

HOLOCAUST HIGH PRIEST

ELIE WIESEL, *NIGHT*, THE MEMORY CULT, AND THE RISE OF REVISIONISM

To the memory
of Pope Pius XII

Holocaust High Priest

Elie Wiesel, *Night*, the Memory Cult,
and the Rise of Revisionism

By Warren B. Routledge



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Cover Illustrations: front center: Elie Wiesel addressing the UN General Assembly; surrounded by pictures showing Wiesel with five U.S. Presidents (Bush senior, Obama, Bush junior, Clinton, Carter) and addressing the U.S. Congress; bottom: various images of Elie Wiesel; most notably, from right to left: with U.S. President Bill Clinton; with U.S. President Barack Obama talking at the U.S. Congress; with U.S. President Ronald Reagan and his wife in the White House; with U.S. President Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the Buchenwald Memorial.

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Foreword

“What are you writing?” the Rebbe asked. “Stories,” I said. He wanted to know what kind of stories: true stories. “About people you knew?” Yes, about people I might have known. “About things that happened?” Yes, about things that happened or could have happened. “But they did not?” No, not all of them did. In fact, some were invented from almost the beginning to almost the end. The Rebbe leaned forward as if to measure me up and said with more sorrow than anger: “That means that you are writing lies!” I did not answer immediately. The scolded child within me had nothing to say in his defense. Yet, I had to justify myself. “Things are not that simple, Rebbe. Some events do take place but are not true; other are—although they never occurred.”

—Elie Wiesel in *Legends of Our Time*, Schocken Books, New York, 1982, p. viii (Introduction), about an exchange he had in Tel Aviv with the Hasidic teacher of his childhood, twenty years after he had last seen him in Hungary during the war.

In October 1944, the victorious Red Army crossed the German border for the first time by penetrating briefly into East Prussia. When the German army managed to throw back the Soviet forces for a short while, they discovered with horror that many German civilians as well as French and Belgian PoWs had been raped, tortured and slaughtered in the most bestial ways imaginable.

When the Red Army advanced again during the following winter, more massacres were reported. Hence the German High Command ordered the evacuation of the entire German civilian population from East Prussia via the Baltic Sea, code-named “Operation Hannibal” – the biggest naval rescue effort ever undertaken.

In early 1945, the Red Army was approaching another German border area in the southeast: Silesia. Auschwitz was right in its path. Although this time the German civilian population was not to be evacuated, the inmates of the regional labor camps were slated to be deported west.

In history's best-selling Holocaust book *Night*, Elie Wiesel, who at that time was incarcerated at the Monowitz labor camp near Auschwitz, wrote about this:¹

A doctor came into the room and announced:

"Tomorrow, immediately after nightfall, the camp will set out. Block after Block. Patients will stay in the infirmary. They will not be evacuated." [...]

At that time Wiesel was in the camp's infirmary, where he was recovering from minor foot surgery. He had the option to stay and be liberated by the Soviets, or to leave with the Germans. Here is what he decided to do (p. 78):

"What shall we do, father?"

He was lost in thought. The choice was in our hands. For once we could decide our fate for ourselves. We could both stay in the hospital, where I could, thanks to my doctor, get him entered as a patient or a nurse. Or else we could follow the others.

"Well, what shall we do, father?"

He was silent.

"Let's be evacuated with the others," I said to him.

He did not answer. He looked at my foot.

"Do you think you can walk?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Let's hope that we shan't regret it, Eliezer."

We need to realize what this means: According to his book, Elie Wiesel and his father had been living for three-quarters of a year in a camp system where Jews had been burned alive *en mass* by their German tormentors. The living inmates had been abused and mistreated by every method one can think of. Then in early 1945 there was a chance to escape the clutches of these mass murderers and to be liberated by the advancing Soviets.

How would you have decided?

Elie decided to flee *from* their liberators *with* their diabolic tormentors. They decided to remain slave workers in the hell allegedly created by the evil Germans.

Arguing in my book *Lectures on the Holocaust* along these lines, I came to the conclusion that these lines prove that Wiesel never really felt threatened by the Germans, that the atrocity stories he tells in his book must therefore be untrue.²

¹ New York: Bantam, 1982, p. 77.

² G. Rudolf, *Lectures on the Holocaust* (2nd ed., Washington D.C.: The Barnes Review, 2010), 403.

But it's not that easy. When retired German judge Günter Bertram, who opposes the prosecution of peaceful historical dissidents in Germany,³ read my book, he criticized me for having omitted a crucial passage from Wiesel's text which he claimed refutes my hypothesis. I checked it and found that Bertram was correct, superficially speaking, because Wiesel, after having been told by a doctor that they will be evacuated, writes (pp. 77f.):

This news made us think. Were the SS going to leave hundreds of prisoners to strut about in the hospital blocks, waiting for their liberators? Were they going to let the Jews hear the twelfth stroke sound? Obviously not.

