

CHAPTER 2

THE JUDGMENT OF “PRIVILEGED” JEWS IN THE WORK OF RAUL HILBERG



To a Jew this role of the Jewish leaders in the destruction of their own people is undoubtedly the darkest chapter of the whole dark story. It had been known about before, but it has now been exposed for the first time in all its pathetic and sordid detail by Raul Hilberg.

—Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*

The limit of judgment in relation to “privileged” Jews is crucially important to a consideration of Hilberg’s work, the widespread impact of which cannot be underestimated. His seminal study, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, has been praised by many as “the single most important work on the Holocaust,” and Hilberg himself has been characterized as “the single most important historian” in the field.¹ Furthermore, the above epigraph makes clear that Arendt’s controversial arguments regarding Jewish leaders (see the introduction) drew heavily on Hilberg’s pioneering work. This chapter investigates the part of Hilberg’s work that deals with “privileged” Jews, in order to provide a thematic analysis of the means by which Hilberg passes his overwhelmingly negative judgments on this group of Holocaust victims.

Hilberg’s judgments are conveyed in diverse ways due to the eclectic nature of his publications, in which the subject of the *Judenräte*—which has received considerable attention in Holocaust historiography—

makes frequent appearances. From situating Jewish councils within the institutional framework of the Nazi perpetrators to constructing a moral spectrum along which individual Jewish leaders are placed, Hilberg's reliance on retrospective evaluations, his selection of sources, and his use of emplotment, commentary, irony, and organizational charts represent "privileged" Jews in an often problematic manner. His arguments regarding Jewish passivity have inspired a large number of strong responses, and Hilberg's controversial persona has impacted heavily on the vigorous debates relating directly or indirectly to the issue of "privileged" Jews.

In *The Drowned and the Saved*, Primo Levi places great importance on the potential of historians to counter the problems he perceives in popular representations of the Holocaust. At one point, he describes "the gap that exists and grows wider every year between things as they were down there and things as they are represented by the current imagination fed by approximate books, films and myths." Levi emphasizes that it remains "the task of the historian to bridge this gap."² Nonetheless, he remained suspicious of the prevalence of misleading ethical Manicheanisms in Holocaust history, and little explicit reference to Levi's ideas is made in Hilberg's numerous publications. In his contribution to a recent anthology inspired by Levi's concept of the grey zone, Hilberg acknowledges Levi's "command not to make judgments" but does not take the opportunity to reflect upon his own controversial evaluations of Jewish behavior.³ Indeed, the notion that one should suspend judgment of "privileged" Jews is entirely absent from Hilberg's work, which rarely reflects on the choiceless choices confronting these liminal figures and gives little indication of the problematic "area" that Levi identified.

Significantly, Hilberg and Levi's very different approaches to attempting to understand the Holocaust were key influences on Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), the principal film to be discussed in chapter 3. Indeed, key elements of Lanzmann's film pivot on the on-screen presence of Hilberg himself. As we will see, Hilberg's work, particularly his preoccupation with the Warsaw Ghetto leader Adam Czerniakow, constitutes an intrinsic part of *Shoah*'s mode of representation. For these reasons, Hilberg's work and persona occupy a crucial mediatory position between Levi's writings and Holocaust film. A close analysis illustrates that the judgment of Jewish leaders in Hilberg's work differs substantially in nature from Levi's attempt to suspend judgment. Yet, as in the case of Levi, Hilberg's personal background can be seen to shed some light on the processes of judgment he engages in.

Born in Vienna, in 1926, Raul Hilberg was barely an adolescent when his country became part of the Third Reich, his parents' assets were

expropriated, and his father was briefly arrested. This persecution triggered his family's emigration to the United States in 1939. After a relatively brief and uneventful experience serving as an American soldier in Europe, Hilberg learned that much of his extended family had died in the Holocaust. In the war's aftermath, he worked as a member of the United States' War Documentation Project, which gave him access to extensive German records. He immersed himself in countless Nazi documents for many years, completing his studies and starting work in 1948 on a PhD, upon which *The Destruction of the European Jews* (first published in 1961) was based. With something like the feverish impulse of those survivors who feel compelled to testify, Hilberg undertook the task of exposing the mechanisms underpinning what he termed the "destruction process."⁴ Explaining the bureaucratic nature of the Holocaust's implementation became, in Hilberg's words, "the principal task of my life."⁵ Hilberg held an academic position as a political scientist at the University of Vermont in Burlington from 1956 until his retirement in 1991. Throughout his long career, he found himself at the center of many disputes regarding Jewish behavior, which will be detailed further. Hilberg died in 2007.

Just as several scholars have identified the development of an ethical system in Levi's writings, John K. Roth devotes a complete chapter of his volume *Ethics During and After the Holocaust* (2005) to the "ethical insights" in Hilberg's work, in which he writes:

If one is looking for Hilberg's ethics in the projects that have occupied his life, the task is a complex one of detection because there is a need to consider not only what he says overtly and explicitly, but also what is not said but still conveyed, what is left in silence but nonetheless voiced, what is pointed at but not directly.⁶

Amidst his discussion of Hilberg's moods, principles, virtues, and ethical groundings, Roth only briefly refers to his subject's moral judgments of Jews. He notes that Hilberg "assesses responsibility where he must, but with empathy for the constraints and pressures that faced a Jewish leader such as Czerniakow, who led the Jewish Council in the Warsaw Ghetto."⁷ Hilberg's strong preoccupation with the role of Czerniakow will be discussed further, although considering Roth's earlier engagement with the difficult case of Calel Perechodnik, a member of the Jewish police, and his later discussion of Levi's grey zone, it is curious to note that he does not question Hilberg's apparent imperative to judge.⁸ Roth's analysis of Hilberg's ethics identifies three sources of the historian's "moral insight": his lifelong commitment to Holocaust studies, after having been spared from the war himself; his resultant under-

standing that the Holocaust “reveals an immense moral failure” of ordinary people (rather than “bloodthirsty killers”); and his methods of research and (by extension) representation.⁹ These are also the sources and products of Hilberg’s judgment in his writings, evident in the devices he uses to portray the Nazis’ persecution of European Jewry. By positioning “privileged” Jews as cogs in the “machinery of destruction,” Hilberg passes judgment through, to use Roth’s words, “what is not said but still conveyed, what is left in silence but nonetheless voiced, what is pointed at but not directly.”

Cogs in the Machine: The Place of Jewish Leaders in the Destruction Process

Hilberg’s *The Destruction of the European Jews*, which focuses on the step-by-step implementation of the Holocaust by its perpetrators, has taken on an almost Whitman-esque evolution, gradually transforming through various editions and translations.¹⁰ However, from the publication of the first edition of his book in 1961 to the release of the third edition in 2003, the judgments Hilberg makes regarding “privileged” Jews remain consistent. In the preface to the first edition, he writes: “We shall not dwell on Jewish suffering, nor shall we explore the social characteristics of ghetto life or camp existence.”¹¹ While he generally held to this guideline, Hilberg’s brief evaluation of Jewish behavior has stirred up more controversy than any other aspect of his research. Of the more than a thousand pages in Hilberg’s study, little more than a few dozen are dedicated specifically to the behavior of Jews. These sections are mostly located in the introductory and concluding chapters, which provide a narrative frame for his detailed account of the “destruction process.” This notable disproportion may be due to Hilberg’s prioritization of an institutional analysis over a reflection on individual responses to the structural mechanisms involved, an analysis that by nature is much more speculative and more difficult to fit into an institutional framework.

The thematic structure of Hilberg’s study can also be seen to contribute to the way in which judgment of “privileged” Jews, namely the Jewish leaders in the ghettos of Eastern Europe, is constructed. Dan Stone notes that while *The Destruction of the European Jews* breaks with the “conventional narrative form” based on chronological order, “it only does so by replacing it with an even more strongly determined sociological narrative.”¹² Stone adds that since Hilberg “conceives of the Holocaust as being ruled by rigid laws of historical logic emplotted in

the narrative as a threefold procedure of definition, concentration, and annihilation, it is odd that Hilberg feels able to judge the actions of the Jews."¹³ Notably, Hayden White writes in his study *Tropics of Discourse* that "as a symbolic structure, the historical narrative does not *reproduce* the events it describes; it tells us in what direction to think about the events and charges our thought about the events with different emotional valences."¹⁴ While only a subsidiary theme of Hilberg's study as a whole, his judgment of victims as being in many ways complicit in their own demise is communicated using various methods.

By stating in his opening line that "the Jewish collapse under the German assault was a manifestation of failure,"¹⁵ Hilberg immediately makes his position clear, although his moral judgments of "privileged" Jews are usually more subtle in nature. Significantly, he uses the word "cooperation" rather than "collaboration" to characterize the behavior of "privileged" Jews. Hilberg positions himself throughout his study as a political scientist who aims to reveal *how* the Holocaust was possible. His explicit focus is the bureaucratic process that enabled the extermination of European Jewry to take place rather than the reasons *why* it happened and was able to continue. In the second edition of *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Hilberg writes that "the 'how' of the event is a way of gaining insights into perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. ... The Jewish community, caught in the thicket of [Nazi] measures, will be viewed in terms of what it did and did not do in response to the German assault."¹⁶ Long after publishing his research, Hilberg wrote: "I did not want to deal with the Jewish Councils. ... But I could not stop in the middle without completely facing the problem which is quite simply: how were the Jews destroyed? Not why, but how?"¹⁷ It is already clear from these statements how difficult, if not impossible, it is to divorce one's recounting of *how* things happened from one's judgment of *why* they happened—or, importantly, *who is to blame for it*.

