before the Holocaust, as well as future generations who had only been exposed to the predominant memory culture and needed to be told what really happened.

There are also a couple of mentions of Gideon Hausner, in relation to his role as prosecutor in the trial. The schoolchildren's Halmin-Turts book tells how as part of the ceremony held for the publication of the book, a telegram from Hausner, described then as the Attorney General of Israel and former prosecutor at the Eichmann trial, was read aloud.[726] The content of the telegram is not included in the text. Hausner is mentioned in other schoolchildren's books as the driving force behind schools taking up Holocaust commemoration, although this particular point is not made in the Halmin-Turts book. The other schoolchildren's book included in this chapter,

[725] Ibid., 193.
[726] Schwartz, *Zikhron netsakh la-kehilot ha-kedoshot Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah asher nekhrevu ba-Shoah: hantsahat kehilot ha-kodesh Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah*, 6.

Sopotskin,[727] makes no mention of either Hausner or Eichmann. This brings us once again back to Rüsen's model and to the effect the Eichmann trial had on the memory of the Holocaust and of the diaspora.

Overall, the relatively low number of mentions of Eichmann is consistent with what was found in the analysis of the editorials. The Eichmann trial had a profound effect on the general public's perception of the Holocaust, but much less effect on those involved in the production of Yizkor books, as they were already depicting the memories of the communities and of the Holocaust as significant, and their point of view was already victim-focused rather than perpetrator-based.

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[727] Parnas, *Sopotskin: toldot imuts 'ayarah ahat*.

Chapter 10: Final Discussion

The main research questions of this thesis concern the people who published Yizkor books: who were they? What reasons did they have for publishing the books? How did they produce them? What kind of memory of the diaspora and the Holocaust did they present to their readers? In addition, the thesis examined the continuities and changes that can be observed with regard to the people who published and edited the books, and how those continuities and changes were related to the book's place of publication, the commemorated community, the time of publication and the type of publisher. Lastly, the thesis also asked whether and, if so, how the content and function of the books were affected by significant historical events.

I have used descriptive statistics to study the time and place of Yizkor book publication, as well the languages of publication and the people who published and edited the books. I then analysed the content of the individual entries, as well as the full books, using MaxQDA. In total, this research comprised a quantitative analysis of 613 books in a database compiled by the author, 1,746 pages of editorials from 565 Yizkor books, thirty full books, and various texts, images and necrologies from the different Yizkor books.

A starting point for summarizing the answers to these questions was the two main claims in previous research on Yizkor books: first, that they were produced mainly by landsmanschaftn, in Yiddish, and distributed through traditional Yiddish networks; and, second, that the authors of the texts were mostly young Zionist Holocaust survivors, who survived through their physical prowess. I have followed the common, "classic" definition of landsmanschaft – a mutual-aid organization of landsleit, based outside of their home country around a common birthplace or place of origin – and shown that scholars have commonly defined Yizkor books as "landsmanschaft literature". This definition implicitly entails the idea that the books were largely in Yiddish, and that they were published through traditional Yiddish cultural channels.

The results of both the quantitative and the qualitative analyses show that the first point is only partially correct, in that a definition of "Yizkor book" based on that definition covers only a small proportion of the books regarded

by scholars as Yizkor books. The quantitative analysis of Yizkor books and publication patterns demonstrates that already by the mid-1960s, Yizkor books were being published primarily in Hebrew. From the beginning, Yizkor books were also primarily published in Israel. Landsmanschaftn were uncommon in Israel but continued to exist in other countries. One reason for this is the definition of the term. Once Israel was established, it self-evidently became the home of Jews living there. While place of birth was still significant, as reflected in the efforts put into producing Yizkor books, these organizations were no longer "based outside of their home country" and thus not seen by their members as landsmanschaftn. From the information provided in Yizkor books, it is clear that the majority of landsleit organizations in Israel that published Yizkor books were established after the Holocaust, often with the explicit goal of commemorating their destroyed communities. Publishing a Yizkor book was one of several commemorative activities. Others included annual memorial meetings, erecting a memorial or a physical communal gravestone, planting trees in the Forest of the Martyrs and dedicating a memorial plaque in the memorial cellar on Mount Zion.

Many Yizkor books were published by organizations that were not landsleit associations. These books have either been referenced as Yizkor books in scholarship, or are part of the Yizkor book collections at institutions such as the New York Public Library and Yad Vashem.[728] The NYPL collection, for example, contains books published by Yad Yahadut Polin[729] and by schoolchildren.[730] Furthermore, some books were published by individual

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[728] For example, books published by the Encyclopaedia of the Diasporas: Nathan Michael Gelber, *Lvov*, Sidrat Polin (Jerusalem: Hevrat entsiklopedyah shel galuyot, 1956); Nachman Huberman and Dov Sadan, *Bershad* (Jerusalem: Hevrat entsiklopedyah shel galuyot, 1956); Jasny, *Sefer jadow*; Ph. Korngruen, *Tarnopol*, Sidrat Polin (Jerusalem: Hevrat entsiklopedyah shel galuyot, 1955). A book published by a displaced persons organization: Taffet, *Zaglada Zydow zolkiewskich*.

[729] Levin, *Ostrov Mazovyetsk*; *Ozarkov*; *Ostra'ah*; *Ostra*.

