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THE EUROPEAN JEWISH RESEARCH ON THE RECENT JEWISH CATASTROPHE IN 1939-1945*

By PHILIP FRIEDMAN

1. THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH AND THE CHARACTERISTIC OF ITS SOURCES

The catastrophe of extinction struck European Jewry on the eve of a significant anniversary. European Jewry was preparing to celebrate the 150th anniversary of a turning point in Jewish History — the French Revolution which initiated a period of emancipation and civic equality for the Jews resulting in their ever increasing participation in human culture and civilization. After a period of such optimistic prospects the catastrophe with its unprecedented sufferings and enormous losses hit us even more acutely. The impact of the Tragedy was increased through its international geographic extension. Unlike the earlier catastrophes in Jewish History which for the most part were confined to one country this catastrophe spread over continental Europe. The international character of the destruction is of tremendous importance both for the scope of scientific study, its methods and scholarly apparatus.

Our historiography has always been faced with problems much bigger than the history of any nation. Instead of covering just one national territory we have to cover whole continents and dozens of countries with heterogenous political, economic and social backgrounds and with different, partic-

* This study is confined to an analysis of Jewish research activities on the recent Jewish Tragedy as far as these activities are carried on in Europe only. The problems and achievements of Jewish research in this field in Israel and America should deserve a special study.

The author wants to express his warm thanks to Mrs. Jeanette M. Baron for her helpful assistance in stylistic revision and correction of this paper.

ular problems. The Jewish historiography of the recent catastrophe has an even more multi-levelled basis. Materials—a rather tremendous amount of sources—are scattered over dozens of countries, in various languages, have been and are being compiled by as many governmental, municipal, communal, international and private institutions with diverse ideological and political approaches, with different goals and objectives. An attempt should be made here to present some characteristics of these materials both as to their quantity and quality and as to the methods of producing and exploiting them.

The quantity, as already mentioned, is very considerable. The Germans in their sudden collapse did not succeed in destroying everything, and much first class material was found or uncovered by the victorious allied armies. Important parts of this official German material have been presented in the War Crime Trials all over Europe. To show the size and abundance of these stocks it is sufficient to give a few illustrations:

The First Nuremberg War Crimes Trial Commission and the offices of the four allied prosecutors presented an amazing amount of documents, evidence and depositions. Some collections of this tremendous assemblage of sources have been edited. The extensive U. S. edition with its bulky 36 volumes published to date may be mentioned in the first place¹ as well as the smaller preparatory edition in 8 volumes with two supplementary vols.² The French government followed with voluminous publications as did the Soviet government.³ The

¹ International Military Tribunal. Trial of the Major War Criminals before the Int. Milit. Tribunal. 14 Octob. 1945–31 August 1946. Proceedings and Documents. Washington D. C. 1947.–

² International Military Tribunal. Nazi Conspiracy and aggression. Office of U. S. Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality. Washington D. C. 1946–7. A critical examination from the Jewish point of view cf. Joseph Guttman's article in YIVO-Bleter. New York 1947. vol. XXX, # 1. p. 5-20.

³ Tribunal Militaire International de Nuremberg. Procès des grands criminels de guerre. 14. X. 45.- IX. 1946. Paris 1947. 7 vols. Le Procès de Nuremberg. Textes officiels. Paris 1946. 4. vols

The Russian edition was not available to this writer.

greater part of the non published sources (chiefly mimeographed materials) concerning Jews has been compiled (in multigraphed copies or sometimes in originals) by several Jewish institutions such as the Jewish World Congress (Institute of Jewish Affairs, New York), YIVO (New York), Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris (furthermore quoted in abbreviation as CDJC) etc.

This was the output of only one trial. The subsequent Nuremberg Trials, the scores of other trials in Bergen Belsen, Dachau, Lueneburg, Warsaw, Krakow, Kharkov, Prague, Paris, etc., etc. brought immense quantities of new materials to light.⁴

⁴ Dr. Herbert Wechsler, professor of Law School in Columbia University, New York and member of the U. S. Tribunal at Nuremberg reported in the annual meeting of the Conference of Jewish Relations on April 3, 1949 about the 12 subsequent Nuremberg cases conducted by the US prosecutors. Each of these cases contains about 10,000 pages of hearings except the documentation which amounts to one million pages approximately. Some parts of this tremendous material have been mimeographed and stored with the Law Library in Columbia University. In Dachau 489 separate cases have been conducted against 672 defendants. Nothing of these materials had been published to date. Almost all of the above mentioned cases contain valuable Jewish material especially the trials of the German physicians, of General Oswald Pohl and his assistants (the administration of the concentration camps), of general Ohlendorf and complices (extermination squads), of Weiszaecker and the other officials of the German Foreign Office.

This is the output of some of the trials conducted by U.S. authorities in Germany. We have to add the numerous trials conducted in Germany by British, French, Russian and German prosecutors, then the trials conducted in all allied countries (for instance the trials against the top officials of German administration in General Government or against the administration of the concentration camp Osvientzim conducted in Warsaw, which resulted in hundreds of thousands pages of hearings, proceedings and documentation) and we can imagine how large is the non-published and non-printed material which amounts to almost astronomic figures today.

Besides the a. m. editions concerning the Nuremberg Trials some other publications may be picked up as an example or illustration of this kind of sources: The publications of the United Nations War Crimes Commission: War Crimes Trial Series. London 1947 — (H.M. Stationary Office). 15 vols. including the Bergen-Belsen Trial (vol. II), Zyklon B. (vol. VII), Arthur Greiser (vol. XII), Mauthausen (vol. XIV). In Poland the proceedings on the trials of Amon Goeth (commander of the Concentration camp in Plaszow)

Besides the Central German Archives, the archives of the Foreign Office, of the German Commanding Staff (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht), the Navy, the Alfred Rosenberg-archives (Ministry for the occupied territories in the East) etc., the allied armies seized and secured a considerable number of local archives such as of the Gestapo, SS, police, NSDAP (National-Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei), Hitlerjugend, German local administration, of the concentration camps. a. s. o. Also archives of the satellite axis governments (central and local) or of the puppet governments in the occupied areas were seized. In a few cases some important materials were secured immediately for Jewish institutions. So the Jewish underground forces in France were clever enough to get hold of the whole collection of the "Commisariat aux Affaires Juives" in France. These archives containing about 40,000 units, are now in the CDJC and have already been catalogued. In the same way the Central Jewish Historical Commission (CJHC) in Poland was successful in preserving the large collection of the German Ghettoverwaltung in Lodz ("Litzmannstadt").

Jewish institutions also tried to gather materials in some neutral countries. The Historical Commission in Stockholm attached to the Jewish World Congress (JWC) is doing a useful job in collecting materials concerning the salvation and rescue action and the reactions of public opinion in the Scandinavian countries—from Swedish governmental archives, from the collections of the International Red Cross in Stockholm, and clippings from the Scandinavian wartime press.

The archives of the allied governments which may contain a large portion of first hand records and many other im-

Arthur Greiser (gouverneur of the nazi occupied Polish provinces incorporated into the Reich), the hearings of Joseph Buehler and some German generals (in the Volume: *The Destruction of Warsaw*, in Polish, Warsaw 1946) were published. In France the proceedings of the trial of Marechal Petain, prime minister P. Laval, the head of the Commissariat aux Affaires Juives, Xavier Vallat have been published. Cf. M. J. Goldbloom: *War Crimes Trials in American Jewish Yearbook*, New York 1949, vol 50. p. 494-500 (deals chiefly with the Nuremberg trials).

portant materials have—as far as I know—not yet been explored.