Not only does Hilberg make vast generalizations about members of the *Judenräte*, but these are frequently subsumed under his blanket criticisms of European Jewry as a whole. He begins his explanation of how the Holocaust happened with a chapter on its "precedents," contending that European Jews had become trapped within a "ghetto mentality," which consisted of traditional reactive patterns to persecution that drew only on strategies of "alleviation" and "compliance." He writes that while "preventive attack, armed resistance, and revenge were almost completely absent in Jewish exilic history ... alleviation attempts were typical and instantaneous responses."¹⁸ This perspective reflects a major facet of Hilberg's argument regarding Jewish behavior, which he also spoke of in a lecture he delivered in 1988, at which

he described "an eighteen hundred year diaspora in which Jewry was always helpless."¹⁹ Through several controversial comparisons between examples of Jewish behavior under the Nazis and Jewish responses to centuries of persecution, Hilberg prioritizes direct "opposition to the perpetrator" as the appropriate response to the Nazis.²⁰ This notion of direct physical action essentially spells out his definition of "resistance," presented in the introduction to be somewhat narrow. By claiming that since a Nazi "agency could marshal only limited resources for a particular task, the very progress of the operation and *its ultimate success* depended on the mode of the Jewish response,"²¹ Hilberg implies that resistance would have been effective in slowing down or even halting the Holocaust, a claim that current historiography strongly contests. Indeed, at one point Hilberg directly accuses the European Jewish community (although this was far from a unified group to begin with) of "hastening its own destruction."²²

In his extensive critique of *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Nathan Eck labels Hilberg's argument as "slander," condemning it for ignoring historical facts and being full of contradictions, errors, and unsupported theories. Listing several Jewish revolts that Hilberg does not mention, Eck points out that the behavior of Diaspora Jews over the centuries—and during the Holocaust—should be understood in terms of the specific socio-historical context, or "objective circumstances," in which Jews found themselves, rather than in terms of the "subjective qualities" Hilberg prioritizes.²³ While providing a comprehensive analysis of Hilberg's argument, Eck is mainly concerned with Hilberg's criticism of Jews in general and does not focus specifically on the manner in which Hilberg judges victims in "privileged" positions. Indeed, Eck does not question the appropriateness of judgment, stating that an awareness of the state of Jewish knowledge is essential for "whoever seeks to pass judgment on the conduct and reactions of the Jews."²⁴ Although Hilberg passes judgment on *all* European Jews, the "privileged" members of the ghetto councils occupy much of his attention.

In a retrospective contemplation (or justification) of his views on Jewish responses to Nazi persecution, Hilberg writes in his memoir:

I had included the behavior of the Jewish community in my description because I saw Jewish institutions as an extension of the German bureaucratic machine. I was driven by force of logic to take account of the considerable reliance placed by the Germans on Jewish cooperation.²⁵

As shown in this passage—which is one of several similar passages—Hilberg refers to the content of his major work as a "description." Inspired by the historian Hans Rosenberg's course on bureaucracy and Franz

Neumann's analysis of the hierarchical organization of the Nazi state,²⁶ Hilberg's model of the "machinery of destruction" implies a degree of "objectivity" and moral neutrality. Hilberg notes in his autobiography that "the methodological literature that I read emphasized objectivity and neutral or value-free words. I was an observer, and it was most important to me that I write accordingly."²⁷ Similarities can be seen here between the linguistic strategies Hilberg uses and Levi's statement that he "deliberately assumed the calm, sober language of the witness" in his own writings.²⁸ However, while Hilberg reflects on his avoidance of emotive words such as "murder" and "executions," he does not consider the more subtle mechanisms or techniques through which judgment can be passed.

Hilberg frequently makes use of short, sharp sentences that are bereft of emotion and superfluous elaboration. For example, when evaluating Jewish efforts to buy enough time to live out the war, his judgment is left implicit as he simply writes: "The Jews could not hold on; they could not survive by appealing."²⁹ He also blends both brevity and judgment in his conclusion to the "Precedents" chapter early in his study: "We see, therefore, that both perpetrators and victims drew upon their age-old experience in dealing with each other. The Germans did it with success. The Jews did it with disaster."³⁰ In his concluding chapter, "Reflections," in which he returns to addressing "the role of the Jews in their own destruction,"³¹ Hilberg employs repetition and lists to stress the complicity of the *Judenräte*:

The German administration did not have a special budget for destruction, and in the occupied countries it was not abundantly staffed. By and large, it *did not* finance ghetto walls, *did not* keep order in ghetto streets, and *did not* make up deportation lists. German supervisors turned to Jewish councils for information, money, labor, or police, and the councils provided them with these means every day of the week.³²

The portrayal of Nazis "turning to" *Judenrat* officials rather than forcing them to cooperate arguably positions the reader to judge these "privileged" Jews as *willing* participants. Just as Hilberg contends that widespread resistance would have hampered the genocidal goals of the Nazis, he implies that a refusal to cooperate on the part of the councils (although he would not have defined this as resistance) would also have made a significant difference.

Hilberg's frequent use of irony is also intrinsically linked to his moral judgment, as in his statement: "It is a fact, now confirmed by many documents, that the Jews made an attempt to live with Hitler. In many cases they failed to escape while there was still time and more often still,

they failed to step out of the way when the killers were already upon them."³³ The repeated use of "failed," along with the dubious notion of Jews being able to "step out of the way," again reflects his negative view of Jewish behavior. At other times, Hilberg's tone moves from ironic to sarcastic. Mapping what he characterizes as the continuity of the idea among European Jews that economic usefulness could serve as a safeguard against all-out persecution, he curtly notes: "Among some Jews the conviction grew that Jewry was 'indispensable.'"³⁴ This mocking remark has curious implications. Does Hilberg mean that the Jews should have developed and sustained a mentality that told them they could be disposed of at any time? Immediately afterward, he links this accusation of self-righteousness to the mentality of the Jewish leadership but only offers one piece of evidence to support this: the 1922 publication of Hugo Bettauer's *The City Without Jews*, a fantasy novel that seems to suggest Jews were an irreplaceable facet of society.³⁵

The nature of Hilberg's scholarship leads him to focus on human decisions, their implementation and their consequences; hence the issue of moral responsibility inevitably arises, even if he does not address it explicitly. He uses an abundance of tables, statistics, lists, maps, organizational charts, and flow diagrams to document the destruction process, all of which reveal the implicit workings of his judgment. In his chapter on the Holocaust's "precedents," Hilberg employs a simple visual illustration of what he sees as the five categories of Jewish behavior: "Resistance," "Alleviation," "Evasion," "Paralysis," and "Compliance." Under these terms (which are given this order), Hilberg provides two parallel horizontal lines that are joined by groups of vertical strokes of varying numbers under each heading, implying that certain Jewish responses (i.e. those with more lines accompanying them) were more prevalent than others. This image graphically represents, seemingly in a quantifiable, authoritative manner, what is essentially Hilberg's opinion alone. The historian offers no explanation for why he allocates ten marks each to alleviation and compliance, two marks each to evasion and paralysis, and none to resistance (despite later conceding there were several examples of this during the war). Instead, Hilberg makes the vague comment that in his illustration, "the evasive reaction is not marked as strongly as the alleviation attempts."³⁶ While the use of a diagram such as this reinforces the sense of accumulated statistics and careful, "objective" deliberation, the table is, in short, unquantifiable, and serves only as a vehicle for passing judgment.

Just as Hilberg includes numerous tables to show the hierarchical structure of the Nazi bureaucracy, he employs similar devices to represent what he sees as the Jewish leadership's involvement in events. In

his discussion of the "concentration" of German Jews leading up to the war, Hilberg uses a large tree diagram to show the position of the Jewish "official community," or *Reichsvereinigung*, underneath the supervision of the Reich Security Main Office. On the next page, the Jewish leadership is depicted in more detail through a list of positions and names shown in a table that resembles the many others throughout Hilberg's study that identify Nazis and collaborators involved in the "machinery of destruction."³⁷ Another tree diagram shows the "German Controls over Jewish Councils," and, more significantly, a simple three-way chart links the three individuals forming the "Deportation Machinery in Salonika," including the president of the Jewish community, Chief Rabbi Koretz.³⁸ After visually connecting Koretz's name closely to the two Nazi authorities above him, Hilberg reinforces his judgment of Koretz in the written text by describing him as "an ideal tool for the German bureaucrats."³⁹

In one of the few philosophical discussions of alleged *Judenräte* "complicity," Abigail Rosenthal summarizes Hilberg's charges against Jewish leaders as consisting of "fatalism"; "anticipatory compliance"; "administrative and executive support"; "popular opposition to armed resistance"; "self-deception"; "self-aggrandizement"; "corruption"; "class privilege"; and "selection."⁴⁰ Despite his assertion early in *The Destruction of the European Jews* that Jewish leaders could have effectively resisted the Nazis in practical terms, on a few occasions Hilberg seems to sympathize with the extreme situations in which they found themselves. Toward the end of his study, he even describes them positively as

... genuine if not always representative Jewish leaders who strove to protect the Jewish community from the most severe exactions and impositions and who tried to normalize Jewish life under the most adverse conditions. ... The councils could not subvert the continuing process of constriction and annihilation.⁴¹

Immediately following this passage, however, Hilberg alters his view somewhat, commenting that the "Jewish councils were assisting the Germans with their good qualities as well as their bad."⁴² After discussing the Nazis' deception of their Jewish victims, which convinced Jews at each stage that the worst had already transpired, Hilberg passes judgment by resorting to a sardonic insult that implies their stupidity: "And so it appears that one of the most gigantic hoaxes in world history was perpetrated on five million people noted for their intellect."⁴³ He then proceeds to claim that the Jews were more victims of self-deception than Nazi deception, again expressing negative judgment.

