

CHAPTER 1

In Memory of Leo Baeck and Other Jewish Thinkers in “Dark Times”

Once More, “After Auschwitz, Jerusalem”

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REMEMBERING LEO BAECK

The last time I spoke in public was at Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem, on November 7, 2000, just two days before the anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, the event I would understand—in retrospect, many years later—as the beginning of the Holocaust. Two days later, someone in Berlin would mention Rabbi Leo Baeck, no more than his name, for who would still know him? But I had been a student of his, in the period 1935–1938, at the Berlin *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*.

Even before I got there in 1935, Baeck had distributed a prayer, to be read in Berlin synagogues on *Kol Nidre*, which—as always at the beginning of Yom Kippur—“confessed Jewish sins, individual and collective,” but also, at *Kol Nidre*, this early in the Nazi regime, voiced “revulsion at the lies, the false charges made against our faith and its defenders,” then adding “let us trample these abominations beneath our feet.” This was Baeck at his militant: he had been *Feldrabbiner* in the Great War. The prayer ended as a plea that

these “soft words” be “heard.” However, Heil-Hitler barks and pseudo-Christian “prayers” were too noisy: the soft prayer was not heard.

For this and other acts of courage, Baeck was jailed, several times.

In all that followed, he showed the same rectitude, and also an uncommon perspicacity, for he knew, early on, that this was the end of German Judaism. But he vowed to stay in Berlin as long as even a *minyan* was left, kept his vow, hence was deported to the Nazi *Musterlager*, Theresienstadt.

By accident he survived, went on teaching in London and Cincinnati, but never spoke of the horrors he knew: he wanted Jewish faith to live—the German liberal version included, if not in Germany, elsewhere—rather than die in despair: he took the horrors he knew to his grave.

But he taught Midrash in Berlin as if nothing was happening, also homiletics: when once a *Rabbinatskandidat* was too long in his *Probe-Predigt*, “trial sermon,” also spoke on too many subjects, Baeck corrected him, mildly, as was his custom: if this were his last sermon before leaving for Argentine, only then would this sermon do: this was one of his few references to our situation.

Scholars who did not know him often fail to grasp how deeply Baeck knew what he was up against, yet would not compromise either on how he taught Judaism in Berlin or on how he practiced it in Theresienstadt. If, despite this, the Nazis used him, his rectitude included, this only shows their utter shamelessness, cunning and, most important of all, the *weltanschauung* that inspired it all; but to this I can come only later—*much* later.

THE DICTUM OF JEWISH PHILOSOPHER HANS JONAS

The aforementioned is in summary of an address I gave more than half a year ago.¹ Then I also reported how Baeck taught Midrash. The biblical *Song of Songs* is understood by the rabbis, not as love between the sexes but between God and Israel. *Song of Songs*, 2:7, “adjures the maidens of Jerusalem to awaken not, nor stir up love until it pleases.”

I recall Baeck teach a Midrash on this verse in Berlin, but did he teach it also in Theresienstadt? Half a year ago I was sure; now I am no longer.

When, after the war, I visited him in London I did not dare to ask about Nazi crimes, and all he would tell me was that, when he and another had to pull a heavy wagon in Theresienstadt, they were discussing Plato and Isaiah.

Since my lecture at Hebrew Union College, of half a year ago, a turmoil has occurred that then was not predicted but that, now we know, is yet far from over; also, unlike then, we have two days of reflection ahead of us. Hence I will mention just *one* more fact—*just one horror* Baeck knew: in Theresienstadt, the Nazi *Musterlager*, he learned of the fate awaiting Jews boarding those trains. Innocents, they wondered: would they take them to a work camp? To some sort of newly established settlement? Baeck was told the truth, but could he believe it, was it believable? Now most of us know “Auschwitz” has

happened, while others assert it never did: but for Baeck—*then and there, in Theresienstadt—was it believable?*

Whether it was or not, he had a problem: *should he tell?* But if *one* knew, soon *all* would. He decided on silence: *the horror he took to his grave included this silence.*

Was he right? Basic for philosophy—especially the “existential,” such as Martin Heidegger’s—is that doctors knowing their patients will die must tell them the truth, but while the doctor’s doomed patient can speak to a lawyer and, of course, to family, in contrast, at Auschwitz each would die alone: for *that* death philosophy, including the “existential”—stress, though it may, loneliness vis-à-vis death—has not been—*never will be*—existential enough.