The underground records and archives are an important source of information. Valuable collections of Polish-Jewish underground materials are in Warsaw, Israel and New York, of French-Jewish underground—in Paris.⁵

A different kind of sources is presented by materials of the German sponsored, Jewish puppet autonomy—in some countries both central and local, as for example the UGIF (Union Générale des Israélites Français), in other countries only local Jewish authorities—the Judenrat. A very important source are also the minutes and records of other Jewish institutions for instance of the Jewish Welfare Boards, of the Jewish militia, of the Jewish civic Courts a. s. o. However only a small part of these archives could be preserved (e. g. the documents of the Judenrat in Lodz, in Vilna, of some Jewish organizations in Paris, in Krakow etc.).⁶

From few samples, one may get an idea of the amount and scope of archival sources available for scholarly research. However, in the mix-up of the post-war confusion much has been omitted or has escaped notice by the collecting teams and is now trickling in through various channels. Much of this scattered material could still be collected.

⁵ French Jewish underground materials are in the Centre de Documentation, Paris 14 rue de Paradis. Polish and Polish-Jewish materials in the collection of the CHC in Warsaw, of the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej) in Warsaw, in the private collection of Dr. I. Schwarzbart, New York, in the collection of the American representation of Bund in New York (partly published 1949 in *N. York in the volume*) פארלאן אונזער צייט אין די יארן פון יידישן חורבן. *פארלאן אונזער צייט* the Zionist labor movement and he-Halutz, partly published by Melekh Neustadt in Hebrew and Yiddish; פון די אידן אין ווארשע *Tel Aviv* 1946–48).

⁶ A large portion of materials about the UGIF and the Jewish communities in France under Nazi occupation is included in the archives of the Consistoire Central de France, cf. the report of Leon Meiss in *Les Juifs en Europe*, Edition du Centre (CDJC) Paris 1949, p. 103–107. The archives of the JSH (Juedische Soziale Hilfe in Krakow—a central Welfare agency in the General Gouvenment) have been discovered after the liberation and transferred from Krakow into the Collections of the CHC in Warsaw.

Our historiography of the recent catastrophe is also confronted with another important problem, namely: the exploitation of sources other than, or beyond the common definition of what is being called archival material. The peculiar feature of this contemporary historiography is that the historian and the archivist are instrumental not only while collecting and exploiting sources but also in producing sources in an abundant manner. Never in history could first hand historical material be obtained and compiled from the very acting historical personnel on such large scale. Each German, satellite, or collaborationist defendant, beginning with the top officials of the axis-regime was bound to deliver detailed information, complete depositions, statements, accounts, evidence. Well known is the story of a group of outstanding German generals, prisoners of war, who were assigned by a U. S. Historical Commission to write their personal records and statements on World War II. while waiting for their trial.

These are unusual and intimate sources of information on previously top secret and highly confidential topics. No other period in our History could be illuminated by this kind of inside information and background study of the inner mechanism and motives of the anti-Jewish action. These records, court depositions, evidence, prison diaries and confessions, minutes of judicial inquiries etc., now number in the thousands. The minutes of almost all War Crimes Trials contain considerable material of Jewish concern. Unfortunately not all these trials are being systematically traced nor are the respective Jewish materials being picked out by Jewish institutions. We are not even in possession of a good—if any at all—indexing or cataloguing apparatus of all trials in process or closed.

However, we may not forget, that all these records are one-sided and apologetically biased. The unilateral character of these records necessitates their being balanced and completed by different ones, namely by Jewish records and statements. This method of producing historical data is being realized by collecting interviews with Jewish survivors, reports, biographical materials. It may also be pointed out

that the above mentioned German sources cover the political background, the organizational and administrative frame of the Jewish life under Nazi-occupation. The inner Jewish history, the sufferings and the spiritual reactions are scarcely or rather falsely reflected in the German sources. This has to be completed by Jewish sources. Jewish records were already collected during the war from escaped Jewish Nazi-victims and witnesses in the neutral and allied countries (for instance by the Vaad Hatzalah and the Jewish Agency in Israel, the JWC in New York, the Jewish Relief Committee in Geneva etc.). After the liberation a large quantity of these records and interviews has been collected by the Jewish historical commissions in Poland (about 3,300 records), in Germany (2,500), Italy (800), Linz, Vienna, in a smaller degree also in Hungary and Rumania.

Other important sources are contemporary Jewish (and non-Jewish) memoirs, diaries, journals, wills, poetry, fiction and folklore. The assemblage of this material has just began. The biggest collection of this kind in Europe is to be found in the CJHC in Warsaw (today: Jewish Historical Institute—JHI); a smaller but valuable collection is in the Centre de Documentation, 14 rue Paradis in Paris. A clear cut distinction has to be made between this first hand material and the rather prolific ex-post memoiristic literature, a product of a post-war favorable opportunity. This post-war literature will be discussed later in this paper.

Contemporary photographs taken by Germans and their assistants, produced by Jewish or non-Jewish underground, or made after the liberation by allied authorities have been collected by the CJHC in Poland, the CHC-s in Germany, Linz, Vienna, Rome, the CDJC in Paris, the Wiener Library in London, etc. Besides this, there are private collections of a few Jewish photographers (for instance Hirsh Kadushin-Kadish of Lithuania, now in New York, Nahman Sonnabend of Lodz, now in Stockholm). In general the number of these photographs is not too big and they are scattered over too many places. The biggest collection in Europe seems to be this of the CJHC in Warsaw (several thousands photos).

Even smaller are the collections of Jewish ghetto-camps-underground- and partisan-songs. We may suppose that a great part of these songs was gone with the people who sang them. The largest collections of songs are in the CHC-s in Poland and Germany. The CHC in Germany has also about 60 musical recordings of these songs. Some collections of musical scores and texts have been published.⁷

Collections of ghetto-art (paintings, sculpture, etchings drawings, metal-plastic etc.) are in the CHC in Warsaw and in the CD, 14 rue de Paradis in Paris. Museum-collections of all kind of material illustrating Jewish life and sufferings under Nazi-rule, particularly in the camps, are in the Jewish sections of the State-museums in Maydanek and Auschwitz (Oświęcim) in Poland.⁸ The Jewish Museum in Vilna seems to have a valuable collection, but no full first hand information was available to this writer.⁹ The Jewish Museum in Prague, enlarged widely during German occupation by a strange Nazi-caprice (to keep souvenirs of a "gone people") — is devoted to illustration of Jewish pre-war life.

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Remarkable in their copious abundance, the materials nevertheless have to be evaluated as to their quality. We pointed out earlier that the tremendous amount of German official sources is very valuable. Besides this, never before could the perpetrators of such important historical misdeeds be

⁷ The best edition in this field is the publication of the "Songs of the Ghettos and Camps" *לידער פון די געטאס און לאגערן* (in Yiddish) compiled by Sh. Kaczerginsky, edited by H. Leivick, with music tunes arranged by M. Gelbart (CYCO, New York 1949).

⁸ Cf. J. Kermisz: *Le Musée Juif à Auschwitz* in "Les Juifs en Europe," p. 164-5; J. Slowacki-S. Zborowski: *Oświęcim* (publ. by the Osvientzim Museum Committee 1947) P. Sobolewski-Zagorska: *Muzeum Panstwowe na Majdanku* (The State Museum in Maydanek, s. d., s.a.).