[730] Amarant, *Le-zekher kehilat Dvinsk*; Barukh Bernstein, *Yustingrad-Sokolivkah, ayarah she-neheravah: hiburim she-katvu yalde kibuts Mash'abe Sadeh le-hantsahat zikhrah shel ha-'ayarah* (Mash'abe Sadeh: Kibuts Mash'abe Sadeh, 1971); Bronshtain, *Skalat*; Gal and Bet-sefer mamlakhti yesodi "Savyon"-Gane Yehudah., *Le-zekher Rovnah*; Komemiyut, *Hantsa'hat kehilat Ripin-Polin*; Parnas, *Sopotskin: toldot imuts 'ayarah ahat*; Rimon, *Yahadut Tarnov ve-irgune ha-no'ar*; Schwartz, *Zikhron netsakh la-kehilot ha-kedoshot Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah asher nekhrevu ba-Shoah: hantsahat kehilot ha-kodesh Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah*; Tsurnamal and Kefar Ganim. Bet ha-sefer ha-yesodi ha-mamlakhti., *Zikhron netsah la-kehilah ha-kedoshah Lask: ahser nechrevah ba-shoah*; Zimroni and Schwartz, *Zikhron netsah la-kehilah ha-kedosha Koloz'var-Klozenburg, asher nehrevah ba-Shoah*; *Le-zekher kehilat Volkovisk*.

publishers with no organizational structure behind them.[731] An examination of the languages of publication showed that although the majority were published in Hebrew, Yizkor books were published in several other languages. Most notably, several books were published entirely in German. The latter were all produced by individual publishers.[732] Furthermore, Hungarian Jews primarily spoke and published in Hungarian, not Yiddish. Finally, eight books published to commemorate Sephardic communities that had no relation to the Yiddish language or the Yiddish world are included among the books studied here.[733]

All of these points lead to the conclusion that the term "landsmanschaft literature" is a partially correct definition of Yizkor books. This definition as used by some scholars, includes both Yizkor books considered as such by scholars, but produced by other publishers, and other publications by actual landsmanschaftn which are not Yizkor books. A notable example is the book on Glubokie,[734] which scholars consider to be a Yizkor book, under the definition of the books as landsmanschaft literature, but was published by two brothers with no organization behind them. There are also many organizations, in Israel and elsewhere, that were explicitly established for purposes other than mutual aid, mainly commemoration.[735] These are not landsmanschaftn by any common definition.

The emphasis on the Yiddish context also appears in the use of the term "yisker buch", which is common in the literature even today. I use the term Yizkor book because the books became a Hebrew- and Israel-centric phenomenon quite early on, and using a Hebrew word transliterated to fit the Hebrew pronunciation is the proper way to reflect this.

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[731] See Aharoni, *Toldot kehilat Rakoshpalotah*; Peter Simonstein Cullman, *History of the Jewish community of Schneidemuehl* (Bergenfield, N.J., 2006); Kafri, *Yalkut ayarat ha-te'omim, Novoselitsah*.

[732] See Gold, *Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina – Vol. 1*; *Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina – Vol. 2*; *Geschichte der Juden in Wien*; *Gedenkbuch der untergegangenen Judengemeinden Maehrens*.

[733] Benyamin Arditti, *Yehude Bulgaryah* (Tel-Aviv: va'ada tziburit Tel-Aviv, 1968 (Inferred)); Dagan and Kobo, *The Jews of Ruschuk, Bulgaria*; Oren, *'Ir u-shemah Monastir*; Parezis, *Ha-kehilah ha-yehudit be-Volos, Yavan = The Jewish Community of Volos, Greece*; Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*, 1; *Zikhron Saloniki*, 2; Romano, Ben, and Levy, *Bulgaria*; *Saloniki – Ir va-em be-israel*.

[734] Rajak and Rajak, *Hurbn Glubok, Sharkoystsene, Dunilovitsh, Postov, Droye, Kazan: dos lebn un umkum fun yidishe shtetlekh in Vaysrusland-Lite (Vilner gegnt)*.

[735] See Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Wadowice Andrychow Kalwarja Myslenice Sucha*; Society, *Cracow*.

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Continuity and Change

It is possible to divide the period of Yizkor book publication roughly into three periods, with the schoolchildren's books serving as the mid-point for this division. The first period of 1943–64 began with the publication of the first Yizkor book, the Lodzher yizker-bukh,[736] which was published by a landsmanschaft in the classic meaning of the term. The United Emergency Relief Committee for the City of Lodz was a US-based organization, established previously by landsleit from Lodz, that provided aid to townsfolk in the Lodz ghetto. During this early period, a relatively small number of books were published every year. There were also a larger number of landsmanschaftn among the publishers. Most editors in this period came from the ranks of the publishers, which meant that they were members of the publishing organization (as was the case for example with the Lodz book) or were themselves the publishers (as was the case for example with the above-mentioned Rajak brothers and the Glubokie book, as well as the books published by Hugo Gold). Many of the organizations that published during this period were founded prior to the Holocaust. This means that even though the exact reason for establishing the organization was not given, it was clearly not done for commemorative purposes. These organizations were therefore more likely to be landsmanschaftn, even if they were not necessarily involved in mutual aid activities.

The books from this period were often published in locations other than Israel and the US. There were still a significant number of Jews in Europe, especially in the late 1940s, but the majority of them had emigrated from the continent by the early 1950s. Israel was founded in 1948 but material conditions were difficult until the late 1960s at least. This was reflected in the number of books published in Argentina during this period: seventeen of twenty-four Argentinian Yizkor books had been published by 1963. The commemorated communities were mostly located in Poland, and the main language of publication during this period was Yiddish. This indicates that the books were mainly aimed at the older generation, those who had lived in the communities before the Holocaust, as well as people who had emigrated to Yiddish-speaking locations in other countries, such as Buenos Aires. Another possible explanation is that texts in Yiddish could not be translated into Hebrew due to the lack of resources. The editors probably received more texts in Yiddish as the second generation survivors were still young and thus were not generally participating in the publication processes. While the overall

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[736] Lodz, *Lodzsher yizker-bukh*.

number of books published in this early period was small, these examples demonstrate that Yizkor books were indeed at the outset a Yiddish-centred phenomenon.