Philosophic thought must therefore go *one step* farther: in the Holocaust, “much more was real than is possible.” We owe this dictum, mind-boggling as it is, to Jewish philosopher Hans Jonas; to put less briefly what Jonas put all-too-briefly, if the evil-more-than-possible is radical, and if to *explain* radical evil is ipso facto to *diminish* it, that is, make it *less than* radical, must not philosophy, the more self-critical it is, be the more *ruthless* in facing the Holocaust as being both “real-and-impossible”?

This goes far to explain why scoundrels still get away with “there never was a Holocaust, at most some normal killing to avoid some normal plague.” Holocaust denial was already predicted by the perpetrators: in “Auschwitz” they would scoff at the victims: “if a few of you should survive, who will believe you?” It seems, then, that we are *in the midst of a race*, lasting perhaps for 100 years, at the end of which the Holocaust will *either* be denied or—much the same—be distorted beyond recognition, *or else*—with patient scholarship, pious memory for which *that* past will never go away and an always-insufficient philosophy be recognized for what it was. And of the 100 years only just over sixty are gone.

I call philosophy “insufficient” because a philosophy that truly faces the Holocaust does not need to be told: it knows its own insufficiency itself. Philosophy is rational, and reason explains; but is not explaining radical evil ipso facto making it less-than-radical? It would seem that historians can *show* radical evil, but cannot *explain* it.²

The two days ahead are on philosophy, general as well as Jewish: it is good to keep Jonas’s dictum in mind.

MORDECAI KAPLAN AND MOSHE DAVIS

My final lecture, at the end of this conference, will be on general philosophy; this, my first, at its opening, is on Jewish philosophy, hence, to be comprehensive should include the American, Mordecai Kaplan; but I had long been too much of a “Buberite” (of which more later) to take Kaplan seriously on theology. If, nevertheless, I once gave a lecture in his honor, it was mostly for

Moshe Davis: he had absorbed Kaplan's critique of Jewish theology as ignoring Jewish "peoplehood," hence, invented a concept of "Jewish civilization." Davis had applied this concept radically, first by making *Aliyah* and then, in Jerusalem, with the help of that concept founded an "Institute for Contemporary Jewry," this within Hebrew University, but also, in a sense, against it: a time "epoch-making" (Hegel) for "Jewish peoplehood"—the Holocaust and the rebirth of a Jewish state—was no time when "contemporary events" could be left to journalists: it also needed scholars—and, so I thought—philosophers. Moshe did more than anyone else to bring us to Jerusalem.

MARTIN BUBER

Martin Buber was not personally exposed as Leo Baeck; yet as early as 1933 the thinker, who has bestowed the word "dialogue" on politics—more, made *genuine* dialogue with "the Other" the core of his thought—was himself compelled to rise to tough politics. Two hundred years earlier, with Jewish emancipation in Germany beginning, a certain Johann Caspar Lavater had written to Moses Mendelssohn, asking him to refute what some third-rate Christian theologian had written or, if unable to, to do "what Socrates would have done," convert. Mendelssohn was famous, admired widely, even by Gentiles, as "another Socrates." Lavater never would have been famous, at least not in Jewish history, not even because of this episode, but only because his challenge was public, hence, at length, forced Mendelssohn to become the first modern Jewish philosopher. But in immediate response to Lavater, Mendelssohn replied publicly, as diplomatically as possible.