⁹ A description of the Jewish Museum in Vilna and its collections may be found in the book of F. Novik *איסקופ־פארלאג. אייראפע צווישן מלחמה און שלום*. New York 1948, p. 314-320.

investigated in this thorough, scientific manner, through interrogations, inquiries, even special prison tests, psychological examinations, observations and scrutinies. But even so this material covers, as already mentioned, only few fields of Jewish life. We have to be cautious and critical with these sources for one reason more: German official materials always tried to put a blackout over the most ignominious German anti-Jewish activities. They preferred to use some form of disguise when talking about touchy subjects, used euphemistic synonyms, faked figures. For example German sources very rarely mentioned anti-Jewish pogroms or extermination *expressis verbis* and rather were inclined to use paraphrases like: *Gross-Einsatz*, *Uebersiedlung*, *Ueberstellung*, *Transport*, *Durchkaemmung*, *Aktion*, *Himmelfahrt*, *Himmelkommando*, *auf Schmelz*, *Hasenjagd* etc. for extermination; *Sonderbehandlung* for asphyxiation; *Bad- und Inhalationsraeume* for gas-chambers; *Sonderkommando*, *Rollbrigade* for extermination-squads; *Baekerei*, *Ziegelbrennerei* for crematoriums; *Wohngebiet der Juden* for ghetto; *Arbeitslager*, *Erziehungshaft*, *Schutzhaft*, *Durchgangslager (Du-lag)*, *Ju-lag* for concentration-camps; *Effektenkammer* for storehouse for the belongings of the executed Jews; *Sicherstellung*, *Treuhandstelle* for diverse forms of confiscation of Jewish property etc, etc. A special vocabulary of this veiling German terminology has to be collected. Some attempts have already been made, however unsatisfactory.¹⁰

In contradiction to German sources which endeavour to hide or to diminish the true dimensions of the Jewish Tragedy — the Jewish sources give us the full-size picture of the catastrophe. But they too are biased. They are inclined to exaggerate, to lay stress on the macabre and gruesome aspects. How-

¹⁰ A few examples of this literature: H. Pacht. *Nazi Deutsch*. A glossary of contemporary German usage. New York 1944; *Aus dem Woerterbuch des Unmenschen* (by several authors signed mostly by initials), a series of articles in "Die Wandlung," 1946, 1947; N. Blumental: *Slowa niewinne* (Innocent words, Lodz 1946). Blumental's unfinished compilation (from A. till I.) is rather a vast omnibox with all kind of incoherent materials without any system and with meager interpretation.

ever, this is an understandable and human reaction. Therefore these sources are not merely descriptive, but rather passionate and emotional, frequently with incriminating, sometimes (for instance if they are originating from former members of the Judenrats, militia and s. o.) with apologetic tendencies. Incidentally, not all witnesses are capable of giving a clear and objective report of what happened. In most cases under Nazi occupation their possibilities to move, to observe and to get reliable observations were restricted; in the charged tension of Nazi persecution rumours were frequently taken for truth. A considerable number of eye witnesses were illiterate or not sufficiently educated to understand the more complicated situations and hence give us a rather simplified record of the respective events. They are not skilled enough to understand what an impartial statement is, and therefore they introduce—even unconsciously and bona fide—their personal judgments, appreciations or wishes, presenting them as the real facts. Frequently the *interviewers* are not sufficiently trained for their responsible task and their own emotionalism or biases destroy the necessary objectivity of their reports.

Summarizing this, we have to admit that the collection of contemporary Jewish materials is not satisfactory neither in quality nor in quantity. In order to get more and better material it is necessary to train interviewers skilled in this type of work which is to be done in terms of sociological rather than historical methods (social inquiries, questionnaires, interviews etc.; sometimes only is a chance of doing the exactly archivist job of collecting or checking documents). Some attempts to work out the techniques and instructions for interviewers have already been made and published.¹² In some places where large agglomerations or survivors are living now,

¹² Jacob Lestchinsky. די אידישע קאטאסטראפע. די מעטאדעס פון איר פארשונג. New York 1944.

מעטאדאלאגישע אנווייזונגען צום אויספארשן דעם הורבן פון פוילישן יידנטום. Edited by Philip Friedman and others, Lodz 1945. CHC in Poland. This booklet has been also partly reprinted by the CHC in Germany and used for instruction purposes.

especially outside of Europe the collection of these materials *has been completely neglected* (this is true in a very high degree for the U.S., in a smaller degree for Israel; but it is true also for some European countries, for instance France, the Low Countries, England). The necessity to gather these data with the utmost speed can not be emphasized enough since the living source of information is diminishing from year to year and the reminiscences of the still living are getting weaker and deformed with progress of time.

2. VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE

The activities of the various Jewish Historical Commissions in Europe cover various fields from the collection to the edition and publication. A brief survey of these activities may be offered here:

A) *Collecting of materials*

- a) Collection of sources: all historical commissions are engaged in this job.
- b) production of sources (interviews, eye witness records, questionnaires, statistical and social inquiries): the historical commissions in Poland, Germany, Linz, Vienna, Rome and the CD, rue Paradis in Paris.
- c) collection of literature of the Jewish catastrophe or of bibliographical data: A.Wiener Library in London, CD Israelite in Paris, CDJC in Paris, Histor. Commission in Stockholm (bibliography of judaica and antisemitica in the Scandinavian literature and press since 1939), CHC in Poland (bibliography of judaica and antisemitica since 1939 in Poland).

To date, no scientific, reliable, annotated bibliography of the Jewish catastrophe has been worked out.¹² This lack re-

¹² Scattered bibliographical fragments to special problems have been published covering only a small portion of the respective material. Some more important of them may be mentioned: the studies of Z. Szajkowski in YIVO-Bleter XXVIII, #2 p. 397-408; Yivo Bleter XXX, #2 p. 259-

sults in the duplication of the identical research, contradictions and controversial assertions, which could be avoided by consulting and comparing the available sources. The absence of a serious, permanent instrument of evaluation and criticism encourages irresponsible graphomania or even forgery of historical facts. Lack of an annotated bibliography means also lack of scientific guidance and information particularly necessary for the numerous amateurs-historians and is a handicap in the popularization and consumption of the Hurban-research.

B) *Research work and publishing*

a) Editing and publishing of documents: in Paris the CDJC edited about 10 volumes of documents¹³, approximately the same quantity as the CHC in Poland.¹⁴ Besides this the CHC

289; of B. Shohetman in "Reshumoth," New Series, vol. IV, p. 209-232. Tel Aviv 1947, Sh. Fridman: תו שין וי, שואה ישראל בספרותו תל אביב, in the Annual Book of Davar, Tel Aviv 1947 (Tav Shin VAV) p. 265-296, of L. C. Tihany (Jewish Hungarian bibliography) in American Slavic and East-Europ. Review, Cambridge, Mass. 1947, vol. 6. p. 158-178, of Hans Mayer (German literature) in Juedische Rundschau, Marburg a. d. Lahn, June 1947, vol. 2. ## 14-15; of M. Kaganowicz (literature of Jewish resistance and fighting against the Nazis) in "Im Gang" #8-10, p. 54-65, W. Kiedrzyńska (Polish literature on German concentration camps) in "Dzieje Najnowsze" 1947, vol I; of Philip Friedman in Jewish Year-book Annual, New York 1949-50, vol VIII (in print), of Helen Conover: The Nazi State War Crimes and War Criminals (mimeographed) Washington D. C. Library of Congress; of Raphael Lemkin: Axis Rule in occupied Europe, Washington 1944 (bibliography of nazi-legislation, p. 641-665); of Franz Ahrens: Widerstandsliteratur. Ein Querschnitt durch die Literatur ueber die Verfolgungen und den Widerstand im Dritten Reiche. Hamburg 1948.