In the second period, from 1964 until the early 1970s, several significant changes took place. Two of the major changes during this period – the general increase in publication numbers and the appearance of schoolchildren as publishers – can be explained with the help of Rüsen's model of historical studies.

The process of publishing a Yizkor book had become more established and structured by the mid-1960s. As a result, professional Yizkor book editors appeared during this period. They were neither landsleit of the community nor part of the publisher group. David Sztokfisz was highly representative of the new group of editors,[737] alongside historian Nachman Blumenthal,[738] Chaim Rabin,[739] Shimon Kanc,[740] A. Wolf Jasny,[741] and Yehudah Leyb Levin (the latter edited the books published by Yad Yahadut Polin).[742] There were outliers too in this period: Sztokfisz had already edited a book in 1955 and

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[737] David Sztokfisz and Irgun yots'e Markushov be-Yisrael, *Hurbn un gvure fun shtetl Markushov = hurbanah u-gevuratah shel ha-'ayarah Markushov* (Tel-Aviv: Fareyn fun Markushover landslayt in Yisroel, 1955); Sztokfisz, *Sefer Vishkov*; *Sefer Frampol* (Tel Aviv: Va'ad ha-sefer Defus Orli, 1966); *Sefer Falenits* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Falenits be-Yisrael, 1967); *Sefer Rubiz'evits', Derevnah, veha-sevivah*; *Sefer Demblin-Modz'its*; *Sefer yizkor Dokshits-Parafyanov ... = Yizker-bukh Dokshits-Parafyanov* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yots'e Dokshits-Parafyanov be-Yisrael uva-tefutsot, 1970); *Sefer yizkor kehilat Kuzmir d'Lublin*; *Sefer Gnivoshov* (Tel Aviv?: Irgune Gnivoshov be-Yisrael uva-tefutsot, 1971); *Sefer Krashnik*; *Sefer Nisviz'* (Israel: Irgune yots'e Nisviz' be-Yisrael uva-tefutsot, 1976); *Sefer Divenishok: yad va-shem le-'ayarah yehudit = Devenishki Book: Memorial Book = Sefer Divenishok: geshikhte fun a shtetl*.

[738] Blumental, *Sefer Mir*; *Sefer-yizkor Baranov*; *Sefer yizkor Rozvadov veha-sevivah*; *Aleksander (al yad Lodz')*; Blumental and Ben-Azar, *Sefer yizkor Maikhov, Kharshnitsah, ve-Kshoinz'*.

[739] Rabin, *Shumsk: sefer zikaron le-kedoshe Shumsk she-nispu be-Sho'at ha-natsim bi-shnat 1942*; *Sefer Vishnevets*; Rabin, *Sefer Vishogrod*; Chaim Rabin, *Bilsk Podlaski: sefer yizkor le-zikhram ha-kadosh shel yehude Bilsk she-nispu ba-Shoah ha-natsit ba-shanim 1939-1944* (Tel Aviv?: Irgun 'ole Bilsk be-Yisrael, 1975); *Mikhov (Lubelski)*.

[740] Kanc, *Svintizian Region – Yizkor Book in Memory of Twenty Three Jewish Communities*; *Sefer Riki*; *Pshedboz'*.

[741] Jasny, *Yizker-bukh fun der Zshelekhover Yidisher kehile = Sefer yizkor li-kehilat Z'elihov*; *Sefer yizkor li-kehilat Shedlits: li-shenat arba'esreh le-hurbanah* (Buenos Ayres: ha-Irgunim shel yots'e Shedlits be-Yisrael uve-Argentina, 1956); *Sefer Pabyanits*; *Yizker-bukh fun der Tshekhanover Yidisher kehile = Sefer-yizkor li-kehilat Ts'ehanov* (Tel-Aviv: Irgun yots'e Ts'ehanov be-Yisrael un di landsmanshaftn in huts-lo'orets, 1962). Jasny is also credited as the editor of the Yiddish section in: Talmi, *Kehilat Sherpts sefer zikaron*.

[742] Levin, *Ostrov Mazovyetsk*; *Ostra'ah*; *Ozarkov*; *Ostra*.

Rabin edited a book as late as 1987. However, an intensive period of Yizkor book production occurred between the early-to-mid 1960s and the early 1970s. This period was characterized by a significantly higher number of publications, as well as an increase in cases where the same editor published multiple volumes. It also brought to the forefront books that were difficult to publish because the community had too few survivors who could participate in the work. Two main groups responded to this problem. The first, as discussed above, was organizations such as Yad Yahadut Polin, the umbrella organization of Polish Jews in Israel, which took it on itself to publish Yizkor books for Polish communities that did not yet have one. The project did not reach far, publishing only a few books for towns starting with Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Nonetheless, it is clear that the group responded to a problem it had identified within the larger project of the commemoration of the ruined communities of Eastern European Jewry. The other group was schoolchildren. Gideon Hausner, the former Chief Prosecutor at the Eichmann trial, used the impact of the trial on Israeli society, as well as his own role in it, to organize youth conferences in Jerusalem and issue a call to schools in Israel to produce Yizkor books. Eleven of the schoolchildren's books are included in this project,[743] published between 1964 and 1974. The schoolchildren differed from other publishers, both in the internal power structure of the publishing group and in their direct relation, or lack thereof, to the Holocaust. (Many of the schoolchildren were the descendants of parents and grandparents who were neither Holocaust victims nor survivors. Using Rüsen's terms,[744] the appearance of schoolchildren publishers is an example of a development over time of a new form of representation of Holocaust memory. The Eichmann trial created an interest in the Holocaust among groups that were previously not involved in Holocaust commemoration. That interest resulted in a new perspective that Holocaust survivors and victims had