In 1933, Buber was challenged, also publicly, replied also publicly, also diplomatically; but that Jewish emancipation in Germany was coming to an end was obvious from the book the challenger had sent him: Gerhard Kittel did not want conversion but asserted that Jews were a *fremdes Volkstum*: Kittel was a Christian Nazi.

I once used that term, *Christian Nazi*, in a lecture—just once. (If one used it more often, one would cheapen it.) Someone stormed forward after the lecture: "Christian Nazi? A contradiction in terms!" I said, sadly "true by definition, but for twelve years the impossible-by-definition was empirically real." Kittel's father, Rudolph, had edited *Biblia Hebraica*. The son was the first editor of a theological dictionary of the New Testament. It will not do for Christian apologists, at this late date, to get away with "Nazism was pagan."

If Kittel was not another Lavater, then Buber was not another Mendelssohn. In replying publicly, Mendelssohn risked goodwill, perhaps his health; in doing the same, Buber risked concentration camp.³

Just prior to the 1938 *Kristallnacht* Buber found refuge in the *Yishuv*, soon the embattled, reestablished Jewish state. Long before, however, his 1923 *I and Thou* became a classic, if not for Muslims for Christians as well as Jews. For me this small book is precious still, for in it Buber made the

Durchbruch, “breakthrough,” of his life, from his earlier *ideas*-about-Judaism to God *himself*, a *Durchbruch* he even in extremis never abandoned. Perhaps this was not without help from his friend and collaborator, Franz Rosenzweig who, in the *Herzbuch*, the “core” of his *Star of Redemption*, had cited *Song of Songs*, 8:6, that “strong as death is love.” A love *stronger than* death would invite a mystic flight from reality, which Buber and Rosenzweig jointly opposed; a death *stronger than* love would lead to pagan despair.⁴ Rosenzweig’s choice of this passage had been—for philosophy, Judaism—a stroke of genius.

On his part, Buber focused on the actuality of the inter-human, the possibility of human-Divine “dialogue”: he persisted in it, as long as possible—possibly too long: its key thesis is that one must be open in “dialogue,” so that even from a genuine “encounter” with a human “thou”—let alone the Divine “Eternal Thou”—one does not emerge the same as one had been. The allusion is to biblical prophets, their initial call: after Isaiah, ch. 6, Jeremiah, ch. 1, surely neither prophet was the same. But while I still am with Buber on the Bible, he himself shrank from such allusions. The one time Rose and I met him, in 1957 in Princeton, he asked me to change one word in an essay I had written. I had called him a “prophet in modern guise.” He asked me to substitute “sage.”

The Holocaust was over in 1945, surely known to all who cared ten years later, yet—as historians such as Yehuda Bauer have understood—it is one thing to *learn* “facts” about it, another to *absorb* even some, let alone the Holocaust as a whole, for the closer one gets to it the more unintelligible and incredible it is. Much has recently been written on Buber on politics, but for me his thought on God has always been ultimate, hence, what still troubles me deeply, retroactively, even reading him now, is that as late as 1957 he could still write the following:

The mutuality between God and Man is not demonstrable, just as is the existence of God itself; but he who dares speak of it, thereby testifies to it, and also calls for testimony on the part of one addressed, present or future.⁵

Who—other than a few individuals here and there—all by then, virtually alone, totally helpless—was “addressed” during the Holocaust, even after it?

Five years earlier, Buber had published *Eclipse of God*, a book admitting that “*Gottesfinsternis* is the characteristic of the world-hour we live in.”⁶

True, *Eclipse of God* concerns only the realm of thought, not that of life, when it deals with Sartre, Heidegger, Jung, even Kierkegaard. But Maurice Friedman, Buber’s faithful biographer, ends his chapter on *Gottesfinsternis* with a question I had asked of Buber when he was still alive—whether his “eclipse” is not “troubling.” Buber had replied that he was unable to conceive of divine Revelation as ever ceasing; but that for us humans it appears as a time of divine absence. Friedman’s own chapter ends with Buber himself:

“He that says it is getting brighter leads into error.” Bold though he was for a *Durchbruch* to God, Buber would not, could not, face radical evil. I must stress again that Buber knew the Holocaust cannot be forgotten or “forgiven,” but add now that all sorts of Christians ask us to do both.⁷

LEO STRAUSS

Leo Strauss never was my teacher, but I still think of him as a mentor, which he later was, but he pushed me into thinking as far back as Berlin when I studied *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, what such as Yehuda Halevi or Maimonides had written and thought; but I wanted to know whether it was true, any of it. Hence, just at the right time I came upon Strauss’s advice to “reopen the dusty old books,” “dusty” as well as “old” because, if anyone opened them, it was only for *Wissenschaft*, “facts”—for me already then, *dead* facts. Specifically, even back in Berlin, Strauss disturbed and enlightened me with one question: “Which is more critical, modern philosophy when, simply qua modern, it dismisses Revelation, as a cultural, purely human phenomenon or its medieval predecessors when, while using reason, they treat it as merely human, that is, subject to Revelation which is divine?” This question disturbed and enlightened me so deeply, so lengthily, as to cause me to write my Toronto PhD thesis, years later, from 1943 to 1945, on medieval Arabic philosophy, and from this I got to Maimonides: I would take past Jewish philosophy seriously, but only if it was not Jewish only, even though it accepted Revelation, nay, because of it.

In retrospect, I can say this: I never was as much of a “Buberite” as to accept his *Durchbruch* to God on his own grounds, for an essay of mine on Buber’s concept of Revelation followed only after I had explored Maimonides.⁸

Only as late as 1982 did I dedicate *To Mend the World* to Leo Strauss’s memory, for he had recovered for me the possibility, hence, necessity, of Jewish philosophy. From nobody else did I ever learn so deeply that great thinkers of the past are not superseded fools but fellow philosophers, contemporaries.

HEIDEGGER, ROSENZWEIG, PRIMO LEVI

Subsequently, I abandoned medieval philosophy for “thought-in-the-‘present age’” (Kierkegaard), hence, could not—no more than Strauss—avoid Martin Heidegger. But neither Strauss’s involvement nor my own was either long or deep for—to quote Heidegger’s student, Karl Löwith—he was a *Denker in dürftiger Zeit*, “a time of need.”⁹

In contrast, Strauss and I turned to philosophers in times of greatness. (As I would tell my Jewish students—those concerned with the subject—Jewish philosophy must be done in relation to either Plato/Aristotle or Kant/Hegel.¹⁰) With hesitation, Strauss finally turned to Plato, I to the “golden age” of German philosophy, climaxing with Hegel. But neither Strauss nor I could ever become indifferent to what was happening to Jews.¹¹

Strauss and I had Franz Rosenzweig in common: he dedicated his first book to Rosenzweig's memory, and I, as already mentioned, my magnum opus to that of Strauss himself. In taking Rosenzweig seriously, we had a third in Emmanuel Levinas; but he found it necessary to stay with Heidegger, much longer, more deeply than either Strauss or I.

The same *dürftige Zeit*—it had started before the Great War—that caused Heidegger to write *Sein und Zeit* caused Rosenzweig to immerse himself in Hegel, only to conclude that his own *Stern der Erlösung* was possible—for a Jew post-Hegel *mortuum*, even necessary. Hegel had rescued him permanently—so Rosenzweig thought—from “historicity,” viewed by him as a “curse” because to be *in the midst* of history was to be cut off from Transcendence, the highest, metaphysical truths. For Rosenzweig, Hegel's “old thinking” had risen, in an abstract way, to Transcendence, so that post-Hegel *mortuum*, his own “new thinking,” was possible. But—as I will try to show later—little more than twenty years after 1921, the first appearance of the *Stern*, a devastating rupture took place in history, by no means for Jews only, that caused both “old” and “new” thinking to plunge into an unprecedented crisis, in my view not over yet: *Good and Evil after Auschwitz: Ethical Implications for Today*. What *are* the “ethical implications for today”?¹²