¹³ Books on anti-Jewish legislation in nazi-occupied France and in Vichy France; about Jews in East Southern France under Italian occupation; about the looting of Jewish objects of art and libraries by the nazis; about Jewish resistance in France; at last two bulky volumes of documents about persecutions of Jews in Western and Eastern Europe compiled from the collections of the Nuremberg Military Tribunal.

¹⁴ Documents and eye witness records about camps, extermination actions, the ghetto in Lodz, Jewish resistance in Poland, album of photographs, proceedings of the Amon Goeth Trial, eye witness records about Belzec, Klementow, life in hiding and on "Aryan papers."

in Poland and the CHC in Germany published memoirs.¹⁵ As to their scientific virtues and their scholarly apparel the books differ. In general, the later editions are also the better in this regard.

Documents and memoirs have been published also in Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria.¹⁶

b) Periodicals: The CHC in Germany published irregularly in Yiddish the magazine "Fun letztn Hurban" devoted primarily to eye witness accounts.¹⁷ The CDJC in Paris issued the monthly "Le Monde Juif" devoted to documents of the last catastrophe and to the recording of current events in Jewish life. After a year's interruption the monthly reappears since fall 1949 (until now 24 numbers). The Wiener Library publishes the W. L. Bulletin devoted mainly to bibliography and criticism. The CHC (JHI) in Warsaw published in 1948 two numbers and in Summer 1949 the third number of its quarterly "Bleter far Geschichte" devoted to serious research.

c) Monographic studies have been published by the CHC in Poland (about 10 vols),¹⁸ the CDJC in Paris¹⁹ and the CHC in Rome.²⁰

¹⁵ CHC in Poland; memoirs from the concentration camp in Lwow (Janowska street), the slave labor factory in Skarzyska, Jewish resistance movement in Krakow and environs, Jewish martyrdom in Warsaw; CHC in Germany: memoirs about Jewish sufferings in some small towns in Poland (Skalat, Biala Podlaska, Miedzyrzec Podlaski).

¹⁶ The three volumes edition of M. Carp (Cartea Neagra) in Rumania, the publications of Natan Greenberg and memoirs of rabbi Daniel Zion in Bulgaria, the three books of Jenoe (Eugene) Levai in Hungary (one of them "The Black Book on the Martyrdom of Hungarian Jewry" has been published in English translation, Zurich 1948); the report of Dr. Rezső Kaeszner on the rescue activities in 1942-44 in Hungary a. s. o.

¹⁷ The first number appeared in August 1946, the last (#10) in December 1948.

¹⁸ On extermination of the Jews in Lwow, Sosnowiec, Zolkiew, Krakow, on the uprisings in Warsaw and Bialystok, on Treblinka, a statistical study on Jewish population in Lodz, Krakow and Lublin under the nazis, studies about Jewish poetry in the ghettos and concentration camps, a lexicographic compilation about the nazi glossary etc.

¹⁹ On Jewish organizations in France under the nazis, on Jewish resistance, on the press and public opinion in France, concentration camps, Drancy, the yellow David-star.

²⁰ M. Kaganowicz: Jewish participation in the partisan movement in

C) *Training of scholars and of assisting personnel. Studies in methodology of the hurban-research.*

There is no possibility for training Jewish scholars in Europe. No qualified Jewish institute to do so exists. If some attempts in this direction have been made they are rather modest and limited only to the preparation of workers for the practical purposes of interviewing, collecting material and library research work. The work of the historical commissions was chiefly carried out by the small number of Jewish scholars who escaped extermination and by amateurs. The relatively biggest staff of historians was concentrated in the CHC in Poland where it was also possible to instruct and introduce younger applicants to scholarly work. However the staff of the CHC in Poland is constantly diminishing by emigration. The CDJC in Paris has some well trained scholars but has great difficulties in procuring scholars with good judaistic background for its research staff. Some of the best publications of the CDJC have been done by prominent outside scholars. The third institution with an adequate scholarly—but small—research staff is the Wiener Library in London. The work of the other historical commissions is carried on by amateurs. The CHC in Germany tried to raise the standards of its work by arranging short training courses for field workers. But the courses failed to produce the desirable effects since it was impossible to fill the gaps in judaistic and general education of the students by a simple short seminar.

To meet the needs of methodological instruction some historical commissions as well as some individual scholars published several papers about methodology and techniques of the Hurban-research. A remarkable further step towards a better elaborated methodology and towards a better mutual co-operation and co-ordination was the First Conference of the European Historical Commissions in Paris, in December 1947.²¹

דער יידישער אנטייל אין דער פארטיזאנערבאוועגונג אין רוסלאנד (yidd) Rome 1948
סאוועטי־רוסלאנד

²¹ In the Conference of the Jewish Historical Commissions in Paris some papers on the technique and methods of research have been read by E. M.

3. THE INDIVIDUAL LITERARY, BIOGRAPHICAL AND SCHOLARLY PRODUCTION ON THE LAST CATASTROPHE

Even the amateurish work of some of the historical commissions is an advance over production in this field by individuals. The prolific semihistorical and auto-biographical production on the recent Jewish Tragedy is a strong elemental movement which has its deep psychological and sociological roots. Therefore even the inferior products of this literature-phenomena can not be done away by routine criticism as merely graphomania but has to be studied carefully as symptoms of some socio-psychic developments. However, it is not here the place to discuss this socio-psychic background. But it may be stressed that the output of memoirs and chronicles on the subjects of the recent Jewish catastrophe is enormous today, beyond comparison with the respective memoiristic production after other important events in the Jewish history. It seems that the recent catastrophe evoked thousands of Nathan Neta Hannovers. But not only is Jewish post-war literature so productive. The French or Polish entries about German occupation are almost equally as numerous. In French for instance I happened to find more than a thousand entries (books and pamphlets) on this subject, in Polish and Hungarian several hundreds, in Dutch, Czech, Rumanian — several dozens of publications. The most preferred subjects

Levy, M. Moch, L. Poliakoff, H. Monneray, Philip Friedman, A. M. Halevy, I. Schneersohn and others. These addresses as well as the proceedings of the conference and the scholarly papers and reports of activities presented to the conference, have been published by CDJC in "Les Juifs en Europe," Paris 1949.

This writer published the following studies devoted to problems of Jewish Hurban research:

די פארשונג פון אונדזער חורבן, אין 'קיום', פאריז, יאנואר 1948, ז' 47-54;
פון אנטיהיסטאריציזם צום סופערהיסטאריציזם, אין 'קיום', מערץ, 1948, ז' 28-32;
די עלעמענטן פון אונדזער חורבן-פארשונג, אין 'המשך' מינכען, נ'ר 1, 1948, ז' 4-10 און
'המשך' נ'ר 2, 1949, ז' 26-34.
די פארשונג פון אונדזער חורבן אין שריפטן פאר ליטעראטור, קונסט און געזעלש. פראגן,
מינכען 1948, ז' 75-86;

Les problèmes de recherche scientifique sur notre dernière catastrophe, in
"Les Juifs en Europe" p. 72-80.

of these books are: concentration camps, prisons, labor camps and plants, underground fighting against the oppressors. The Jewish materials in these publications have not yet been explored.

To show how large the respective Jewish literature is, we will cite only one example. A tentative list of publications on the Warsaw ghetto published by Z. Szajkowski (YIVO-Bleter, vol. XXX, #2 pp. 280–288) cites 113 entries. This list could be easily increased to about 200 entries (only books and pamphlets). It may be well imagined that many of these publications do not represent a valuable contribution, if any at all, to the problem discussed and in some of them there is much verbiage.