The manner in which Hilberg judges “privileged” Jews can also be seen through his reliance on retrospective evaluations. In writing about the “grey zones” in Hilberg’s work, Gerhard Weinberg warns against moral judgment through hindsight, arguing that “it makes little sense to attack [*Judenrat*] leaders and members for not knowing what no one else on earth knew at the time: precisely how the tide of battle on the Eastern Front would shift and when and how the war would end.”⁴⁴ After stressing at one point how limited the information available to Jewish leaders was, Hilberg writes, “Seldom did the councils ask themselves if they should go on without reliable indications that everyone would be safe.”⁴⁵ Curiously, he follows this with two specific examples of *Judenrat* leaders repeatedly requesting information regarding deportations and being lied to. Hilberg’s claim that some Jewish leaders were able to find out more than others suggests that situations varied markedly at different times and in different places, although he continues to employ far-reaching generalizations. He also blames Jews for adopting, like the Germans, the coping mechanism of euphemistic language.⁴⁶ Hilberg’s sounding of an imperative that even Jews in closed ghettos “had to become conscious of a growing silence outside”⁴⁷ seems somewhat contradictory considering that some of these ghettos were, for all practical purposes, hermetically sealed.

Hilberg’s reliance on retrospective judgments raises a crucial issue for Holocaust historiography, one that has been explicated in detail by Michael Bernstein in his study *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (1994). Noting in particular the Zionist interpretations of Jewish persecution that position the Holocaust as the destined result of Jewish life in the Diaspora, Bernstein writes:

Every interpretation of the Shoah that is grounded in a sense of historical inevitability resonates with both implicit and often explicit ideological implications, not so much about the world of the perpetrators of the genocide, or about those bystanders who did so little to halt the mass murder, but about the lives of the victims themselves.⁴⁸

Bernstein contends that problematic judgments of victim behavior are widespread in early historical accounts. He understands these judgments through a phenomenon he terms “backshadowing,” through which “the shared knowledge of the outcome of a series of events by narrator and listener is used to judge the participants in those events *as though they too should have known what was to come*.”⁴⁹ Bernstein is particularly interested in those historical writings, biographies, and novels that construct and condemn the “blindness” and “self-deception” of Austro-

German Jews, who were apparently unwilling "to save themselves from a doom that supposedly was clear to see."⁵⁰ However, the concept of backshadowing can also be utilized when considering assessments of "privileged" Jews, not least in the work of Hilberg, whose reliance on retrospect leads at least in part to his passing of clear-cut judgments on their behavior.⁵¹

Further aspects of Hilberg's methodology reveal how judgment of "privileged" Jews is passed in his work. Again on the subject of the *Judenräte*, Hilberg claims that "Jewish efficiency in allocating space or in distributing rations was an extension of German effectiveness,"⁵² rather than a method of sustaining Jewish life in the ghettos. This statement not only communicates moral judgment, but reveals the potential problems that arise from relying heavily on the sources and perspectives of the perpetrators. In his autobiography, Hilberg expresses his conviction that the destruction process needed to be viewed through the eyes of the Nazis: "That the perpetrators' perspective was the primary path to be followed became a doctrine for me, which I never abandoned."⁵³ As will be discussed further, this caused problems for Hilberg when he tried to find a publisher. Hilberg's footnotes provide several instances of his problematic use of Nazi sources to support his judgment of Jewish behavior. For example, in his discussion of Jewish "paralysis" (a negative term in itself), Hilberg seems to take at face value a German's observation of "symptomatic fidgeting" amongst a community awaiting death in Galicia. Even more significantly, he appears to accept uncritically the connection made by Franz Stangl, Nazi commandant of Sobibor and Treblinka, between Jewish victims and "lemmings."⁵⁴ Hilberg reinforces his judgment of Jewish leaders in particular when he quotes a high-ranking SS officer who stated that the Jews "had no organization of their own at all, not even an information service. If they had had some sort of organization, these people could have been saved by the millions; but instead they were taken completely by surprise."⁵⁵ Hilberg introduces this passage with two lines that reflect his source's opinion at every turn: "On a Europeanwide scale the Jews had no resistance organization, no blueprint for armed action, no plan even for psychological warfare. They were completely unprepared."⁵⁶ It would seem that the judgments of the perpetrators have influenced the historian.

Hilberg is skeptical of the representativeness and usefulness of survivor accounts, noting that "survivors are not a random sample of the extinct communities, particularly if one looks for typical Jewish reactions and adjustments to the process of destruction. . . . Understandably the survivors seldom speak of those experiences that were most humiliating or most embarrassing."⁵⁷ Hilberg's distrust of survivor testimony

is equally clear in his statement that "I did use survivor testimony, but I also had to acknowledge that the Jewish view of what was happening was extremely limited. How far do you see when you are boxed in to a ghetto or a camp? A few hundred yards?"⁵⁸ Ironically, the lack of perspective to which Hilberg alludes can be directly connected to the lack of knowledge for which he criticizes Jewish leaders. In his 1971 volume, *Documents of Destruction*, Hilberg characterizes the *Judenräte* and their police forces as "agents of the Germans. They continued to obey orders and efficiently produced results. Several million Jews were consequently trapped, not only in the Nazi Reich but in their own communities as well."⁵⁹ Noting pointedly that the number of "'Prominent' Jews did not shrink as fast as the ghetto population at large," Hilberg provides several documents that seem to back up his assessment, further revealing how his selective use of sources invokes negative judgment of "privileged" Jews.⁶⁰

While Nazi documents clearly reveal the bureaucratic nature of the destruction process, they render the victims anonymous and are unlikely to shed more than a superficial light on the ethical dilemmas confronting "privileged" Jews in the camps and ghettos.⁶¹ Saul Friedländer, who incorporates multiple perspectives in his own history of the Holocaust, points out that "the victims' testimony is our only source for the history of their own path to destruction. Their words evoke, in their own chaotic way, the depth of their terror, despair, apathetic resignation—and total incomprehension."⁶² Likewise, Israeli historian Dan Diner argues that historians can better comprehend the difficulties in judging the extreme situations of the Holocaust if they adopt the perspective of the *Judenräte*.⁶³

Even if one dismisses the radical strand of postmodern thought that rejects all conceptions of "truth" and "reality," it is nonetheless widely acknowledged that historical representation is governed by a scholar's selection, sequencing, and expression of "the facts" and is thus ultimately incapable of an exact mimesis of the past. All that can be achieved in recording history is an approximation of what has occurred; "objectivity" in its larger sense does not exist. While *The Destruction of the European Jews* is arguably the most influential study of the Holocaust, it is evident that the conventions at work in Hilberg's representation of "privileged" Jews in the ghettos reveal strong negative judgment, despite his implicit claims to impartiality. Indeed, in the last paragraph of his concluding chapter entitled "Reflections," Hilberg's moral evaluation of Jewish behavior is explicit: "For the first time ... the Jewish victims, caught in the straitjacket of their history, *plunged themselves* physically and psychologically into catastrophe."⁶⁴ As cogs in Hilberg's

"machinery of destruction," "privileged" Jews could not escape death, just as they were unable to escape his judgment. Later, in undertaking a more balanced use of archival and testimonial sources, Hilberg expressed his judgment in a substantially different form.

A "Spectrum" of Behavior: Levels of Judgment in Hilberg's Writing

In contrast to *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Hilberg's tripartite analysis in *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945*, first published in 1992, focuses on individuals and groups of people rather than organizations and events. This constitutes a major shift in Hilberg's style, which he bluntly characterizes in his autobiography as "an abandonment of political science."⁶⁵ His footnotes testify to an expansion in his research to include numerous Jewish sources—both primary documents in the form of survivor testimony and, owing to the time of writing, a more diverse range of historical interpretations—as well as material originating with the Nazis. Perhaps in response to the criticism of his earlier views, Hilberg acknowledges in his preface that Jews "have remained an amorphous mass."⁶⁶ Nonetheless, while he stresses in his opening paragraph that victims are a distinct, indissoluble group not to be blurred with any other,⁶⁷ his representation of "privileged" Jews reveals that he continues to find them culpable for their behavior.

Hilberg's book is divided into three parts of relatively equal length, focusing on the Holocaust's perpetrators, victims, and bystanders respectively. Hilberg essentially invented this taxonomy, which continues to exercise considerable influence in Holocaust studies and other fields of inquiry. The first chapter of the section on victims—and, significantly, the chapter that immediately follows the section on Holocaust perpetrators—deals with the "Jewish leaders." Providing a general account of the numbers employed in the many Jewish councils, how the positions were filled, the pressures their members faced, and the various activities they undertook, he notes that all *Judenräte* were "burdened with problems as crushing as any."⁶⁸ However, Hilberg soon turns his attention to individuals, providing successive representations of several Jewish leaders: Rabbi Leo Baeck of Germany; Dr. Josef Löwenherz of Austria; Adam Czerniakow of Warsaw; Chaim Rumkowski of Lodz; Ephraim Barasz of Bialystok; and Jacob Gens of the Vilna Ghetto. In fact, Hilberg describes his book as consisting of "brief descriptions and capsule portraits of people, known and unknown."⁶⁹ His use of these

vignettes results in a very different mode of representation from his predominantly institutional analysis in *The Destruction of the European Jews*; thus his judgment takes on a very different form from that which appeared in his previous work.