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[743] Komemiyut, *Hantsa'hat kehilat Ripin-Polin*; Amarant, *Le-zekher kehilat Dvinsk*; Bernstein, *Yustingrad-Sokolivkah, ayarah she-neheravah: hiburim she-katvu yalde kibuts Mash'abe Sadeh le-hantsahat zikhrah shel ha-'ayarah*; Bronshtain, *Skalat*; Gal and Bet-sefer mamlakhti yesodi "Savyon"-Gane Yehudah., *Le-zekher Rovnah*; Parnas, *Sopotskin: toldot imuts 'ayarah ahat*; Rimon, *Yahadut Tarnov ve-irgune ha-no'ar*; Schwartz, *Zikhron netsakh la-kehilot ha-kedoshot Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah asher nekhrevu ba-Shoah: hantsahat kehilot ha-kodesh Halmin-Turts veha-sevivah*; Tsurnamal and Kefar Ganim. Bet ha-sefer ha-yesodi ha-mamlakhti., *Zikhron netsah la-kehilah ha-kedoshah Lask: asher nechrevah ba-shoah*; Zimroni and Schwartz, *Zikhron netsah la-kehilah ha-kedosha Koloz'var-Klozenburg, asher nehrevah ba-Shoah*; *Le-zekher kehilat Volkovisk*.

[744] See chapter 4. Rüsen, Kerns, and Digan, *Evidence and Meaning: A Theory of Historical Studies*, 42–51.

meaning beyond their existence before the State of Israel was founded. The children and the school staff turned to a new method of commemoration for them: book-form commemoration. Schoolchildren's Yizkor books joined previous publishers to expand and enhance the function of Yizkor books in Israeli society.

The majority of Yizkor books were published during this period, as the tradition of Yizkor books spread from its traditional areas into new ones by including non-Yiddish speaking Ashkenazi areas, such as Hungary, as well as Sephardic communities. Hebrew took over as the main language of publication in this period, and Israel fortified its status as the main place of publication. There was therefore a clearly identifiable shift from a Yiddish-centred phenomenon, and a more heterogeneous composition of places of publication, to a Hebrew-centred, Israeli focus.

The third period, which began in the 1970s, exhibited several changes. The overall number of publications fell significantly from the second half of the 1970s. As part of this process, schoolchildren completely disappeared as publishers. Single-language books in Yiddish nearly disappeared as well, while books in English reappeared. While the overall number of books decreased, a noticeable percentage of the publications were now in English. This change can be attributed to the passing of time; many first generation Holocaust survivors had passed, and the majority of publications were now being produced by members of the second generation. The 1990s also began to see the third generation becoming involved. The third generation of publishers aimed their books at future generations who did not speak Yiddish at all. Their sources were mostly documents and stories handed down from parents and grandparents. The books were mostly in Hebrew and English. Another change in this context is the engagement of larger groups of the second and third generations, who had previously not shown a significant interest in the pre-Second World War life of the diaspora. One notable result of this change was a wider translation effort of Yizkor books, partly into Hebrew but mostly into English. These translations are not included in this research, but are worthy of note. Another result of this generational change was a decrease in the number of organizations overall, and that there were generally almost no landsmanschaftn among the publishers. The share of private individuals as both publishers and editors, including women, increased significantly.

Another change was the publication of Yizkor books for Sephardic communities. There are eight such books included in this research.[745] While these had begun to appear in the late 1960s, the majority were published in the third period. Three of these eight books were initiated by wealthy businessmen, who wanted to create a book-form memorial for their hometown communities, modelled according to the Ashkenazi tradition.[746] This specific type of publisher was unique to the Sephardic communities; they were not found in any of the books commemorating Ashkenazi communities. All of the books for Sephardic communities were almost entirely in Hebrew, with a small number of pages in other languages, mainly Spanish. Yiddish was not spoken in Sephardic communities. Their common Jewish language was Ladino, but it does not appear in the books.

The identities of the participants in the book production process – the publishers, editors and contributors – included Holocaust survivors, most notably of course in the Holocaust period. The narration of the Holocaust period provided in the books was mostly based on eyewitness accounts and not on documents. However, there was also a large proportion of people who were not Holocaust survivors, most commonly landsleit who had emigrated before the Holocaust. Many of the texts describing the community prior to the Holocaust were written by members of this group. They were more likely to be Zionists, which was the main group of emigrants to Israel, which subsequently became the main place of publication. This is almost certainly a contributing factor to the strong Zionist tone found in Yizkor books.

The idea that Holocaust survivors were young Zionists who survived due to their physical fitness is an incorrect perception of survival during the Holocaust. There is no basis for this assumption, which is probably an offshoot of the self-perception of Zionists as young and virile compared to the weak diaspora Jews. In reality, physical prowess had very little to do with survival of the Holocaust. The most common reason for survival noted by survivors was luck. Most survivors fled to the Soviet Union. Others survived by hiding, being helped by gentile friends or by being educated or having useful skills in music or sports. Certainly, after the Holocaust and the establishment of the

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[745] Arditti, *Yehude Bulgaryah*; Dagan and Kobo, *The Jews of Ruschuk, Bulgaria*; Grünwald and Etz-Chaim, *Megilat ha-Sho'ah shel kehilat kodesh Cakovec, h.y.d*; Oren, *'Ir u-shemah Monastir*; Parezis, *Ha-kehilah ha-yehudit be-Volos, Yavan = The Jewish Community of Volos, Greece*; Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*, 1; *Zikhron Saloniki*, 2; Romano, Ben, and Levy, *Bulgaria*; *Saloniki – Ir va-em be-israel*.