Generally speaking there are as many good books written by individual scholars and litterateurs. There are also a quantity of outstanding books among the memoirs. But the rest, the bulk of this numerous output may be divided roughly into two groups: 1) books or pamphlets written by inadequately trained amateurs, zealous and ambitious, but using non-checked materials and unreliable sources, credulous, taking all for granted, sometimes looking just for sensationalism to bring their production into the market. The approach is rather journalistic, the efforts to give to the books a rather literary form and to embellish them by a "poetic touch" are in most cases failures. 2) Even more dangerous and harmful is a second group of publications in which we may distinguish tendencies to adjust the historical facts to some anticipated theories or political biases. For instance, in the history of the famous Warsaw ghetto-fighting almost every political party is concerned not only with its own interpretation but sometimes the writers are very selective in the choice of sources and facts. Sometimes again, the personal interest of the writer prevails; either he is a publicity seeker or he attempts to put himself or his friends in a favourable light by unconscious or conscious forgery. *Nomina sunt odiosa*.

It may be admitted that vulgarisation of literary and scholarly production is a common disease and a threatening phenomenon in the post-war cultural life of the Shearith Haplathah. There are numerous justifications for it. The almost

complete extinction of the Jewish intelligentsia by the Nazis; the large shift of the Jewish population which displaced the acknowledged authorities and centers of learning, art and scholarship and mixed up different milieus; the new type of the unadulterate and naive reader, hungry for each kind of literature and accepting everything without criticism — all this created a favorable public for inferior literary products. As it happens, this “golden age” for newcomers promoted not only serious and gifted men, but a crowd of graphomaniacs entered the field. Bluff, sensationalism, banalities, falsehoods and the growing distrust of the public to all Hurban-literature are the results. In this case we can not act according to the principle: “tout comprendre est tout excuser”. Indulgence and tolerance, or even indifference toward these abuses can greatly damage our science. If nothing will be done to halt this development, it can be imagined that these publications may be used in the future as reliable sources. Monographs based on these sources of information should be therefore instantly checked and corrected. In conclusion, only a systematic, current, critical bibliography can help us to distinguish the chaff from the wheat.

4. JEWISH INSTITUTES OF RESEARCH IN EUROPE

The writer of this paper personally took an active part in or investigated the Jewish research work in Poland, Germany, France, England, met and discussed problems with representatives of historical research institutions in Austria, Bulgaria, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Italy, Hungary, the Low Countries, Yougoslavia, Sweden and Switzerland. This gave him the chance to draw the following picture of the activities on this field over Europe.

Poland

Until 1939 Poland was the biggest center of Jewish cultural life and scholarship in Europe. Since 1939 that country was the area of the cruel slaughter of three million Polish Jews and last tragic Golgatha of hundreds of thousands of Western

and Mid-European Jews. No wonder that the historical research developed here first and on the largest scale. Just after the Germans entered Warsaw the first Jewish Statistical Commission (with Dr. Lipowski, Chilinowicz and, להברל לחיים, Moshe Mark-Prager) has been established but was soon discontinued. In few months later (1940) the famous "Oneg Shabbath" (this cryptonym was used to camouflage before the German authorities the real task of these ghetto-archives) headed by Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum had been created. Many contemporary records, statistics, studies, social inquiries, literary and scholarly papers, newspapers, underground press, cuttings had been collected and buried in safe iron-containers already during the great German extermination action, in August 1942.²² The excavation of this archivist treasure began in summer 1946 and a part of the hidden materials have been rescued and incorporated in the archives of the CHC-JHI in Warsaw as a separate unit.²³ The search for the other parts of the hidden materials and the excavation activities are continuing.

After the liberation the Central Jewish Historical Commission was founded by this writer in Lublin in 1944, moved in 1945 to Lodz and in 1948 to Warsaw. Besides the headquarters in Lodz extensions had been established in 1945 in Warsaw, Krakow, Bialystok, Katowice, Wroclaw, Lublin etc. The staff numbered about 20 scientific workers and 60-70 technical and administrative personnel. In 1948 the name was changed to Jewish Historical Institute (JHI) and the objectives of research enlarged in order "to study the History of the Polish Jews from the beginnings into our time." But as I understand, these ambitious plans have not yet been materialized.

²² For a detailed description of the activities of the Warsaw underground Ghetto Archives cf. A. Eisenbach: Scientific Research in the Warsaw Ghetto in וויסנשאפטלעכע פארשונגען אין ווארשעווער נעטא, ווארשע, בלעטער פאר נעשיכטע' נר. 1. ז' 55-113, נר. 2. ז' 69-84, 1948.

²³ A survey of the rescued materials is given in the article איבערויכט איבער די מאטעריאלן פון אונטערערדישן נעטא־ארכיוו (רינגעלבום־ארכיוו) signed A. Bach (Eisenbach) in "Bleter far Geschichte," vol. I. # 1. p. 178-82

The inner development of the CHC is for the first two years characterized by an inner struggle. The direction and the executive officers in Lodz emphasized the scholarly approach without political biases and prepared publications of technical, bibliographical and monographical character. The opponents inside the CHC (the Krakow branch) and outside (a left winged group in the Central Committee of Polish Jews to whose supervision and financial maintenance the CHC was subject) advocated a publishing policy for popular consumption, to serve propagandistic purposes and the fight against fascism. The split in methods is reflected in the respective publications, the head quarters specializing in editions of documents and monographs, the Krakow branch in publishing belles lettres, memoirs, poetry a. s. o. Later the editorial activities of the branches had been cancelled and their work more adjusted to the general standards of the CHC. About the latest development the present writer can no longer report from personal experience since he left Poland in summer 1946 and resigned from his post as director of the CHC. As I understand it, the present situation is that the JHI has to adjust itself to the general lines of cultural and political developments in that country.

The CHC-JHI has, as I believe, the biggest and most valuable European collection of sources to the Jewish catastrophe. However, cataloguing these archives is progressing rather slowly, as is the other reference and indexing work. The CHC published to date about 40 books and pamphlets in Polish and Yiddish.

The research on Jewish catastrophe in Poland is not only confined to the boundaries of the CHC. For the time being the most informative bibliography of German persecutions is to be found in a non-Jewish publication — the quarterly of the "Institute for National Remembrance" in Warsaw, "Dzieje Najnowsze" (Recent History). Also the three volumes of "German Crimes in Poland" (published in Polish and in English)²⁴ edited by the Polish War Crimes Commission contain

²⁴ The English edition of the "German Crimes in Poland" is in two volumes. Vol. I contains a verbatim translation of the Vol. I in Polish edi-

a series of valuable contributions on the Jewish catastrophe. Besides, some good studies about the concentration camps (Oświęcim, Maydanek, Stutthof etc., with a very large amount of material of Jewish interest) and some commendable memoirs or diaries by Jewish authors have been published by Polish publishers. Also Jewish publishers outside the CHC put out some interesting literary and scholarly publications in Yiddish on the Jewish catastrophe.²⁵

France

The most important Jewish institution in this field in France is the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (CDJC) founded in 1943 in Grenoble by its devoted and zealous president Itzhak Schneersohn. The CDJC specialized at first in compiling sources for the Jewish history in France and North Africa (Algiers and Tunis). This compilation has been completed in a very remarkable manner and is better ordered and catalogued as for instance the archives of the CHC in Poland. The latest development of the CDJC is the extension of its activities to the sources and history of the Jewish catastrophe in other European countries. The CDJC organized the first European conference of the Jewish Historical Commissions in Paris, Dec. 1947. Sixteen European historical Commissions and more than fifty Jewish scholars, writers and students participated in this meeting; reports of activities, technical and methodological addresses have been made,

tion (Biuletyn Komisji Głównej dla badania zbrodni niemieckich w Polsce), Warsaw 1946, with contributions on extermination of the Polish Jewry on the concentration camps Osvientzim, Chelmno, Treblinka and a general survey of all German camps in Poland. Vol. II comprises summaries of the articles published in Vol. II and III of the Polish edition. Of Jewish interest are primarily the papers on the concentration camps in Belzec, Sobibor, Stutthof and on the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto.