“Good” is still the same after Auschwitz *but is “Evil”*? Hegel's “Spirit” could “overcome” even the “death of God,” the worst evil he could think of, and if for Nietzsche “God is dead,” “everything is permitted”; but in “Auschwitz,” radical evil *was commanded*—even committed by “ordinary men” merely invited, as a way to celebrate *Erntefest*, “harvest festival,” that is, to participate in the final murder of Polish Jewry.¹³

But what of philosophy? His *Zeit* was *dürftig*, for Heidegger, and also for Rosenzweig, who wrote much of his *Stern* in the trenches of the Great War, but the two philosophers ended quite differently: Rosenzweig's book ends with a hopeful, perhaps even joyous, call “Into Life.” Heidegger's end may be said to be in 1953, when he published lectures first given in 1935. The book is published without change: toward its end, included is praise of the “truth” and “greatness” of the national-socialist “movement,” if not what was, he subsequently claimed, was already then offered as its “philosophy,” but also, early in the book, repeatedly, that Germans are the “metaphysical” *Volk*, endangered in Europe's heart in the “pincers” between Russia and America, two countries “metaphysically the same,” in “preeminence of mediocrity.”¹⁴

The book's appearance caused much discussion, as to whether, in republishing in 1953 what he had said in 1935, Heidegger was honest or, even in 1953, still something of a Nazi, albeit with a different “philosophy” and the *cognoscenti* know that this kind of discussion, more among French than German Heideggerians, has not yet ended.¹⁵

But for me, a Jewish philosopher writing in 2001, it is not only irrelevant but also offensive, indeed, philosophically mendacious, for it still evades what Heidegger never faced—that his—possibly once—“metaphysical *Volk*”

had become implicated, even philosophically, hence destroyed by the Nazi weltanschauung, hence he said not a single word while, in the name of that very weltanschauung, indeed, for its sake, they acted criminally to the Jews of Europe, also abused teachers I revered, exploiting Baeck's rectitude, assaulting Buber's faith at its weakest; only Strauss had escaped, not only physically but also in thought, seeking refuge in philosophy elsewhere.

May one say that "escape" can be applied also to Rosenzweig? He never left Germany, died heroically, tragically, much too young in 1929—but even so, as it were—by "divine grace"? His death occurred more than three years before the Nazi *Machtergreifung*, "seizure of power": his death may be compared to that of German Judaism as a whole.

The "Into Life" with which his *Stern* ends in 1921 still speaks today, *but to whom?* Not to Jews of twenty-odd years later, the Auschwitz *Muselmänner*, for of these Primo Levi wrote in 1958, "One hesitates to call them living; one hesitates to call their death death, in the face of which they have no fear, for they are too tired to understand."¹⁶

It took Levi fully thirty years before he could write that the *Muselmänner* are not only *victims* but also *witnesses*, both unique:

"When the destruction was terminated, the work accomplished was not told by anyone, just as no one ever returned to recount his own death. Even if they had paper and pen, the submerged would not have testified because their death had begun before that of their body. Weeks and months before being snuffed out, they had already lost the ability to observe, to remember, compare and express themselves. We speak in their stead, by proxy."¹⁷

Now that Levi is dead, *who is proxy?* For humans of flesh-and-blood it is impossible, hence there remains only philosophy, possibly all of it, certainly the Jewish. Ever since Jacob, possibly since Abraham, Jews have wrestled with their God, and—whatever may be said of it otherwise—Jewish philosophy has always protected Him from triviality, often against superhuman odds, philosophy's own included, letting Leibniz prove this was "the best of all possible worlds," Voltaire mock "theodicy."

Henceforth, Jewish philosophy has a new task, located as it is between two extremes, neither of which can be trivialized, one, as always, God, the other the 6 million. They "did not return from their death." Even they do not, cannot.