[746] Oren, *'Ir u-shemah Monastir*; Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*, 1; *Zikhron Saloniki*, 2.

State of Israel, Zionism became more popular among the survivors, and this is also reflected in the overall tone of the books.

Overall, it is apparent that the term "landsmanschaft literature" only partially fits Yizkor books. A small percentage of Yizkor books were actually published by landsmanschaftn, and some of these books, as well as others published by other organizations and by individuals, were published in Yiddish. The majority of Yizkor books, however, did not fit into both groups – they were not both published by a landsmanschaft *and* in Yiddish. It would therefore be more accurate to describe Yizkor books as part of "landsleit literature" and even more specifically as "communal, commemorative, landsleit literature" to differentiate it from other publications by landsleit and landsleit organizations, as well as from other forms of Holocaust literature, such as survivor memoirs.

Mnemonic Themes

The place and significance of Zionism in the community before the Holocaust were accentuated in the majority of Yizkor books. However, there were some exceptions, most notably books published by highly religious individuals that did not include any mention of Zionism in the community.[747] Beyond the strong emphasis on Zionism, the position on other political ideas varied greatly between books. With regard to communism, for example, some books made no reference to it ever existing in the town while others adopted a hostile attitude to communists as oppressive, violent and deceitful.[748] However, some books displayed a much more balanced approach, looking at communists as individuals and acknowledging that the Soviet occupation, while far from positive, was in hindsight far better for the Jews than the Nazi occupation.[749]

While the vast majority of Yizkor books strongly accentuated the place of Zionism in the community, they generally did not adopt the negative Zionist view of the diaspora. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 reshaped in retrospect the perception of the place of Zionism in Jewish communities before the Holocaust. The foundation of Israel was universally seen in Yizkor books as the most significant event in Jewish history and its highest point to

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[747] One example analysed in this research is: Sofer, *Mazkeret Paks*, 1. This book does not include any mentions of Socialism or Communism as well.

[748] Amitai, *Akerman ve-ayarot ha-machoz*; Kressel, *Sefer Kosov*; Zavidovits, *Kehilat Horodlah sefer zikaron*; Zinger, *Berestechko, haytah ayarah*.

[749] Adini, *Dubno sefer zikaron*; *Hurban Volkovisk be-milhemet ha-olam ha-sheniyah, 1939–1945*.

date. It is therefore not surprising that Zionism was given a significant place in the books, especially considering the background of the authors, many of whom were Zionists who had left Eastern Europe before 1939.

The Zionist view of Jewish history in the interwar period, and later, describes life in the diaspora as a "history of suffering", stressing the hostility of the gentiles against the Jews and the eternal struggle between Israel and Amalek, which in every generation rises up to destroy Israel. This teleological approach to Jewish history regards the State of Israel as the only possible solution to this struggle. As part of this meta-historical ideology, Zionists were understood and represented as strong and independent while the rest of the diaspora were portrayed as naive and weak. This in turn encouraged the idea that the Jews of the diaspora went "like lambs to the slaughter" during the Holocaust, while Zionists fought back. This is of course a false notion of events that is emblematic of the *Yishuv's* attitude to the diaspora, and a lack of understanding on the part of those Jews who were not present in Europe during the Holocaust of the conditions and circumstances faced by Holocaust victims and survivors. In Yizkor books, the story of Amalek and the imperative to remember were often stressed in the editorials, but were almost completely absent from the individual entries. Where it did appear, it was usually in texts written by authority figures or members of the publishing group.

In respect of Zionism, the majority of the editorials, as well as the individual contributions examined, claimed that it was incredibly popular, that the majority of community members were enthusiastic about Zionist ideas and that other ideologies received only sparse support. Where other ideologies were mentioned, Jews who followed them were commonly observed, from the Zionist point of view, as naive people who had lost their way. However, the negative view of the diaspora as historically insignificant and a mere precursor to the state of Israel, and of diaspora Jews as weak, was by and large not accepted in the Yizkor books. Life in the communities before the Holocaust was the most important aspect of Jewish life commemorated in the books. This is reflected in the very large proportion of the books dedicated to the pre-Holocaust period, covering many aspects of life then. The Holocaust receives less attention, and sections dealing with the post-Holocaust and post-1948 periods are smaller still. The very existence of the latter is indicative of just how important Zionism was to the authors and editors. Nonetheless, it is clear that the majority of books first and foremost aimed to commemorate the pre-Holocaust period, that is, the life of the diaspora community. Many authors also discussed feelings of nostalgia towards life before the Holocaust. Others

sought to resurrect the lost community through the stories in the book and through the act of publishing it. On the Holocaust period, the idea of lambs to the slaughter was rarely brought up and when it was, it was commonly done in order to contradict it and to explain to future generations that this was a misperception of Jewish behaviour during the Holocaust.

As for the impact of historical events on the memories produced in Yizkor books, the Eichmann trial and the Six-day war, both considered by scholars as significant to the Jewish memory of the Holocaust, not least in Israel and the US, had a limited impact on the content of Yizkor books. The Eichmann trial had a notable effect on the overall publication numbers of the books and resulted in the appearance of a new category of publishers, Israeli schoolchildren.[750] However, since the trial's main impact on the collective memory and on memory culture was a greater emphasis on the victims, and Yizkor books already focused on the victims, the trial had only a minor effect on the content of the books. This mainly took the form of occasional references to Eichmann himself. The Six-day war also had a limited effect on Yizkor books, possibly due to the 1973 Yom-Kippur war having a contradictory effect on Israelis shortly after. An event not mentioned in previous research but repeatedly raised in Yizkor books was the foundation of the State of Israel. This was generally seen as the most important moment in Jewish history and as the beginning of a new age for the Jewish people. Other important events were those in the life of the community – its founding, important events during its existence, and the circumstances of its death – the German occupation, significant deportations and actions, the local ghetto and, finally, the day the community was destroyed – the final deportation or the liquidation of the local ghetto.