Hilberg's discussion of "privileged" Jews in *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders* reveals a process of judgment that in some ways resembles the moral spectrum represented in Levi's essay on the grey zone. However, while Levi relies on a spectrum of behavior along which various groups are situated, Hilberg constructs a spectrum of individuals, with some Jewish officials implicitly classified as better or worse than others. The clearest indication that Hilberg presents a moral spectrum lies in his own admission that his case studies reveal a "spectrum of leaders and types of leadership, from old officeholders to emerging crisis managers, and from a traditional superintendency to the aggressive and internally unhampered decision making of a dictator."⁷⁰ Hilberg characterizes individual leaders, from Baeck through to Gens, within this framework. In doing so, he briefly sketches each official's personal background along with some of their experiences and actions in their respective organizations.

Hilberg is highly selective and concentrates mainly on those Jewish leaders he views negatively, particularly those situated on the "darkest" end of the spectrum. In this way, the order in which Baeck, Löwenherz, Czerniakow, Rumkowski, Barasz, and Gens are progressively discussed is significant, as Hilberg creates the impression that each leader was more "compromised" than the one preceding. Beginning with Baeck, Hilberg initially represents the elderly leader of Germany's *Reichsvereinigung* in a positive light, even implying that he possessed a measure of bravery: "Having turned down all opportunities for emigration, he was determined to stay at his post as long as ten Jews were left in Germany. Baeck projected reliability and respectability to the remaining Jews, and together with his associates he also presented to the community a constellation of reassuring faces."⁷¹ While there is perhaps a hint of Hilberg's customary irony present here, suggesting that such reassurance was a problem, any judgment of Baeck is far from condemnatory. Even when Hilberg notes the increasingly ambiguous actions of the *Reichsvereinigung*, particularly the supervision of the "efficient conduct of the deportations," he draws on primary documents to portray Baeck, who chaired council meetings as "only a shadowy figure who did not speak."⁷²

Hilberg's negative judgment moves up a level when he turns to Löwenherz of Austria. Describing an incident in which the Jewish leader was slapped by SS Lieutenant Adolf Eichmann, Hilberg makes an ini-

tial observation that admits to the powerless position of Jewish leaders, who were at the whim of the Nazi authorities. However, characterizing Löwenherz as "managerial" and "stately," Hilberg includes him in his matter-of-fact assessment of the "diligent assistance of the community machinery" in the country's fatal deportations of 1941–42. In addition to his reference to Jewish organizational "machinery," Hilberg employs a strategy often used in *The Destruction of the European Jews* by paraphrasing Eichmann's comment that he "had the Jewish leaders trotting along and working diligently."⁷³ This leaves the perpetrator's judgment of the victims' behavior unquestioned. Interestingly, Hilberg only devotes four sentences to Czerniakow. Nonetheless, the somewhat positive nature of Hilberg's judgment is clear in the selection of only one aspect of Czerniakow's leadership. In one of his trademark short sentences, Hilberg writes: "As chairman of the Warsaw Jewish Council he [Czerniakow] had harsh words for Jewish leaders who had fled or emigrated right after the German invasion. He considered them deserters."⁷⁴ Such a fleeting portrayal of Czerniakow is considerably different from his preoccupation with what he otherwise sees as the Jewish leader's naivety and shortsightedness (to be discussed further).

In *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, Hilberg provides a stark contrast between Czerniakow and Chaim Rumkowski (discussed in chapter 1). He notes that both leaders rose to the position of council president due to the emigration of their predecessors, but describes Rumkowski as "a deputy of another kind."⁷⁵ He goes on to characterize Rumkowski's transformation from a failed yet honest businessperson who "managed several orphanages with devotion" to an egotistical and immoral "autocrat":

Increasingly self-assured, Rumkowski accustomed himself to power. Now he could reward friends and intimidate adversaries. With every step he focused attention on his unique position. When he married again, he chose a woman less than half his age. When bank notes were printed in the ghetto, they bore his likeness. ... Rumkowski presided over his community through periods of starvation and deportations for almost five years.⁷⁶

Hilberg's vignette of Rumkowski's behavior, which also refers to his oft-criticized speeches, makes it clear that Hilberg views every aspect of the "privileged" Jew's personal and professional life as leaving much to be desired. Hilberg's preoccupation with judging Rumkowski precludes any acknowledgment that he arguably contributed to Lodz's status as the longest surviving ghetto, which was also the closest to being liberated before its total destruction. Instead, his reference to Rumkowski's five-year rule serves only to highlight the length of time the council elder

"presided" over Jewish suffering. There is no sign here of the need to suspend judgment, as stressed in Levi's representation of Rumkowski in "The Grey Zone." Similarly, in his brief account of Barasz's position of power in the Bialystok Ghetto, Hilberg draws on a lone Jewish Council document to argue that the once "genuine manager of the community organization" became the all-encompassing "man in charge."⁷⁷

Hilberg portrays the apparent thirst for power on the part of "privileged" Jews as most virulent in his last example, Jacob Gens, who was not a council official but the chief of the Jewish police in the Vilna Ghetto. Hilberg depicts Gens as the "prime mover" of the ghetto's "militarization" and a corrupt underling who impressed his Nazi overseers. He describes at length Gens's education, military involvement, and radical Zionist political inclinations, creating an overall impression of a quite unsavory individual. Interestingly, Hilberg does acknowledge the opportunities Gens had to escape the ghetto, writing that he "chose to remain and be judged by history."⁷⁸ He then immediately proceeds to elucidate what this judgment should be, drawing a parallel with the behavior of other Jewish leaders and then suggesting that Gens crossed the line of complicity even further by being "in competition" with the ghetto's resistance movement:

In emphasizing a policy of accommodation and production, Gens did not differ from other ghetto potentates. ... Sure of himself, [he] persisted in his course, even while the resisters were in a quandary over the question of risking severe German retaliation for a chance to fight. In this contest Gens prevailed. He drove a wedge between the organizers of resistance and the ghetto community. The people followed *him*.⁷⁹

Hilberg's use of italics not only reveals his exasperation that the Jews followed their leaders rather than engaging in extremely risky armed resistance, but also his judgment of Gens as being far from suitable for the position he held. Also of significance is that while Hilberg identifies the ethical dilemma regarding the Nazis' policy of collective responsibility that faced members of the Resistance,⁸⁰ he does not acknowledge that Jewish leaders such as Gens faced this very same dilemma.

With his condemnation of Gens, Hilberg's moral spectrum is complete and is then clarified even further through his criticisms of the Jewish leadership in France and Romania. At the end of his chapter, Hilberg returns to the subject of Jewish councils in general, reiterating many of the arguments he proposes in *The Destruction of the European Jews*: that Jewish leaders only desired stability; relied on petitions and compliance; and stressed the need to sustain the ghettos' economic output to avoid becoming superfluous to their Nazi persecutors.⁸¹ By

emphasizing small, last-minute concessions such as requests for milk to be supplied to children being deported, attempts to reduce deportation quotas, and pleas for deportations to be undertaken in a "humane spirit," Hilberg implies that such strategies were not only ineffective, but hopelessly shortsighted. Yet, reflecting that Jewish leaders were themselves victims caught up in the "cauldron," Hilberg asks: "How, in these circumstances, did they judge their own positions?"⁸² He finds that *Judenrat* officials, at least those whose self-perception might be gauged, did not view themselves as complicit—although Hilberg makes it clear that they should have. Writing that Jewish leaders "did not think that they enjoyed undeserved privileges, even though they were aware that they ate better and were housed more spaciously than most other Jews," his (seemingly confident) gesture toward the mindset of "privileged" Jews reveals negative judgment.⁸³

In a move reminiscent of Levi's conclusion to his essay on the grey zone, Hilberg begins the chapter's last paragraph by shifting from the particular to the universal. He states that "Jewish leaders were, in short, remarkably similar in their self-perception to rulers all over the world, but their role was not normal and for most of them neither was their fate."⁸⁴ Taking this statement into consideration, Hilberg's seemingly detached, dispassionate list of the grim ends that greeted many of the Jewish leaders he discussed reveals more a sense of irony than tragedy. Even so, the closeness of Hilberg's representation at this point to what Hayden White would identify as a discourse of tragedy is significant.⁸⁵ The ironic inducement of the archetype of the tragic (male) figure who "falls" (dies) due to "his" own fundamental flaw(s) could be seen to be consistent with the nature of Hilberg's judgment elsewhere. Hilberg does not question the legitimacy of the attempts to impose legal proceedings on some former council members after the war, and his implicit judgment of Rabbi Benjamin Murmelstein, elder of the Theresienstadt Ghetto, is equally evident. Hilberg simply reports that Murmelstein had "prudently chose[n] a life of anonymity" in Rome and seems to agree with the decision of the Jewish community, which "refused to bury him near his wife, but allowed him a plot at the edge of the cemetery."⁸⁶