HALLEL AND HÄNDEL

I am ambivalent about Germany. This is most easily explained by my *Heimatstadt*: two persons known worldwide were born in Halle, one famous, the other infamous. Historians such as Eberhard Jaeckel view Reinhard Heydrich as a worse German instigator of the Holocaust than even Himmler, this latter merely Hitler's *treue Heinrich*, and Hitler himself was Austrian. Heydrich was

Curt Lewin's neighbor, and Lewin was a good friend of my father's: that the Holocaust had been as close to me I learned only decades later.

The world-famous person, born in Halle, was Georg Friedrich Händel, of great composers surely alone in his love not only of biblical but also postbiblical Judaism: he composed *Israel in Egypt*, *Jephtah*, and many other Old Testament works, but also the postbiblical *Judas Maccabaeus*. Despite his words in his *Matthaeus-Passion*, which disturbed my mother, who loved Bach's music, even though Rosenzweig recommended Bach, Händel is better in that even his *Messiah* contains no anti-Jewish words. More, love of Händel was with us not only personally, for we often heard *Hallel* (Psalms 113–118) in synagogue, on *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot*, to the great hymn from *Judas Maccabaeus*; this also was sung in Berlin synagogues, but in Halle it was special.¹⁸

In 1998, on a visit to Halle, I went to the *Marktplatz*, not for other *Sehenswürdigkeiten*, "things to see"—such as the *Rote Turm* or the *Marienkirche*, in which one of Bach's sons, Wilhelm Friedemann, had once been organist—but just for one purpose: to see whether Händel's statue is still there. They had smashed Mendelssohn's in Dresden and changed the text of Händel's *Israel in Egypt* to "*Opfersieg von Walstatt*."¹⁹

Twelve years of Nazism had been enough to make Germany *judenrein*, but too short to "cleanse" her of "Aryan Jew lovers": Händel's statue is still there.

Even so, my attitude to Germany remains ambivalent, for in *Kristallnacht* they destroyed the Halle synagogue and, soon after, through expulsion or murder, "cleansed" her of Jews. True, there are Jews again in my *Heimatstadt*, even a *Bethaus* in the cemetery, but "*Hallel and Händel*"? Once a possibility, even an actuality, but *nimmermehr*, "never again."

BUBER IN DEFIANT FIDELITY

I also am ambivalent about Jews, even Israelis, also related to "Hallel," but quite different otherwise. I get this from a slim book of Buber's which, not contained in his collected German *Werke*, seems to exist only in English and, in Germany at least, is all but unknown: *At the Turning*²⁰ consists of three lectures and is preceded by the foreword: "The reader should bear in mind that a Jew speaks here to Jews, in the center of the Diaspora [i.e., New York], in the hour when the deciding crisis of Judaism begins to become manifest."

For these lectures, I have reason to believe, Buber's arm was twisted, just as mine was, in the same city, fifteen years later, when I first spoke of the "614th commandment."

At the final lecture's climax, Buber asks: "Dare we recommend to the survivors of Oswicim, the Job of the gas chambers: 'Call to Him, for He is kind, for His mercy endureth forever.'" (This, slightly misquoted, is Buber's English, translated badly and not edited at all.)

The verse Buber quotes, too, is taken from *Hallel*, which—to repeat—is recited on *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot*, festivals when once Israelites would go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, there to give thanks to the “God of history.”²¹

Evidently, Buber could not bring himself to use the word “Auschwitz” in German. Prior to the crucial question just quoted, he has asked whether Jews can still “speak” to God, “hear His Word,” two questions surely testing, even ruining, his thought in toto, yet he ends his lecture with a defiance that, for him, has no precedent: “Though His coming appearance resemble no earlier one, we shall recognize again our cruel and merciful Lord.”