Yizkor Books as "Lieux de Mémoire"

Yizkor books have both produced and participated in the collective memory of the Holocaust in the countries where they have been published. The books are both the results of collective efforts of remembrance and commemoration, and themselves carriers of collective memory – the memories of eyewitnesses transmitted to the reader through language, visual imagery and

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[750] This connects us once again back to Rüsen's model of historical studies. The increase in publishers and publication numbers can be analysed as a response to the need for people to reorientate themselves in the past, as a result of the Eichmann trial. See: Rüsen, Kerns, and Digan, *Evidence and Meaning: A Theory of Historical Studies*, 41–51.

commemorative rituals. In some cases of stories about townsfolk, the memory has been processed, adapted and transmitted more than once, for example, from grandfather to grandchild to the reader. The stories of the exodus from Egypt and the eternal struggle with Amalek are also examples of collective memories transmitted by many generations through written and spoken language, rituals such as the Passover *Sedder* and other traditions. Amalek is an example of a *Lieu de Mémoire* in the Israeli context.[751]

Yizkor books are primarily intended to be repositories of historical knowledge, and of collective and collected memories. The editorials often state that the role of the book is to transmit the history of the community to future generations and to arouse feelings of nostalgia in the old. Some authors mention the rest of the world as their target audience, to tell them what happened and how the nations of the world stood by, and to make sure the Holocaust never happens again. These, however, were not the books' sole intended functions. The books are most often mentioned as being a literal "place of memory" – a replacement for a gravestone. The books are not only markers with a short inscription etched on them; they serve as a substitute space for all those victims whose time of death and places of burial are unknown. The book can be used as a place around which relatives can hold the yearly *azkara* and say the *Kaddish* prayer. Since the date of death for many Holocaust victims is unknown, the *yahrzeit* of the community can instead be used as the *yahrzeit* of individual victims. This communal *yahrzeit* was most commonly set as the date the community was liquidated. In other cases, the date of the initial German occupation or of a significant action was used.

A Mention to Those who were not Mentioned

While most Yizkor books exaggerated the place of Zionism in the diaspora, very few authors adopted the dismissive Zionist position on the place of the diaspora in Jewish history. The main idea in the Zionist understanding of the diaspora was that it was naive and overly trusting of the gentiles, who aimed to destroy the Jews. The weak diaspora was regarded as a historical "dead space" between instances of resistance and heroism, between the rebellions of ancient times and the resistance fighters of the Holocaust. In the Zionist

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[751] Nora, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: Legacies*, 3; *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: Histories and memories*, 4; "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire"; Nora and Jordan, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: Space*, 2; Nora, Jordan, and Trouille, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire: The State*, 1.

version of history, those resistance fighters were young Zionists, and the rest of the diaspora went like lambs to the slaughter. A more extreme point of view claimed that the diaspora deserved its fate and was sacrificed to create the State of Israel so that other Jews would learn the lesson never to trust the gentiles. Only a strong Jewish state, through its military might, could ensure the future safety of the Jewish people. In the US, heroism was also a significant element of Holocaust memory, as was the Holocaust as a violation of human rights, as part of a universal chain of evil happenings. The Zionist or Israeli angle was naturally less significant among the broader US public. At the same time, US Jews were also affected by Israeli Holocaust memory culture.

The Zionist disposition regarding the diaspora appeared in the editorials in some instances. It is most commonly reflected in schoolchildren's books, as the students were not Holocaust survivors or even landsleit of the community. Schoolchildren demonstrated a significantly shallower and less nuanced understanding of life in the diaspora and during the Holocaust. They often presented a self-contradictory position of praising the diaspora as just and worth commemorating, on the one hand, while dismissing the entire diaspora as a precursor for the State of Israel, on the other.

The common position in the editorials, which was also reflected in the content of most of the individual entries examined, was that the diaspora was far from a mere precursor to Israel. While Israel was very important – its founding often seen as the single most important event in Jewish history, and its existence as the dream of every Jew in the many *galuyot*, not just in Europe – the diaspora was still viewed in a positive light as worthy of being remembered.

Yizkor books split sharply from the Zionist and Israeli perspective on the ideas of heroism and martyrdom. In the Zionist tradition, as well as in earlier Jewish traditions, only those who died *al kiddush ha-Shem*, in its strictest sense, were or are martyrs. They were Jews who specifically chose death over conversion, such as the *aseret harugey malchut*, the Tanaic leaders under the Roman occupation of Palestine, who continued to practice Judaism and teach the Bible, while refusing to pay allegiance to the Roman emperor, and were executed for their actions. This definition of martyrdom is highly selective and inherently contradictory, as indicated by the inclusion of the warriors on Masada, for example, as martyrs, even though they chose mass-suicide over fighting the Romans, while excluding Jews who died in the Holocaust, including those who killed themselves, as "lambs to the slaughter".