While *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders* contains no chapter on "resisters" as such, Hilberg includes Jews who engaged in direct, armed opposition to the Nazis in a chapter titled "The Unadjusted," a category which also includes those who hid, escaped, or committed suicide. Significantly, this constitutes the second-to-last chapter of the section on the victims, followed only by a chapter on "The Survivors," another small minority. Hilberg summarizes his chapter on "The Unadjusted" in

his book's preface by constructing a binary opposition that is more reflective of his earlier work: "Whereas most victims adjusted themselves step by step ... there was a minority, however small, that did not share the adaptations of the multitude."⁸⁷ Importantly, Hilberg's monograph makes only one brief mention of a case where "privileged" Jews engaged in an act of resistance, generally portraying them as either the indefatigable obstacle to, or target of, others' resistance efforts. Indeed, he gives the impression that "privileged" Jews in the ghettos strongly disapproved of any kind of opposition to the Nazis, thereby indicating what he thinks they should have done:

In the Jewish councils, no pamphlets were composed and no arguments were made to show that any German action was hurtful and morally wrong. No ill will was expressed to the Germans. No threats were made to the life of any German. No rumors were started that the Allied powers would retaliate for the destruction of the Jews.⁸⁸

Of course, Hilberg does not elucidate what effects such activities might have had on the destruction process. Indeed, in mentioning the possibility of Allied retaliation, Hilberg temporarily ignores the issue of Nazi retribution, which he acknowledges at length elsewhere. In terms of the assumed need for the *Judenräte* to demonstrate that Nazi persecution was "morally wrong," few would argue that Jews needed much convincing.

Lastly, in what marks a strong contrast to Levi's portrayal of the majority of survivors as having been "privileged" or "compromised" in some way, Hilberg contends that those who survived comprised "a remnant of persisters and resisters," whose psychological makeup consisted of "realism, rapid decision making, and [a] tenacious holding on to life."⁸⁹ This reinforces his implicit argument that the tide of the Holocaust could have been turned had a greater number of Jews opposed their persecutors more directly. In depicting the "unadjusted" as refusing to cooperate "with the perpetrator or their own leadership,"⁹⁰ Hilberg implies that the actions of the *Judenräte* always had a detrimental effect on the ghetto populations. While a number of familiar conceptual threads, as well as marked differences in methodology and style, serve to both connect and separate Hilberg's earlier pioneering study and *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, his blatant judgment of "privileged" Jews in the former is no less evident in the latter. Indeed, Hilberg's work has profoundly influenced the historiographical debate surrounding the contentious issues of Jewish "resistance" and "collaboration" during the Holocaust, and his controversial persona itself has played a significant role in this.

A Holocaust Historian and His "Thirty-year War": Hilberg's Controversial Persona

Although they are expected to maintain a degree of critical distance, historians are always influenced by their personal context and the historical context in which they live. In his autobiographical work, *The Politics of Memory: The Journey of a Holocaust Historian* (1996), Hilberg makes little effort to hide his propensity to cast judgment, and he expresses dismay at others' reactions to his ideas. In the final lines of the memoir, Hilberg cites H. G. Adler's characterization of him as representative of a generation that is "bewildered, bitter and embittered, accusing and critical not only vis-à-vis the Germans ... but also the Jews."⁹¹ Reflecting on the first time he read this, Hilberg states, "I felt as though Adler had peered directly into the core of my being."⁹² The tension between the universal significance and "unique" character of the Holocaust, which contributes to the paradox of judgment in Levi's "grey zone" (see chapter 1), also appears to have some bearing on Hilberg's thought. In 1999, he commented: "For me the Holocaust was a vast, single event, but I am never going to use the word *unique*, because I recognize that when one starts breaking it into pieces, which is my trade, one finds completely recognizable, ordinary ingredients."⁹³ Significantly, when Hilberg elaborates on other genocides and draws a specific comparison between Rwandan Tutsis and Dutch Jews, it is to make a point about the passivity of the victims. So while Hilberg may well agree that the Holocaust was an unprecedented phenomenon, there is no evidence—indeed, much to the contrary—that he views the event and the human behavior involved in it as undermining preexisting moral categories.

At no point in his memoir does Hilberg deny passing judgment on Jews, although he does seem to position himself as possessing a greater measure of moral neutrality than a close reading of his writings might suggest. Contemplating the opposition to his views on Jewish behavior during the war, Hilberg writes somewhat patronizingly of the criticism of *The Destruction of the European Jews*:

The fragile nature of the objections hurled against me did not impair their durability... The opposition did *not* die. Added to the repetition of these charges was the accusation that in my subsequent writings I had reiterated and elaborated what I had first said in 1961 about compliant Jewish reactions to destruction. I had waged a thirty-year war against the Jewish resistance.⁹⁴

Setting aside the issue of whether such criticisms are "fragile" and the telling use of the militaristic reference to a "thirty-year war," it is Hil-

berg's claim to a certain "objectivity" in his work that has been shown not to stand up to closer scrutiny. Throughout his esteemed career, Hilberg has been a key figure of controversy, encountering strong and consistent opposition to his views on Jewish behavior during the Holocaust, from the very beginning of his research. Indeed, a brief survey of Hilberg's personal and public experiences demonstrates that the problematic issue of judging Jews proved a crucial facet of his life and career.

Previously considered to be only potential historical sources at best, autobiographies have increasingly been thought of as representations of the past in themselves. In his volume on autobiographies by historians, Jeremy Popkin views this subgenre as "an ambiguous supplement to the fields of history on the one hand and autobiography on the other."⁹⁵ It is to be expected that life writing by historians will engage with not only their own personal histories, but also the histories they have focused on in their research. Furthermore, autobiographies always claim some form of historical verifiability. While inevitably introducing an explicit subjectivity into their memoirs, historians still invariably reinforce their conviction that historiography is concerned with reconstructing "historical truth."⁹⁶ Nonetheless, although first-person narratives by historians generally reflect the form and tone of historical writing and attempt to gain the reader's confidence through their historical perspective, life writing arguably allows more opportunities for judgments to be made without the author's usual scholarly scrupulousness. Hilberg is no exception to this. Popkin even suggests that Hilberg implicitly claims in his memoir that his "methods produce a representation of past events that is in some sense truer and more accurate than that of those who were actually there."⁹⁷ This is particularly important when considering Hilberg's earlier dismissal of survivor testimony. Throughout his recollections Hilberg engages at length with the theme of Jewish behavior during the Holocaust, primarily by responding to the many criticisms of his views by survivors, historians, publishers, and critics alike. In its merging of historical and life writing, Hilberg's memoir stresses the legitimacy of the arguments presented in his earlier publications.

Hilberg notes in his memoir that when he submitted his trial master's essay for review, his sponsor "objected only to one passage in the conclusion ... that the Jews had cooperated in their own destruction."⁹⁸ In reworking this essay into his doctoral dissertation, which eventually became *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Hilberg deleted the passage as requested, although he notes that he was "silently determined to return it to my larger work."⁹⁹ Even the very first person to read Hilberg's manuscript—his father—expressed concern over the issue.¹⁰⁰ In 1958, in what proved to be the first of many setbacks on Hilberg's road to publi-

cation, Yad Vashem, the prominent Holocaust research and educational institution in Jerusalem, anticipated "hostile criticism" of Hilberg's work and refused to participate in the publication of his manuscript. Hilberg was given two reasons for this decision: first, the editorial board was concerned that his history relied primarily on German sources; and second, it had reservations regarding his "appraisal of the Jewish resistance."¹⁰¹ Interestingly, after quoting the offending letter from Dr. J. Melkman, then the general manager of Yad Vashem, Hilberg asserts in his memoir that Melkman survived in the Nazi-occupied Netherlands through "a precarious privileged position, first in Amsterdam, then in the transit camp of Westerbork, and finally in Bergen-Belsen."¹⁰² While Hilberg states that Melkman's decision was motivated by Yad Vashem's ideological stance, which prioritized Yiddish and Hebrew sources and the theme of resistance, his accusation of "parochial self-preservation" may be seen to imply a double-meaning when taking into account Melkman's "privileged" status during the war. Hilberg's argument regarding Jewish behavior became a further obstacle in 1965 to publication in Germany, where it was feared by a potential publishing company that the volume could have "very dangerous consequences."¹⁰³

Amidst the controversy over Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (see the introduction), with which his approach was frequently aligned, Hilberg reiterated his views on the *Judenräte* at a 1963 symposium, only to be loudly booed by the forum's audience and denounced in the open discussion that followed.¹⁰⁴ He had used an example of a woman and her young child standing "passively" while waiting to be shot at the edge of a mass grave to illustrate a controversial point about what he saw as "the outcome of Jewry's age-old policy" of compliance.¹⁰⁵ Hilberg, who was accused of "sadism" during question time, later described his disposition during the symposium pithily, in short sentences: "I was not friendly. I did not yield, and I was oblivious to the fact that I was tearing open unhealed wounds. I was not allowed to finish."¹⁰⁶ At times, his self-representation in his memoir almost takes on the aspect of a lone crusader:

It has taken me some time to absorb what I should always have known, that in my whole approach to the study of the destruction of the Jews I was pitting myself against the main current of Jewish thought, that I did not give in, that in my research and writing I was pursuing not merely another direction but one which was the exact opposite of a signal that pulsed endlessly through the Jewish community... The philistines in my field are everywhere. I am surrounded by the commonplace, platitudes, and clichés.¹⁰⁷

This somewhat glorified self-representation is equally evident in Hilberg's short article "The Judenrat: Conscious or Unconscious 'Tool.'"