This Buber writes in 1952. As late as 1960, five years before his death, Buber completed a project begun many decades earlier with Rosenzweig, a translation of the Hebrew Bible for German-Jewish readers—this, however, when none to speak of are left in Germany.

Buber’s *Gottesfinsternis* is still here, still with us, yet I say to all Jews here in Jerusalem tonight—to Jews anywhere—that we are a collective Nahshon. The Midrash imagines that this biblical figure jumps into the Re(e)d Sea before the waters had even parted, hoping for a miracle, but determined, if none would happen, to swim alone.

“After Auschwitz, Jerusalem”: the “comma” means no cause-effect relation obtains between these two, only links: one hope, the other resolve.

NOTES

1. The November lecture appears in English in *Judaism* 197:50 (Winter 2001): 53–59.

2. This was shown masterfully by Ian Kershaw: *Hitler 1889–1936: Hubris; Hitler 1936–1945: Nemesis* (London: Penguin, 1998, 2000). The author needed fully fifty years for a perspective on World War II yet was himself still close enough not to treat it as “ancient,” no longer relevant, for his generation still suffered the aftermath. Hence, his book is scholarship yet reads like a tragedy, not only for victims but also Germans who, *mitgegangen*, were *mitgehangen*, had somehow or other gone along with it. Kershaw has done what another Englishman, Winston Churchill, promised but could not do, get rid, with Hitler himself, also of his “shadow.” (Of course, this is only a book, not post-Hitler history, getting rid of it, *all* of it.)

Hence, Kershaw is gripping on the Holocaust, in *Hubris*, as no mere *Führer* whim but indispensable for the Nazi *weltanschauung*; in *Nemesis*, first as “Marks of a Genocidal Mentality” (ch. 3) and in the end, in terrible, logical fulfillment of a “prophecy” (ch. 10). Germans reading the book can now relate to what is called the *Rausch* of their grandparents, while Raul Hilberg, the first and still most intrepid witness, can now be satisfied.

Yet despite Kershaw, the “race” of which I have spoken is unfinished, for simultaneous with Kershaw was Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War To Be Won* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000) which merely counts the war dead, implying that, of 50 million, 6 million Jews are not that many, especially since “war-related deaths” are “not easy to define” (555).

Murray and Millett are thus far only last in a long line. The first postwar book was Bullock's *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (London: Odhams Press, 1952), whose interest in tyranny in general then made him write *Hitler and Stalin* (London: HarperCollins, 1991), like Hannah Arendt, concerned with totalitarianism in general, away from the Holocaust in particular. Then came Joachim Fest's *Hitler* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1974), who begins with "Hitler would have been a great man had he died in 1938." He forgets, or finds irrelevant, that *Kristallnacht* was in that year and ends with admitting that the *Führer* did have a *weltanschauung* in which Jew hatred was central but because of "remnants of bourgeois morality" (744) wanted no details; then came Robert G. Waite's *The Psychopathic God* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), a "psycho-history," as such, always suspect to historians but especially when "explaining" the Holocaust; now we have Winter-Baggett and Gerhard L. Weinberg contradict each other about the relation between the two wars, hence ipso facto about the Holocaust. Winter-Baggett's *Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century* (London: BBC Books, 1996) has the Second World War merely continue the Great War, thus making the Holocaust possible, including that the Auschwitz inscription *Arbeit Macht Frei* was honestly meant by Rudolph Hoess, the world's greatest mass murderer (399). "Hatred was no part of his nature, but systematic killing was" (398). In contrast, Weinberg's *Germany, Hitler and World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) documents that, unlike the first, World War II was about "who would live and what peoples would . . . disappear" if wanted by the German "aggressor." But even Weinberg admits that Hitler's announced "alliance with the devil against the Jews has not been given the attention it deserves" (33).

This survey shows the uncertainty of historians regarding "radical evil." The first to write on this concept in modernity was Kant; Hegel tried to "overcome" Kant, and Schelling pursued what Kant had written.