²⁵ Cf. on activities of the CHC: N. Gruess—Diana Grynbaum: One year work and the collections of the CHC in Poland. Lodz 1946; J. Kermisz in "Les Juifs en Europe," p. 140-144; Jacob Patt: אש און פייער, New York 1946, p. 76-82 (and the resp. pages in the English edition of Patt's book); "Bleter far geschichte," vol 1, # 1 p. 198-200 and I-III.

scholarly papers read and organizational problems discussed. The conference resulted in the creation of a Coordination Committee of the Jewish Historical Commissions in Europe. The activities of the new body however are handicapped by lack of financial means and executive power. Nevertheless, in order to strengthen the ties and continue this very necessary and far reaching program the CDJC is planning a second European conference in connection with a European Exhibition of the Jewish Catastrophe and Reconstruction.²⁶ The publications of the CDJC (about 20 books and *Le Monde Juif*) represent a valuable contribution to the history of the Jewish catastrophe. They are all edited in French. The first publications in Yiddish are now in print or in preparation.²⁷

A second Centre de Documentation has been established with the Union des Sociétés Juives en France (14, rue de Paradis) originating also from underground activities during the German occupation. The Centre has very limited financial means, no trained scientific staff and is maintained mainly by the devotion of its director. The Centre has collected valuable material for the history of the Jewish underground in France (particularly of the Jewish leftist and communist organisations), of Jewish social and cultural activities in the concentration camps, has stored manuscripts of Jewish writers, has compiled a museum of Jewish paintings and different relics and memorabilia, has assembled the Jewish underground press. On the basis of this material only three books have been issued to date.²⁸

²⁶ Cf. the articles of H. Hertz and I. Schneersohn in "Le Monde Juif," ## 13 & 16.

²⁷ The two books in print deal with Jewish resistance and Jewish organizations in occupied France. A third book, the proceedings of the European conference of the historical Commissions in Paris is in preparation. About the activities and collections of CDJC cf. the report of H. Hertz in "Les Juifs en Europe," p. 58-62; another exhaustive report in "Le Monde Juif" #9-10, p. 20-27; I Schneersohn in YIVO-Bleter XXX, #2 p. 248-258 and a pamphlet in English: The Jewish Contemporary Documentation Center, published by CDJC Paris 1949.

²⁸ יזכור-בוך צום אנדענק פון 14 אומגעקומענע פאריזער יידישע שרייבער. רעדאקציע.

A third institution, the Centre de Documentation Israélite (47, rue Miromesnil) in Paris has perhaps the biggest collection of books, pamphlets and other printed or mimeographed material, especially in French, concerning racial problems and persecutions. Unfortunately the Centre has no means to order or catalogue this collection. The Bulletin d'Information published by the Centre was discontinued since 1948. In general, this Centre exists today only as an appendix to the Centre de Documentation Politique. Both have been founded and conducted by an able and expert bibliograph M. Vanikoff. According to the information given me by Mr. Vanikoff the Centre has about 40,000 units in which as many Jewish entries may be included.²⁹

Scattered valuable materials have been collected by various institutions as the Consistoire Central, the Central Representation of the French Jews (CRIF), the Alliance Israélite Universelle. The Committee of the Sephardic Jews and the direction of the Cahiers Sephardis under the able and industrious leadership of Mr. Sam Levy assembled almost a full documentation on the tragic fate of the Sephardic community in France.³⁰

The Centre d'Etudes (Forschungszenter "to study the thousand years' History of the Polish Jews") attached to the Association of the Polish Jews (9, rue Guy Patin, Paris) may be mentioned here for mere registration purpose. Neither in its collections nor in the scholarly qualifications of its direction (Mr. M. Borwicz and Mr. J. Wulf) is there any guarantee of a serious approach to its alleged scientific objectives. Anyhow the gigantic aims and tasks which this institution claims constantly to be willing to materialize can not be co-

י. ספערא, ג. קעניג, ס. שולשטיין, ב. שלעווין, פארטן 1946; אין קאמף פאר פרייהייט.
French title: *Combattants de la Liberté*, Paris 1948, and a small pamphlet containing six letters of Romain Rolland to a Jewish underground fighter in 1940-41 (in French and in a Yiddish translation). The Center organized also an exhibition in 1947 and published a catalogue of the exhibition in French and Yiddish.

²⁹ Cf. the report of M. Moch in "Les Juifs en Europe," p. 34-37 and of M. Vanikoff: *ibid.* p. 144-8.

³⁰ Cf. the report of Sam Levy in "Les Juifs en Europe," p. 66-71.

vered even in a slightest degree by its material and spiritual capacities and one can not help getting some impression of irresponsibility on the side of the leaders of the Centre d'Etudes.

The existence of so many Jewish research centers in Paris is rather confusing. However for numerous reasons a merger of these institutions in near future is not conceivable. Even efforts to bring about a closer cooperation have failed till now.

England

England has fortunately not been a Nazi-occupied country and should therefore be treated in our survey on a later place together with the neutral countries. However for some reasons Dr. Wiener Library has to be included in one of the first sections in this survey. This library which originated in Amsterdam in 1934 as a part of the Jewish Central Information Office and moved to London in the beginning of World War II was the first scientific instrument to fight against Nazi-discrimination. Its collections of about 60,000 books, pamphlets and newspapers, only one half of which is catalogued, is devoted not only to the study of the Jewish catastrophe but also to general aspects of World War II, to the study of the German problem, nazism and racism, the Arab question, Zionism a. s. o. This is the largest and best organized Jewish collection of books in Europe for the study of the above mentioned problems. A cross-reference catalogue is now in work. We mentioned already that the institution has a scholarly adequate staff and an expert and devoted director (Dr. Alfred Wiener). The institution has published some books both of Jewish and non-Jewish interest. In general,—on the Jewish field its publishing activities are rather limited (small issues of photostatic reproductions of documents and a few mimeographed survivors' reports). Like the other services of the Wiener Library is the bibliographical W. L. Bulletin focussed to meet the needs not only of Jewish but also of general information.³¹

³¹ Cf. the pamphlet: Jewish Central Information Office. The Wiener Library. Its History and activities 1934-46. London 1946 and Dr. A. Wiener's report in "Les Juifs en Europe," p. 125-128.