Responding here to Gideon Hausner's queries about his views on Jewish behavior, Hilberg aggressively invokes what he sees as "a generational problem" defined by "the willingness or the unwillingness to ask questions."¹⁰⁸ He describes his evaluation of Jewish complicity not only as "critically important" but also "very obvious," and he ends his article with an uncharacteristic exclamation: "If you have difficulty with me, watch the next generation!"¹⁰⁹ In a sense, Hilberg constructs a binary opposition between different interpretations of Jewish behavior, with himself at one extreme and the entire academic establishment at the other. There appears to be no room for compromise, no room for nuance or doubt regarding "the active role of the Jews in their own destruction."¹¹⁰

Elsewhere in *The Politics of Memory*, Hilberg uses personal attacks on academics to reiterate his judgment of "privileged" Jews. He deliberately distances himself from Arendt and opposes the parallels that have often been drawn between his position and her remarks regarding Jewish leaders in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Hilberg dismisses Arendt's highly influential (and controversial) concept of the "banality of evil" out of hand and makes a sharp distinction between her evaluation of Jewish behavior and his own. Whereas for Arendt the Jewish leaders effectively betrayed the communities for which they were responsible, Hilberg argues that for him, "the problem was deeper":

The councils were not only a German tool but also an instrument of the Jewish community. Their strategy was a continuation of the adjustments and adaptations practiced by Jews for centuries. I could not separate the Jewish leaders from the Jewish population because I believed that these men represented the essence of a time-honored Jewish reaction to danger.¹¹¹

This reveals a new dimension of Hilberg's judgment of Jews, with his criticism of those in "privileged" positions during the Holocaust being in no way diminished simply because at times he paints his judgments with a broader brush. Indeed, the distinctions he draws in his various publications between "privileged" and "non-privileged" Jews (despite not using these specific terms) have been clear. While Hilberg's work avoids the polemical tone and hypothetical statements of Arendt's book, there are some similarities in their views on Jewish complicity, as much as Hilberg denies this. Hilberg also denigrates the work of the Holocaust historian Lucy Dawidowicz, who criticizes his "rashness in generalizing about" Jewish history and claims he "has flawed his otherwise valuable work with uninformed comments and distorted conclusions about Jewish behavior."¹¹² Hilberg offers only an offhand rebuttal of Dawidowicz's view that nothing could effectively have been done by Jews to prevent or halt the Holocaust.¹¹³

Unlike Levi, Hilberg never questions the appropriateness of judging "privileged" Jews. Although the historian laments his premature dismissal or misinterpretation of historical documents over the years,¹¹⁴ he never expresses any doubt about his position in relation to the Jewish councils. Indeed, his memoir's account of the opposition he came up against is very self-assured. As Mitchell Hart points out in his analysis of *The Politics of Memory*, Hilberg provides "a sense of his self-perceived heroic isolation, of a battle ... waged between the solitary soldier for truth and all the rest who are satisfied with myth.... He sets himself up as a scholar under siege, surrounded on all sides by ineptitude, bad taste, and dishonesty."¹¹⁵ After interviewing Hilberg in 1999, Erna Paris describes her impression of the historian who, then in his early seventies, was still furious with the criticism of his evaluation of Jewish behavior: "His mouth is etched with deep creases, and his speech carries a bitter, ironic edge after a lifetime of unending controversy over his work.... At the forefront of his concerns is his reputation and his legacy."¹¹⁶ The complexity and controversial nature of Hilberg's persona is no more evident than in his prolonged engagement with the diary of Adam Czerniakow.

Remnants of the Past: The "Ghost Inside Czerniakow's Office"

Around the same time Hilberg was writing *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, he published a very critical—in some passages, scathing—analysis of the Jewish councils entitled "The Ghetto as a Form of Government," which reviewed Isaiah Trunk's major study, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (1972). Here, in writing that "Jewish executives, like the Germans in charge, could make use of coercion and take advantage of helplessness," Hilberg seems to imply a similarity in behavior that borders on blurring the distinction between victim and perpetrator, a distinction that the taxonomy of *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders* upholds.¹¹⁷ Reiterating his theory that the councils were "an essential link in the chain of destructive steps," he passes judgment using his customary irony and short sentences: "First the Jewish councils handed over money; then they delivered human beings."¹¹⁸ He also blames Jewish leaders for being "completely nonprovocative"; emphasizes their "corruption" and other "vices"; and claims, using phrasing reminiscent of Arendt, that the actions of the Jewish police (and presumably the councils) constitute "one of the greatest moral disappointments of the Holocaust."¹¹⁹

In the final lines of "The Ghetto as a Form of Government," however, Hilberg distinctly changes the tone of his discussion, noting that "the moral questions raised over so many years have not been closed; they have only become more complicated."¹²⁰ He briefly reflects on the fate of three Jewish leaders—Rumkowski, Gens, and Czerniakow—writing: "They were different men by background as well as in their ideas, but in the end all three declined to save themselves after they had not succeeded in saving their people."¹²¹ The way Hilberg connects these three "privileged" Jews in this essay differs from the way he positions them along a spectrum in *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, although further details of their behavior provided earlier in the essay perhaps indicate a negative evaluation of them overall. Nonetheless, Hilberg's increased efforts to engage with the situations of those "privileged" Jews he holds to account reveal differences in the way he passes judgment, a development most evident in his role as coeditor of the English translation of Czerniakow's diary.

Hilberg's six-year involvement, if not obsession, with Czerniakow's diary further complicates the analysis of judgment in the historian's work. He writes in his autobiography that the "diary became a place, a strange locality that I was entering for the first time. I was a voyeur, a ghost inside Czerniakow's office, unobserved, and the longer I inhabited that enclosure, the more I saw."¹²² Hilberg's explanatory footnotes, which briefly refer to abbreviations used and individuals or places named, accompany the majority of pages comprising Czerniakow's painstakingly recorded entries. Describing Czerniakow as having a "unique" vantage point due to his "privileged" position, Hilberg writes: "The ghetto marked a sharp separation between perpetrator and victim, but Czerniakow was like a bridge."¹²³ While Czerniakow served as the sole link between the Nazi authorities and his fellow Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto in a literal way, Hilberg's choice of word comparing Czerniakow to a bridge might also be construed as briefly gesturing to a "grey" area beyond the "sharp separation" of persecutor and persecuted. Indeed, Hilberg's wording is somewhat reminiscent of Levi's characterization of the grey zone as comprising "ill-defined outlines which both separate and join the two camps of masters and servants."¹²⁴

There have been many positive accounts of Czerniakow.¹²⁵ While stopping short of approaching what might be considered empathy, Hilberg's negative judgment of Jewish leaders in general became dulled to some extent due to his engagement with Czerniakow's diary. This may be partly due to the fact that after refusing to publish *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Yad Vashem agreed to participate in a joint publication venture of the diary, albeit with the highly significant proviso

that "Hilberg's footnotes must be factual, identified as his, and *under no circumstances ... evaluative*."¹²⁶ Noting Hilberg's disillusionment with the less-than-enthusiastic reception of the diary due to its challenging of the binary opposition of "good" and "evil," Annette Wiewiorka writes: "Reading Czerniakow entails adopting a state of mind that does not judge. It entails trying to understand a man and the historical role he chose to assume, a role that forced him to face an absolute aporia, until he could bear it no longer and committed suicide."¹²⁷

Importantly, Hilberg's introduction to the diary, which is cowritten with another of the book's editors, Stanislaw Staron,¹²⁸ is preceded by another introduction. This piece, written by the diary's third editor, Josef Kermisz, gives an overwhelmingly glowing account of Czerniakow's "moral strength" and "devotion to his people."¹²⁹ Kermisz stresses the Jewish leader's extensive contribution to the ghetto's educational, religious, and cultural activities; the personal suffering he experienced at the hands of the Nazis, including multiple arrests; and his opposition to the corruption displayed by those surrounding him. Exercising unwavering positive judgment, Kermisz seldom broaches the controversy surrounding the Jewish leader's behavior, instead writing that Czerniakow "would surrender nothing of his dignity and honor. ... In his feeling of responsibility, his devotion and persistence, which knew no bounds, Czerniakow was outstanding."¹³⁰ In one section, Kermisz suggests that "perhaps [Czerniakow] did not pay sufficient attention to the rumors in the ghetto and to the serious portents concerning the ghetto's fate"; however, he also implies that this was because Czerniakow was so thoroughly "immersed" in his activities elsewhere.¹³¹

One can only hypothesize what the reason might be for the English translation of the diary to be given two introductions, but it is in any case clear that the essay to which Hilberg contributes represents Czerniakow in a radically different manner than Kermisz does. Writing in a seemingly more formal, "objective" tone than Kermisz, Hilberg compiles a detailed record of the Warsaw Ghetto's history by drawing on both archival documents and Czerniakow's diary entries. Toward the beginning of his introduction, he writes:

What sort of man was he? One is tempted to speak of him as overwhelmingly ordinary. Often enough, he has been recalled as a kind of non-villain and non-hero, non-exploiter and non-saint. Several of his contemporaries have even attributed to him all of the qualities of nonleadership.¹³²

Here, Hilberg evokes the impressions of others who seem to neither offer outright praise of nor ascribe blame to Czerniakow. Allocating the Jewish leader the status of "non-villain and non-hero" might be interpreted

as positioning Czerniakow as a figure of moral ambiguity; however, a close reading of the introduction reveals that judgment is constructed in implicit and familiar ways. First, Hilberg situates Czerniakow and other members of the Jewish Council within several of the organizational charts typical of *The Destruction of the European Jews*. Shortly after utilizing a tree diagram that displays the Nazi authorities above Czerniakow and the various divisions, including the Jewish police, below him, the written text interprets the significance of the power relations displayed: "To be sure, the police were entitled to some important nonmonetary benefits, mainly, as we shall see, meals and larger bread rations. Czerniakow, incidentally, remained loyal to his controversial police."¹³³ In the use of phrases such as "to be sure" and "incidentally," Hilberg's customary irony implicitly judges the "privileges" the *Ordnungsdienst* received and Czerniakow's complicity in this, despite the statement in the previous paragraph that the ghetto's German *Kommissar* had absolute power over the Council.