3. Buber's essay is in *Disputation and Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter*, a classic in this subject, edited by my late friend, Frank Ephraim Talmage (New York: KTAV, 1975).

4. See my article in Wolfdieter Schmiech-Kowarzik, ed., *Der Philosoph Franz Rosenzweig* (Freiburg: Alber, 1988); also, especially those by Shlomo Avineri and Otto Pöggeler.

5. Martin Buber, *Werke* vol. I (München: Lambert-Schneider, 1963), 170.

6. *Ibid.*, 520.

7. Maurice Friedman, *Martin Buber's Life and Work* (New York: Dutton, 1983), 167.

8. In chapter 11 of Schilpp-Maurice Friedman, *Martin Buber* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Press, 1967) I treat Buber's concept of Revelation. In note 21 that follows I ask why Richard Rubenstein did not remain with Buber's "eclipse."

9. Heidegger, *Denker in Dürftiger Zeit* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Rupprecht, 1960).

10. At least one has listened to my advice. See Michael Morgan, *Platonic Piety* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990).

11. Strauss's last book is *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), yet in its middle is a chapter on "Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections."

12. The question was raised in Rome in 1998, but few of the thirty Catholics, Protestants, and Jews attending, myself included, would say—except for us, *temporar-*

ily—our answers were final. The text is *Good and Evil after Auschwitz: Ethical Implications for Today*, ed, Jack Bemporad, John T. Pawlikowski, and Joseph Sievers (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 2000).

13. See, on the one hand, for voluntary murder by “ordinary men,” Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men* (New York: Harper, 1992, esp. ch. 15). On the other hand, not even in Auschwitz was evil inevitable. Dr. Ella Lingens, a prisoner, recalled at the Frankfurt trial that there was one island of peace at the [Auschwitz] Babice subcamp, because of an officer named Flacke. “How he did it I do not know,” she testified. His camp was clean and the food also.” The Frankfurt judge, who had heard endless protestations that orders had to be obeyed, was amazed: “Do you wish to say,” he asked, “that everybody could decide for himself to be either good or evil at Auschwitz?” “That is exactly what I wish to say,” she answered. *Toronto Globe & Mail*, October 2, 1981.

14. *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1953), 32, 34, 152.

15. See Richard Wolin, *The Heidegger Controversy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), especially Otto Pöggeler, 198 ff. Heidegger’s supposed depth in his search for “Being” precludes the most elementary moral judgments when he classifies murder at Auschwitz and bombs at Hiroshima as merely two ways of technology, as if Japan had not declared war, while it was true of victims of Auschwitz only in the Nazi weltanschauung.

16. *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Collier, 1958), 82. The book’s original title *If This Is a Man?* is much more philosophical.

17. *The Drowned and the Saved* (London: Abacus, 1988), 64

18. See Fred P. Frieberg, *Musik im NS Staat* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1989), 352. In 1942, Hans Georg Goerner, *Musikdirektor* of Berlin *Propstei*, wrote that it was impossible to sing “about the glorification of the Jewish Yahwe of vengeance, while world Judaism prepares the mobilization of all humanity, for annihilating the Aryan race” (353). Under the influence of Pietism, “Daughter Zion,” once was a German song for Christmas Eve, but the music was not only in London synagogues.

19. I am writing to Halle’s Oberbürgermeisterin for a picture, for my memoirs.

20. Martin Buber, *At the Turning* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Young, 1952).

21. In a forthcoming review of *The Death of God Movement and the Holocaust*, ed. S. R. Haynes and J. K. Roth (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), I ask why Richard Rubenstein—who says that, never a “God-is-dead theologian,” he merely asserted this was “the time of ‘God is dead’”—did not stay with Buber’s “eclipse,” the crucial difference being that one can still stay with the Jewish “God of history” if one can hope for the “eclipse” to end. I was glad to contribute to his *Festschrift* myself, but it would have been better to have a different title than *What Kind of God?*