Germany

The CHC in the U. S. Zone of Germany was established in Munich at the end of 1945 by the Central Committee of the Liberated Jews in the U. S. Zone of occupation. The CHC, a top-organization, included about 40 regional and local branches in the U. S. Zone. In 1947-48 the CHC extended its activities to the British, French and Russian Zones. The CHC specialized in collecting eye-witness reports. However, these records are not of uniform value. Many of them had been drawn up by poorly instructed interviewers in the branches and could not be efficiently controlled by the central office. They can be used for scientific purposes only with preservation and with much criticism. The eye-witness reports chiefly cover the East European areas, being collected from Jewish DP's and infiltrates. As only few German Jews made depositions or submitted their personal experiences or notes to the CHC, the results of what happened to the German Jews in the Nazi-period are very small. Curiously enough the indigenous German-Jewish residents do not show too much interest in their own past and the German Jewish communities could not afford up to now to build up an apparatus for historical research. Unnecessary to stress that the traditions of the German Jewry in this regard are quite different. Anyhow the CHC procured some valuable official German documentation, for instance nazi documents concerning the Jews in Munich and Bavaria. The CHC has achieved even more. The commission worked out an exhaustive inquiry for all Jewish settlements, camps, and execution sites in Germany and has succeeded in carrying it out through German officials (by order of the military government) in all zones of the occupied Germany. This unique collection, even when one-sided, gives a comprehensive picture, covering every place in Germany. Besides materials for history of the Jewish catastrophe the CHC collected also contemporary publications of Jewish interest in Germany, DP and German Jewish newspapers and printed materials, photographs etc. and created in this way a basis for the archives of the Shearith Haplathah in Ger-

many. Among its valuable acquisitions are also the abandoned archives of some Jewish communities in Germany (particularly in Franconia) going back to the 17th century.³²

The main task of the CHC-magazine "Fun letzten Hurban" was to publish eye witness accounts collected by the CHC and thereby to stimulate further eye witness depositions. However the approach of the editor to this kind of publication is rather unscientific; the records are editorially corrected and stylistically changed, a method rather strange in publication of documents. The editor Mr. Israel Kaplan explains this editorial policy by claiming that his journal is destined for popular consumption rather than for scholarly research. A smaller portion of the magazine was devoted to the publication of documents from the CHC-archives and to current bibliography (including only articles from Jewish newspapers in Germany); finally few good monographic studies appeared. Notwithstanding the above mentioned technical failures this journal was the best of this kind (publication of eye witness records) in our literature and credit must be given both to the editor Mr. Kaplan and to the director of the CHC Mr. M. Feigenbaum, for their fine achievement in publishing and for their industrious zeal, integrity and ingenuity in collecting sources which made the CHC-archives one of the richest collections of this kind in Europe.

The recent big emigration movement in the DP camps of Germany brought an important turn for the CHC. The Central Committee of Liberated Jews decided before long to transfer the materials of the CHC to Israel and this decision had been carried out in the end of 1948; since then the CHC discontinued its activities. Before this liquidation the CHC and its branches still succeeded to publish a few books.³³

³² Cf. the report of A. M. Faygenbaum in "Les Juifs en Europe," p. 149-151 and an exhaustive report in "Fun letzten Hurban" #10, p. 162-170. In 1948 the CHC arranged an impressive exposition in Bad Reichenhall (in Bavaria) and published an extensive catalogue of the exhibition in five languages.

³³ The CHC in Munich published two books of memoirs, the Stuttgart branch a book about Nazi persecutions in Radom, the branch in Landsberg a pamphlet about Vilna under Nazi rule.

Besides the CHC and its branches two independent Jewish Historical Commissions operated in the British Zone of occupation, the Histor. Commission attached to the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bergen-Belsen and the Historical Commission in Goettingen, with rather limited activities. The Historical Commission in Bergen-Belsen issued two books (a collection of ghetto-songs and an album of pictures). The Historical Commission in Goettingen issued two small bulletins and was busy with gathering Jewish documents and museum-materials.

Also outside the CHC some research work has been done by individuals on the recent catastrophe. A collection of eye witness records gathered by a Lithuanian Jew (Leib Konyuchovsky) in three years of devoted work covering all Jewish settlements in Lithuania except Kovno is remarkable. These records have been prepared very carefully and are the most valuable I have seen in Germany. Recently there have appeared monographic studies on the life and destruction of the Jews in Kovno (J. Gar), in Latvia (M. Kaufman), in Czenstochowa, Otwock, Karczew and Falenica (B. Ohrenstein), in Poland (Ph. Friedman), in Zloczow (S. Mayer), in Sierpiec, in Warsaw (H. Fenigstein), in Lwow (Ph. Friedman) in Szawle (L. Shalit), some methodological and technical studies in the literary magazines of the Shearith Haplathah (Shriftn, Hemshekh) and two Polish books of memoirs covering the personal experience in seven concentration camps and ghettos (T. Stabholz) and in Sosnowiec (P. Wiederman). Besides these contributions much inferior material has been published by amateurs or graphomaniacs. My impression is that only in Germany so much irresponsible and sometimes harmful writing has been published. Finally this evoked a sharp reaction on the part of the more responsible members of the Shearith Haplathah press against these "irresponsible and illiterate" productions and "uncouth proturberances."³⁴

³⁴ Cf. the articles of M. Liebhaber: "עם הארציש און אומפארטאנטווארטלעך" in "Unser Weg," Munich 1948, of Israel Elenzweig in Landsberger Yiddische Zeitung, 1947 and the article of M. Kroshnitz in "Hemshekh," Munich 1949, #2, p. 51-61.

Austria

Two Jewish Historical Commissions, one in Linz, U. S. Zone, the second in Vienna are for the most part occupied in gathering evidence against nazi-criminals in Austria. For this purpose they collected numerous eye witness records and depositions of value both from the judicial and historical point of view, minutes of trials (processed in Austria) on Nazi crimes, of inquiries and interrogatories. The commissions have not engaged in publication to date.³⁵

In Vienna a private publisher started a series of small leaflets on the Jewish Tragedy for popular consumption (of little historical value).

There are some items in the Austro-German literature which deal directly with the Jewish problem or indirectly contain some Jewish details. A respective bibliographical study has yet to be made.

Italy

Neither the Central Committee of the Jewish DPs nor the Jewish Italian community has established a historical commission. The Central Historical Commission of the PHAH (the initials of the joint organization of former Jewish partisan-fighters, haloutzim and ex-servicemen, Partisanim, Haloutzim, Hayalim) plays an important role in collecting materials in Italy. Established in Poland in 1945, the CHC of PeHaH moved to Austria and then to Milano and to Rome. Its aims have been to collect materials and carry on research work on the history of the Jewish fighting against nazi-oppression in Eastern Europe. The CHC PeHaH possesses now about 700 biographical reports on Jewish fighters, materials on circa 25 Jewish partisan-detachments ("Otryadn"), about hundred autobiographical depositions of Jewish fighters, eye witness records, diaries and other materials. A well documented book on the Jewish part in the partisan movement

³⁵ Cf. the reports of Simon Wiesenthal (Linz) and Tobie Frydman (Vienna) in "Les Juifs en Europe," p. 37-40, 194-96.

in Soviet—Russia has been published by M. Kaganovitch (chairman of the CHC). But the activities of the CHC had to be discontinued for the same reason as in Germany; the collections of the CHC in Rome are already on their way to Israel where they are to be incorporated in the Yad va Shem archives.³⁶

As in Austria and Germany the indigenous Jewish population has no share in this research work. In Italy some individual efforts in this field have not gone too far till now.