Hilberg describes the progression of events by employing subheadings based on what he classifies as major phases of Nazi activities, leading up to "Phase V: The Deportations." The description present in the first sentence of this section is significant: "In February 1942, Czerniakow watched a Jewish workman install stained-glass windows in the Council chambers."¹³⁴ This immediately positions the reader to adopt a negative attitude toward the Jewish leader's state of knowledge. Several pages of examples from the diary are then used to further illustrate Czerniakow's fluctuation from apparently being certain of the Nazis' intentions to doubting them—going from despair to hope. After commenting on a notice regarding changes to the Krakow Ghetto and its *Judenrat*, which Czerniakow had found in the official newspaper distributed by the Nazis, Hilberg succinctly writes in one of his characteristically short sentences: "Czerniakow cut the report out of the paper and placed it into the diary."¹³⁵ The details that follow reinforce the implicit judgment behind Hilberg's position, including references to a chess tournament and concerts that took place in the ghetto while rumors of atrocities continued to circulate.

Characterizing Czerniakow as "clinging to residual hopes," Hilberg writes that the Jewish leader "tried not to accept the truth until the very last moment."¹³⁶ He links what he evidently interprets as Czerniakow's naivety directly to what he wrote daily into his notebooks:

In his diary, Czerniakow does not ask where the deported Jews of Lwów, Lublin, or Kraków had been taken. It was not a question commonly verbalized by ghetto leaders. There was in fact no Jewish intelligence network, no systematic acquisition of information, no organized verification of rumors

and reports. At that very moment, Nazi Germany was "solving" the "Jewish problem" in death camps created on Polish territory.¹³⁷

Hilberg is evidently suggesting that Czerniakow *should* have asked such questions and thus should have taken measures, such as the unlikely ones Hilberg lists, to acquire the answers. He makes a similar argument regarding all Jewish councils in *The Destruction of the European Jews*. Indeed, by relying on retrospective evaluations, Hilberg's reference in his introduction to the diary to the systematic killing of Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland overlooks his later comment that Czerniakow inhabited a "world of recurring nightmarish problems."¹³⁸ Hilberg later wrote about the issue of Czerniakow's state of knowledge in his autobiography, revealing an apparent transformation in his judgment on the matter, perhaps partly due to his involvement in Claude Lanzmann's film, *Shoah*.

Hilberg's fascination with Czerniakow, along with his participation in Lanzmann's film, complicates the role of his controversial persona even further. Hilberg notes that after filming was finished, Lanzmann said to him: "You were Czerniakow."¹³⁹ While Roth interprets Lanzmann's comment as relating to the "understated" linguistic expression that Hilberg and Czerniakow seemed to share,¹⁴⁰ it may also reflect their obsessive need to record. In fact, Hilberg's memoir reflects explicitly on the plausible reasons he became so attached to Czerniakow, pointing to aspects of the council elder's character with which he seems to identify. Hilberg notes with apparent admiration the Jewish leader's "sense of honor, of not being allowed to desert his post."¹⁴¹ In relation to the issue of Czerniakow's state of knowledge, Hilberg goes on to stress the Jewish leader's eventual realization of the ultimate fate of Jews under the Nazis by interpreting the fragmentary information and rumors to which he was exposed. Hilberg even appears to view this in a positive light: "Without an intelligence organization of any kind, relying only on chance remarks by Germans, veiled newspaper accounts, and ever-present rumors, he anticipated the bitter end."¹⁴² The positive connotations of this statement contrast strongly with Hilberg's negative appraisal of Czerniakow in his earlier publications, where he criticizes the Jewish leader's allegedly willed ignorance. Indeed, Hilberg's last reflection on Czerniakow in his autobiography is a frank and unembellished sentence, perhaps signifying a softened judgment, if not approaching a more "neutral" position: "When the deportations began, he wanted to save the Jewish orphans, and when he could not secure even their safety, he killed himself."¹⁴³

Any gesture to Levi's grey zone or Lawrence L. Langer's choiceless choices is notably absent from Hilberg's representation(s) of Jewish leaders. Writing at one point of the "options" council officials faced, he

states his position clearly: “We deal with a sequence of steps in such a way that if step one is taken, one becomes a prisoner of that step; if step two is taken, one becomes a prisoner of step two; if step three is taken, one becomes a prisoner of step three.”¹⁴⁴ The idea that Jewish leaders may have been prisoners of the “steps” *before* they were taken—that these steps were, as Zygmunt Bauman points out, the only *rational* steps to take—does not appear to be a possibility for Hilberg.¹⁴⁵ His publications reveal that negative judgment is passed in diverse ways, both explicit and implicit, depending on the form his representation takes. Whether explicating through “force of logic” the place of the Jews in the “destruction process,” positioning individual Jewish leaders along a spectrum of culpability, or seeking answers from Czerniakow’s diary, Hilberg’s personal and professional engagement with the extreme situations of “privileged” Jews during the Holocaust is engulfed by judgment. This would seem to underline Friedländer’s point that “the link between the writing of the history of the Holocaust and the *unavoidable* use of implicit and explicit moral categories in the interpretation and narration of the Nazi era remains a major challenge.”¹⁴⁶ The same might be said of the representation of “privileged” Jews in Holocaust films, the focus of the remainder of this book.

Significantly, Hilberg was approached in the early 1980s by the renowned American director Stanley Kubrick, who had admired *The Destruction of the European Jews*, for advice on a potential Holocaust film project. Hilberg had recommended basing a film on Czerniakow’s diary. Perhaps reflecting the widespread negative judgments of “privileged” Jews to which Hilberg himself contributed, Kubrick rejected the idea because he believed such a film would be anti-Semitic.¹⁴⁷ This potential interaction between Hilberg and the medium of film did not therefore eventuate; however, the historian would play a crucial part in Lanzmann’s *Shoah*. In this landmark film, the “ghost inside Czerniakow’s office” becomes the filmmaker’s *doppelgänger*.

Notes

1. See George M. Kren, “The Holocaust: Moral Theory and Immoral Acts,” in Rosenberg and Myers, *Echoes from the Holocaust: Philosophical Reflections on a Dark Time*, 245; Bartov, “Introduction,” in Bartov, *The Holocaust: Origins, Implementation, Aftermath*, 3. As further testimony to Hilberg’s impact, see Pacy and Wertheimer, *Perspectives on the Holocaust*.
2. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, 128.
3. Raul Hilberg, “Incompleteness in Holocaust Historiography,” in Petropoulos and Roth, *Gray Zones*, 89.

4. For Hilberg's account of his motivation, see Raul Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory: The Journey of a Holocaust Historian* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996), 58–59.
5. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 1st ed. (London: W. H. Allen, 1961), ix.
6. Roth, *Ethics During and After the Holocaust*, 57.
7. *Ibid.*, 64.
8. *Ibid.*, 27–33, 75–97.
9. *Ibid.*, 58–59.
10. The following analysis of *The Destruction of the European Jews* was first published in Adam Brown, "'Privileged' Jews, Holocaust Representation and the 'Limits' of Judgement: The Case of Raul Hilberg," in *Europe's Expansions and Contractions: Proceedings of the XVIIth Biennial Conference of the Australasian Association of European Historians (Adelaide, July 2009)*, ed. Evan Smith (Unley: Australian Humanities Press, 2010).
11. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 1st ed., v.
12. Stone, *History, Memory and Mass Atrocity*, 117.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 91.
15. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 2nd ed., 5. Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent references to Hilberg's major study are to this edition.
16. *Ibid.*, ix.
17. Raul Hilberg, "The Judenrat: Conscious or Unconscious 'Tool,'" in *The Nazi Holocaust: Historical Articles on the Destruction of European Jews*, 6.1 "The Victims of the Holocaust," ed. Michael R. Marrus (Westport: Meckler, 1989), 162.
18. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 23.
19. Raul Hilberg, *The Holocaust Today* (New York: Syracuse University, 1988), 5.
20. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 1035.
21. *Ibid.*, 22 (my emphasis). This view is even more clearly pronounced in a 1998 essay in which Hilberg argues that "the Holocaust was an event in which—let's face it—the victim hardly resisted, and for that very reason it was the utterly unprovoked unilateral relentless killing of one-third of the Jewish people of the world by an organized machine of destruction." See Hilberg, *The Holocaust Today*, 7 (my emphasis).
22. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 28.
23. Nathan Eck, "Historical Research or Slander?," in Marrus, *The Nazi Holocaust*, 118–22.
24. *Ibid.*, 131.
25. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 126.
26. For details, see Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 57–58, 61–63. For the source of much of his inspiration, see Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (London: Gollancz, 1942).
27. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 87.
28. Levi, *If This Is a Man; and, The Truce*, 382.
29. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 1035.
30. *Ibid.*, 28.
31. *Ibid.*, 1030.
32. *Ibid.*, 1037 (my emphasis).
33. *Ibid.*, 26.
34. *Ibid.*, 27.
35. *Ibid.*, 28.
36. *Ibid.*, 26.
37. *Ibid.*, 185–86.