Yizkor books advocated a highly inclusive approach to martyrdom; all Jews killed during the Holocaust in any relevant territory were considered to have died *al kiddush ha-Shem*. Beyond those victims killed by the Germans and their allies and collaborators during the Holocaust and the Second World War, this definition also included, for example, Jews murdered before 1939, Jews who fled to the Soviet Union and perished there, and Jews who hid among Christians and were found out. This point of view commonly included groups that were "problematic" according to other definitions of heroism, such as children and babies who were incapable of taking up arms, survivors who were sexually exploited by perpetrators, Jews who converted to Christianity and members of the German-created *Judenräte* and Jewish Police. The latter two were accused of being traitors to the Jewish people in other instances. All of these groups were nonetheless considered martyrs, and some authors made the effort to specifically mention them. Since many editors did not include every text they received in the final book, the inclusion of such individual contributions in the books can be seen as reflecting the position of the editor and publishers as well.

Within the ranks of the martyrs, those who took up arms were sometimes mentioned in the Yizkor books as especially honourable, or as having a special place or status among the martyrs. This designation of armed resistance as "better" is very different from the Zionist attitude to armed resistance. From the Zionist point of view, armed resistance is the only kind of heroism, and the only kind worth commemorating. In other words, only those who took up arms were considered martyrs who died *al kiddush ha-Shem*. In Yizkor books, noting those who took up arms is a symbolic act that celebrates those few individuals, but does not negate the universal martyrdom of the victims. All victims will rise at the end of days, and they all deserve to be commemorated as individuals. This is in stark contrast to Zionist Holocaust memory culture, where those victims who did not take up arms were commemorated as a group, in a similar way to the commemoration of most pogrom victims in memorial literature prior to the Holocaust.

What Can Be Learned about Jewish Life in Europe before the Holocaust?

Are the books reliable primary sources for historical research? This question is related to wider discussions on Holocaust historiography regarding the reliability of eye-witness accounts as primary sources for historical research,

and is difficult to answer. A general answer would be "yes, but…". Certain aspects of Jewish life in the diaspora were exaggerated in the books, while other were minimized or even omitted. That said, when specific information is given, such as names, activities, events, and so on, there is no reason to assume that it is intentionally incorrect. General statements and non-eyewitness accounts are where exaggerations are often found. Statements such as "everyone in the town was an avid Zionist" or "the youth of the town was famous for its resistance to the Germans" signal exaggeration.

As is the case with any primary source, the texts in the books should be qualified and corroborated on an individual basis. There are areas where the information provided by the books is likely reliable, some areas where it is lacking, and other areas that are entirely absent. For example, it is possible to learn quite a lot about Jewish life immediately before the Holocaust, about institutions, and about specific individuals. The Holocaust period is another area where there is much to be learned from the texts, as that period is described mainly by witnesses. These accounts have the benefits and shortcomings of any eyewitness account, of course, but it can be assumed that those witnesses are generally as reliable as witnesses in other cases. This applies not only to impressions and feelings, but also to certain details regarding times and the events the witnesses experienced first-hand. Obviously, areas such as the policy or plans of the perpetrators, to name a couple of examples, cannot be exclusively investigated through the eyewitness accounts of the victims. The main area in which individual contributions must be read especially critically is politics, especially when general observations are made regarding the whole community, such as concerning the alleged popularity of Zionism and the Hebrew language, and the highly negative representation of communism and communists. Here, the reader can often get a skewed image of life in the town from the books.

Two historical aspects are missing from Yizkor books. The first is the negative aspects of life in the community. The editors generally adhered to the rule that "we should not speak ill of the dead", which was in turn extended to survivors as well. The books are not the place for settling scores. Most of the negative aspects of the people, institutions and general life in the community are never discussed. This was an explicit rule of the general Yizkor book-publishing community. The books thus tell the truth, with some exaggerations, but not the whole truth. The idea was not to lie about a person's deeds, but instead only to speak of the good deeds or positive aspects of that person's life.

Specifically regarding the Holocaust, the same kinds of omissions by witnesses noted in scholarship on the Holocaust regarding certain types of events were also made in Yizkor books. Topics such as violence between inmates or victims, as well as sexual violence and exploitation, are generally not mentioned. These "taboos" of Holocaust witness accounts were rarely shared with others who were not present at the event itself. The reference by Pinchas Erlich in the Tomaszow Lubelski book to "…the daughters *of ha-halutz*, *ha-shomer ha-tzair*, *Beitar*, Bund, who followed the unknown martyrs of the crusades"[752] is a rare exception. Erlich made no clear statement, but to a reader who can decipher the meaning of his words this is a powerful statement, both in invoking the existence of rape on a large scale and in his clear stance that these girls and women are martyrs too, without exception, just like other victims.

Overall, there is a lot to learn from Yizkor books about Jewish life in the diaspora. However, there is a strong overrepresentation of the Shtetl life over large city life. For example, Warsaw, which had a population of around 400,000 Jews before the war, has two Yizkor books included in this research, while Tomaszow Lubelski, a town with around 12,000 Jews before the Holocaust, also has two books. Thus, the large Jewish communities in the main cities, such as Warsaw, Lodz, Bialystok, Budapest or Vilnius, are underrepresented relative to their size compared to smaller communities. Yizkor books are a much more significant source for knowing about small-town Jewish life than about big city life.

Final Words

By a wide margin, this is the largest qualitative and quantitative research on Yizkor books to date, which includes year of publication, language and geographical location, and how these changed over time. If we accept the estimate given by Yad Vashem that around 1,300 Yizkor books were published,[753] the quantitative analysis covers 47.15% of the books published so far, and the qualitative analysis of editorials covers 43.46% of the books. Previous research has covered a significantly smaller number of books. Moreover, this is the first research to focus on a specific part of the books – the editorials – as sources, instead of selecting different texts from different books. There is room to expand and continue this research further into the

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[752] Lerer, Gordon, and Zilberman, *Sefer zikaron shel Tomaszow-Lub*, 365.
[753] Burnette and Howrowitz, "A Survey of Collections", 284.

future to include more Yizkor books, with the results of this research as a basis for comparison.