Czechoslovakia

In Prague some materials were gathered in 1945-46 by the Jewish Agency and shipped to Israel. A few small publications, especially about Terezin (Theresienstadt) appeared. The Jewish Historical Commission (Zidovske Dokumentacne Akcia) in Bratislava has started a more systematic collection of sources for research into the history of the Jews in Slovakia.³⁷

Bulgaria

The Jewish Historical Institute in Sophia had collected a considerable quantity of official German and Bulgarian material for the history of the Jews in that country during World War II. The archives had been ordered and catalogued. A few books and pamphlets have been published. Also the magazine "Novi Dni" primarily devoted to the analysis of actual Jewish problems, fiction and poetry has given some place to historical and statistical monographs on World War II. The present writer has no information as to how much the future development of the JHI is involved in the almost complete emigration of Bulgarian Jews to Israel.³⁸

³⁶ On the activities of the CHC of "Pe HaH" in Italy cf. the report of M. Kaganowicz in "Im Gang" (magazine of the Jewish Writers' Union in Italy) #13-14, Rome July-August 1948.

³⁷ report of Frederic Steiner in "Les Juifs en Europe," p. 216.

³⁸ *ibid.* p. 40-43 report of Elie Eshkenazy.

Rumania

Although no historical Commission exists in Rumania some important contributions have been made by individuals. Among them the outstanding one is the three-volumes publication of documentary and statistical materials prepared by Mr. Matathias Carp ("Cartea Neagra"). A series of booklets edited by private publishers or by organizations has been written for popular consumption (most of them published by "Cartea Rossa" or by "Hehaloutz"). As I understand, Prof. M. A. Halevy, a well known Jewish-Rumanian scholar, is endeavouring to set up a Jewish Historical Institute to collect materials and centralize the scattered Jewish research in this field.³⁹

Hungary

Some instrument for Jewish research in this field seems to exist in Hungary (in Budapest). Three years ago representatives of a Jewish Historical Commission in Budapest got in touch with this writer in Lodz, reported the activities of the above mentioned commission and presented its first publications. Since then the present writer tried to get in touch with the Histor. Commission but without any results. No representative from Hungary came to the European Conference of the Historical Commissions held in Paris, in December 1947. Only a short written report had been sent.⁴⁰ Because of the lack of sufficient and reliable information our report on the Historical Commission in Hungary is therefore rather too general. However I happened to learn from other sources that some dozens of books and pamphlets have been published in our field in Hungary. The valuable report of Dr. Rezso Kaeszner, the well documented books of Eugene Levai (one has been published also in English) have to be mentioned first. Some books about concentration camps (particularly about Osviencim) appeared. The quantity of books

³⁹ *ibid.* p. 160-64, report of A. M. Halevy.

⁴⁰ *ibid.* p. 196-99 report of Ernest Munkacsi.

relating to personal experiences in the labor detachments and labor camps is truly remarkable.⁴²

Greece

No Jewish Historical Commission exists. Some useful historical publications have been prepared by individuals in Salonika, Athens, and Korfu.⁴²

Yougoslavia

The extermination of the greatest part of the Yougoslavian Jewish population has not yet been reflected in a scholarly Jewish or non-Jewish publication. Dr. Weiss, president of the Union of Jewish Communities in Yougoslavia after the liberation and simultaneously Yougoslavian representative at the First War Crimes International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg was much concerned in initiating a serious research project in this field and discussed with me in 1946 the problems of organization and research activities. As far as I know no activities followed. In the meantime the emigration of Yougoslavian Jews changed the situation in that country.

In the voluminous publications of the Yougoslavian War Crimes State Commission only scattered materials of Jewish concern may be found incidentally.⁴³

Russia

We are not able to present an exhaustive picture about Russia since information is very scarce. An enormous amount both of documents, eye witness records and depositions of war

⁴² also cf. Fr. Hevesi: Recent Jewish Literature in Hungary in American Jewish Yearbook, New York 1947-48 p. 71-75 and the already mentioned bibliography of T. C. Tihany (v. #11).

⁴³ Two books about the Jews of Salonika by M. Molho (Salonika, in French 1948) and I. A. Matarasso (Athens 1948, in Greek) and articles in "Reshumot," new series, vol. II. "Fun letztn Hurban," #7, "Les Juifs en Europe," p. 47-54 (by Asher Moïssis) and in Le drames des Juifs helléniques Cairo. 1943. Département hellénique d'Information.

⁴³ Especially in volume II of this publication, Beograd 1945.

defendants has been collected by the Russian War Crimes Commission and the various local War Criminal Trials in various Russian cities. A considerable quantity of material has been stored also with the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Moscow, and with the Organization Committee of the Polish Jews in Moscow. However both above mentioned institutions do not exist any more (the Anti-Fascist Committee has been dissolved in the end of 1948) and a more detailed information of what happened to the rich archives of these organizations which seemed to be well ordered and catalogued was not available to this writer. Ilya Ehrenbourg's publications of documents and eye witness records (published in Russian and Yiddish) seem to be based mainly on these collections. Some parts of the materials stored with the official Soviet archives have been published by the Extraordinary State Committee for Investigation of the Crimes of the German Fascist Occupants in the series: "Documents accuse" (*Dokumenty obvinenyout*. Moscow 1944). In the first two volumes of this series much Jewish material is contained.

Besides these publications smaller contributions of rather journalistic value are scattered in the periodicals.⁴⁴

The Low Countries

In Holland a series of books and pamphlets have been printed describing the Jewish fate and sufferings. Some of these publications are very valuable.⁴⁵

In Belgium the historical output in this field is very modest. A report submitted by the Belgian government to the War

⁴⁴ Articles in the Yiddish newspaper "Aynikayt" (Moscow 1944-48), in the magazines of the Jewish writers' Union ("Tzum Sig", "Haymland," etc. Moscow 1944-), the reports of the special Russian Investigation Commissions in various cities, published since 1944 in the newspapers "Pravda" and "Izviestya", the books of H. Smoliar about Ghetto and underground in Minsk, of M. Yellin and D. Gelpert about Jewish partisans in Kovno a. s. o.

⁴⁵ Cf. the articles of L. de Jong in "Wiener Library Bulletin," Vol. III, #1 (London January 1949) and of Davis Scheinert in *Commentary*, New York April 1949, also T. Gutman in *YIVO-Bleter*, Vol. XXX, # 1, p. 107-16.

Crimes Trial Court in Nuremberg and some articles in the *Revue Juive* in Brussels may be mentioned. In both countries no Jewish Historical Commissions devoted to the research of the Jewish Catastrophe exist.

Sweden

The Jewish Historical Commission collects materials from the archives of the Swedish government, the International Red Cross and from Scandinavian newspapers during World War II.⁴⁶

Switzerland

The Jewish Historical Commission established in 1947 has devised a big program for collecting and research but was not yet able to begin with its realization.⁴⁷ The Jewish Relief Committee in Geneva collected and published during the war a series of eye witness records from Poland edited by Dr. A. Silberschein. (mimeographed)

CONCLUSIONS

Jewish scholars and Jewish Historical Societies have to give more attention to this field of research which is abandoned and mostly in hands of amateurs. These amateurs among whom we may find many devoted and gifted men need instruction, leadership, guidance and assistance. It is particularly necessary to work out a methodology for this research, to train and instruct interviewers, archivists and librarians, as well as research students; to carry on systematic bibliographic registration, to start publishing an annotated bibliography and current, critic-analytical evaluations of new publications. It would be advisable to coordinate the activities of all the European commissions, to assist them in such tasks as the uniform cataloguing and indexing of their collections, finally,

⁴⁶ *Les Juifs en Europe*, report of Nella Rost p. 57-58.

⁴⁷ *ibid.* p. 214-15 p. 214-15.

by means of cooperation on a world wide scale to draft a minimum plan for a longer period of several years for a coordinated research program. The Jewish scholarly institutes and historical societies of the United States and Israel should be the initiators and organizers of these activities. This paper's appearance is fully justified if it evokes discussion in this direction.