38. *Ibid.*, 219, 694, also 725.
39. *Ibid.*, 694.
40. Rosenthal, “The Right Way to Act,” *passim*.
41. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 1037–38.
42. *Ibid.*, 1038.
43. *Ibid.*, 1039.
44. Gerhard L. Weinberg, “A Commentary on ‘Gray Zones’ in Raul Hilberg’s Work,” in Petropoulos and Roth, *Gray Zones*, 75.
45. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 1040.
46. *Ibid.*, 1041.
47. *Ibid.*, 1039–40 (my emphasis).
48. Michael André Bernstein, *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 13.
49. *Ibid.*, 16 (author’s emphasis).
50. *Ibid.*
51. Indeed, while the motivations or reasons for Hilberg’s judgments are not crucial to the present discussion, Bernstein’s characterization of the “almost irresistible pressure” to interpret the Holocaust as the “simultaneously inconceivable and yet fore-ordained culmination of the entire brutal history of European anti-Semitism”—due not least of all to the sheer and unprecedented extremity of the event—may help to explain Hilberg’s position, particularly given the early context of his writing. See *Ibid.*, 10.
52. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 1038.
53. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 61–62. Ironically, Hilberg identifies Rudolf Kastner, discussed in the introduction, as the source of one of the founding hypotheses for his thesis. See *ibid.*, 63. Eck devotes much space to what he terms Hilberg’s “inspiration from the Nazis.” See Eck, “Historical Research or Slander?,” 141–52.
54. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 26, 1037.
55. *Ibid.*, 1030.
56. *Ibid.*
57. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 132–33.
58. Quoted in Paris, *Long Shadows*, 318.
59. Hilberg, *Documents of Destruction*, 6.
60. *Ibid.*, 7. Hilberg’s collection includes documents regarding a deportation exemption for the relative of a “privileged” Jew made by the Jewish leadership in France; the testimony of a member of Rhodes’ *Judenrat* criticizing associates; the role of Slovakian Jewish leaders in deportations; and the failure of Hungary’s *Judenrat* to cope with news of Auschwitz. See *ibid.*, 154–55, 169, 176–80, 191–99.
61. For more on Hilberg’s “anonymizing” of the victims, see Weinberg, “A Commentary on ‘Gray Zones’ in Raul Hilberg’s Work,” 79.
62. Saul Friedländer, “History, Memory, and the Historian: Facing the Shoah,” in *Disturbing Remains: Memory, History, and Crisis in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Michael S. Roth and Charles G. Salas (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2001), 279. For his recent historical writing, see Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, Volume 1: The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997); Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, Volume 2: The Years of Extermination, 1939–1945* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007). Commenting on the lack of attention given to the victims, Yehuda Bauer praises Friedländer for “achiev[ing] a synthesis of the parallel stories of perpetrators, victims and (German) bystanders, something that up until now had not been done. . . . In many ways, it seems, Friedländer might well have been the harbinger of a new and more satisfactory methodology of presenting an immensely complicated subject matter.” Yehuda Bauer, “Contempo-

- rary Research on the Holocaust," in Kwiet and Matthäus, *Contemporary Responses to the Holocaust*, 8.
63. Dan Diner, "History and Counter-Rationality: The *Judenräte* as a Point of View," *Zmanim*, no. 53 (1995): passim.
 64. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 1044 (my emphasis).
 65. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 190.
 66. Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945* (New York: HarperPerennial, [1992] 1993), x.
 67. *Ibid.*, ix.
 68. *Ibid.*, 106.
 69. *Ibid.*, xii.
 70. *Ibid.*, 112.
 71. *Ibid.*, 107–8.
 72. *Ibid.*, 108.
 73. *Ibid.*
 74. *Ibid.*, 109.
 75. *Ibid.*
 76. *Ibid.*
 77. *Ibid.*, 110.
 78. *Ibid.*, 111.
 79. *Ibid.*, 111 (author's emphasis). In a later chapter, Hilberg labels Gens a "dictator." *Ibid.*, 180.
 80. See also *ibid.*, 175–76.
 81. *Ibid.*, 114–15.
 82. *Ibid.*, 116.
 83. *Ibid.*
 84. *Ibid.*
 85. On the tropics of history in relation to Holocaust studies, see, in particular, Hayden White, "Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth," in Friedländer, *Probing the Limits of Representation*.
 86. Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, 117.
 87. *Ibid.*, xi. Likewise, in his autobiography, Hilberg describes resisters as "the independently minded breakaway Jews [who] made a sharp distinction between themselves and all those others who had not joined them." See Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 136.
 88. Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, 178.
 89. *Ibid.*, xi, 188.
 90. *Ibid.*, 170.
 91. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 202–3.
 92. *Ibid.*
 93. Quoted in Paris, *Long Shadows*, 335 (author's emphasis).
 94. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 127–28 (author's emphasis).
 95. Jeremy D. Popkin, *History, Historians, and Autobiography* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 277–78.
 96. *Ibid.*, 278.
 97. *Ibid.*, 222.
 98. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 66.
 99. *Ibid.* For further discussion of this incident, see Friedländer, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe*, 127–28.
 100. Hilberg, "The Judenrat: Conscious or Unconscious 'Tool,'" 162.
 101. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 110.
 102. *Ibid.*, 111.

103. Ibid., 162.
104. Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, 360.
105. Hilberg had made a similar case in the first edition of his seminal work, arguing that "the supreme test of the compliance reaction came in front of the grave." See Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 1st ed., 669.
106. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 152–54.
107. Ibid., 129, 140.
108. Hilberg, "The Judenrat: Conscious or Unconscious 'Tool,'" 162.
109. Ibid.
110. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 127.
111. Ibid., 150–51.
112. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews*, 521–22n.2.
113. See Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 145–47. Hilberg also questions the status of Arendt and Dawidowicz as scholars, a doubt that is not widely shared in the academic community.
114. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 76–80.
115. Mitchell B. Hart, "The Historian's Past in Three Recent Jewish Autobiographies," *Jewish Social Studies* 5, no. 3 (1999), 152–53.
116. Paris, *Long Shadows*, 316–17.
117. Raul Hilberg, "The Ghetto as a Form of Government," in Marrus, *The Nazi Holocaust*, 181.
118. Ibid., 190–91.
119. Ibid., 183–85, 192.
120. Ibid., 192.
121. Ibid.
122. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 126.
123. Ibid., 185.
124. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, 27.
125. See, for example, Nachman Blumental, "A Martyr or a Hero?: Reflections on the Diary of Adam Czerniakow," in *Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance VII*, ed. Livia Rothkirchen (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1968); Aryeh Tartakower, "Adam Czerniakow: The Man and His Supreme Sacrifice," in *Yad Vashem Studies on the European Catastrophe and Resistance VI*, eds. Nathan Eck and Aryeh Leon Kubovy (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1967).
126. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 182 (my emphasis). Despite this, Hilberg describes this cooperation as "remarkably smooth," with the only issue he notes being Yad Vashem's refusal to incorporate photographs showing Jews working in factories for the Nazi authorities, which Hilberg labels "not a totally insignificant omission, considering Czerniakow's daily efforts to increase production in the ghetto." See *ibid.*, 182–83.
127. Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, 20.
128. While this coauthorship must be kept in mind, the proceeding discussion will refer to Hilberg as the author of the piece.
129. Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Josef Kermisz, eds., *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow: Prelude to Doom*, trans. Stanislaw Staron and the staff of Yad Vashem (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 5.
130. Ibid., 17.
131. Ibid., 22.
132. Ibid., 25–26.
133. Ibid., 42.
134. Ibid., 60.
135. Ibid., 61.

136. Ibid., 62–63.
137. Ibid., 62.
138. Ibid., 64.
139. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 188.
140. Roth, *Ethics During and After the Holocaust*, 64. Notably, Hilberg describes Czerniakow as a “detached observer in his writings.” See Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 185.
141. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory*, 187.
142. Ibid.
143. Ibid.
144. Hilberg, “The Judenrat: Conscious or Unconscious ‘Tool,’” 163.
145. For Bauman’s discussion of the Jewish councils (highlighted in the introduction), see Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 117–50.
146. Friedländer, “History, Memory, and the Historian: Facing the Shoah,” 278 (my emphasis).
147. Hilberg had also encouraged Kubrick to make a film simply titled *Auschwitz* that chronicled the destruction process. See Geoffrey Cocks, *The Wolf at the Door: Stanley Kubrick, History, and the Holocaust* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 157, 161. As it happened, Hilberg may have felt that his recommendation to Kubrick was at least partly fulfilled through Lanzmann’s *Shoah*.