This dissertation includes new qualitative knowledge about the people who produced Yizkor books: who they were, and their relation to their book and the commemorated community. It also deals with the reasons they had for initiating and taking part in the publication process, as well as the hardships and challenges they faced. I have presented a typology of Yizkor book publishers, which includes schoolchildren, a type of publisher not previously discussed in the scholarly literature.

The most extensive part of this dissertation deals with memory. I have examined the collective memory of the Holocaust and of the diaspora presented in the books, and their often resistant, sometimes contradictory, relation to the predominant Holocaust memory cultures in Israel, and in part in the US. I have also discussed the memorial and commemorative functions of the books for their producers, including as gravestones, memorial candles and "places of memory", serving as a place to hold commemorative rituals for loved ones and for the community, as well as a locus for conversation as a reminder of a lost time and place. Other points around memory include the books as historical sources, from the authors' and historians' points of view, and the impact of significant memorial events on the memory produced. These areas could and should be developed in future research.

Another option for development is a comparative approach – a focused comparison between the groups discussed in this dissertation, such as types of publisher, groups within Judaism or place of publication, or between Jewish commemorative traditions and other cases, such as other religions or other cases of genocide, or even catastrophes in general.

Finally, following in the footsteps of some of the scholars mentioned in this dissertation,[754] I would argue that the content of Yizkor books could be valuable sources for research and new knowledge about the social and cultural histories of Jewish life in Eastern Europe in the pre-war period and the Holocaust period in Axis-occupied territories, as well as on micro-histories of individual people, such as significant leaders or Holocaust survivors. To a lesser degree, Yizkor books could be used to enhance research on life in Palestine and in Israel, especially between the 1930s and the 1960s.

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[754] Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*; Trunk, *Judenrat: the Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation*.

Glossary

Al kiddush ha-Shem – in Hebrew: על קידוש השם. This very common phrase following someone dying or being killed. Traditionally meant specifically Jews who were murdered because they refused to convert or to renounce Judaism.

Aron Koddesh – in Hebrew: ארון קודש. Literally "Holy cupboard". The place in the synagogue or in the home where holy scrolls (the form in which Torah books are usually in at the synagogue) or books are kept.

Dayan – in Hebrew: דיין , דין. The judge in a rabbinical court.

(ha-)*Galut* – (the) Jewish diaspora outside of the land of Israel. also: *ha-golah.*

Gvir, Gevir – a wealthy man of high social status who has an important formal or informal position of power in the community.

(ha-)*Hachshara* – in Hebrew: הכשרה. Preparation, conditioning. A general name for activities in preparation for immigrating to Palestine, for example agricultural education.

Kaddosh **(male form, in female:** *Kedosha***)** – as an adjective – holy. As a noun – a holy person (a saint would not be a fitting word to use in this particular Jewish context) or a martyr.

Partis **–** a wealthy gentile man.

Parnas – a wealthy man of high social status, similar to the Gvir. These men "supported" the community, through funding of organizations, activities, and locales, as well as by negotiating with the authorities on behalf of the local Jews.

Pessach – in Hebrew: פסח. In English: Passover. The Jewish Holiday celebrating the Hebrews' exodus from Egypt. Celebrated around April (The Jewish calendar oscillates slightly in dates in relation to the Gregorian calendar). The "Final Supper" of Jesus was a "*Sedder Pessach*", the traditional meal on the eve of Passover.

(ha-)*Shem* – a common name used for God in Hebrew and Yiddish, literally means (the) name.

ha-Shem yikom damo (female: -a)(pl male: -am)(pl female: -an) (abbreviated H.Y.D.) In Hebrew: (השם יקום דמו\דמה\דמם\דמן) – A common phrase following

the name of a deceased person or group that died a violent death, meaning "God shall avenge their blood".

Z.L. – abbreviation of "zichrono\-a\-am\-an li-vracha. In Hebrew: – (-) זיכרונו (ן-)(ם-)(ה) לברכה ז"ל. The most common addition to a deceased person's name, could be translated as: 'their memory be blessed'.

Appendix: List of Search Words and Phrases Used in the Analysis of the Thirty Full Books

English	Hebrew
yizkor	יזכור
Eichmann	אייכמן , אייכמנ
Hausner	האוזנר
the Six-day war, the Yom-Kippur war	מלחמ- ת , ה , ששת הימים , ששת-הימים , כיפור
Victory/triumph	ניצחון
IDF	צה"ל
Masada	מצדה
Shoah, *Hurbn*, *Sh'chita*	שואה , חורבן , שחיטה
kaddosh, *kiddush ha-Shem*, *kehila kedosha*	קדושים , קידוש השם , קדוש, קהילה קדושה
Gravestone, Yad-vashem	מציבה , מצבה , יד ושם , יד-ושם
Judenrat	יודנראט
Hitler	היטלר
Liberation	שחרור
Buch	בוך
Israel	ישראל
Diaspora	גולה , תפוצה, גלות
Negation of the diaspora	שלילת הגולה

Resistance, heroism, *amidah*, partisans	התנגדות , גבורה , עמידה , פרטיזן –ים , פארטיז
lambs to the slaughter	צאן לטבח
Characters, types	דמויות , טיפוסים
Zionism	ציונות , ציונים
Tekumah	תקומה
Resurrection	תחיה , תחייה
Communism	קומוניסט –ים , קומוניזם
Nazism	נאציזם
Fascism	פאשיזם
Socialism, Bund	סוציאל , סוציאליסט , סוציאליזם , בונד
Kaddish	קדיש

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