"All invalids will be summarily killed," said the faceless one. "And sent to the crematory in a final batch."

"The camp is certain to be mined," said another. "The moment the evacuation's over, it'll blow up."

So maybe he was afraid that he'd be executed when staying behind. Wiesel confirms himself, though, that these were only false rumors (p. 78):

I learned after the war the fate of those who had stayed behind in the hospital. They were quite simply liberated by the Russians two days after the evacuation.

Even if he thought the Germans might kill anyone staying behind, it still would have made more sense to stay behind, because at that point in time it was clear to everyone that Germany was about to lose the war. Wiesel even says so in his book, which is full of references to the inmates' understandable longing for Germany's impending defeat and thus the end of their ordeal. Therefore Wiesel's captors would have to leave him behind eventually anyway. It was merely a matter of when this would happen. Hence, if Wiesel really thought that the SS would kill inmates rather than leave them behind, it would have made sense to try and get away from the Germans as early as possible, because the more desperate the Germans' situation was getting, the more likely excesses of violence would become.

There are other facts indicating that Wiesel could not have taken those rumors seriously, if they even circulated in the first place. First of all, the Monowitz camp, where Wiesel was housed, had no crematory. Next, the nearest crematories at the Birkenau camp had been taken out of service in late 1944 and dismantled in December 1944. Furthermore, Wiesel himself had experienced that thousands of inmates had been successfully cured of various ailments in the camp hospital where he was recovering at that time. Hence, Wiesel knew that sick inmates were *not* killed by the SS at Auschwitz, but that the German authorities went to great lengths to restore their slave laborers' health. Finally, it was most certainly clear that the few

³ See Günter Bertram, "Panischer Schnellschuss: Die Volksverhetzungs-Novelle 2005," in: *Mitteilungen des Hamburger Richtervereins*, no. 2, 2005, 24-28; www.richterverein.de/mhr/mhr052/m05213.htm.

members of the SS camp staff who would stay behind – the vast majority of them was about to leave the camp with the inmates – could not have carried out a major operation like killing and disposing of hundreds of sick inmates within a day or two before the Soviets' arrival.

Cross-checking with another famous inmate at the Monowitz camp, the Italian Jew Primo Levi, can clarify the matter. In his entry of January 17, 1945, Levi writes in his book *Survival in Auschwitz* how he would have followed common instincts and would have joined the other inmates that fled with the SS, if only he had not been so sick and had to stay behind in the same hospital where Wiesel claims to have been at the same time:⁴

It was not a question of reasoning: I would probably also have followed the instinct of the flock [and fled with the Germans] if I had not felt so weak: fear [of the invading Red Army] is supremely contagious, and its immediate reaction is to make one try to run away.

The atrocities committed by the conquering Red Army induced fear and panic everywhere in Central and Eastern Europe, including the camps the Red Army was supposedly liberating. It turned out that such fears were indeed justified to some degree, for many a female inmate was raped by these “liberators,”⁵ and many detainees conquered by the Soviets ended up in Soviet labor camps rather than being liberated.⁶ Wiesel was therefore right to run with the Germans, whatever his subjective reasons were at the time. The Red Army, after all, did not come as a liberator, but as an army of conquest, occupation and oppression.⁷

I therefore maintain that the choice Wiesel made is truly revealing. Fritz Berg once wrote fittingly about it:⁸

The choices that were made here in January 1945 are enormously important. In the entire history of Jewish suffering at the hands of gentiles, what moment in time could possibly be more dramatic than this precious moment when Jews could choose between, on the one hand, liberation by the Soviets with the

⁴ Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Summit Books, 1986), 154.

⁵ Laurence Rees, “Raped by their saviours: How the survivors of Auschwitz escaped one nightmare only to face another unimaginable ordeal,” *Daily Mail*, Febr. 2, 2010; www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1247157; similar: Tom Hundley, “Struggle to mark horror of Auschwitz,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 27, 2005; <http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2005-01-27/news/0501270319>:

Although the Soviets were welcomed as liberators, it was only a matter of weeks before they began plundering and raping those they liberated. Women who survived the Nazis were raped to death by Soviet soldiers, according to survivor testimonies.

⁶ Jennifer Mascia, “Surviving the Camps but Struggling in Brooklyn,” *New York Times*, January 21, 2010; www.nytimes.com/2010/01/21/nyregion/21neediest.html.

⁷ On the Red Army's atrocious style of warfare see Joachim Hoffmann, *Stalin's War of Extermination, 1941-1945: Planning, Realization and Documentation* (Capshaw: Alab.: Theses & Dissertations Press, 2001).

⁸ Friedrich Paul Berg, “Poison Gas ‘Über Alles’,” *The Revisionist*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2003, 37-47; here 39; www.codoh.com/library/document/1417.

chances to tell the whole world about the evil 'Nazis' and to help bring about their defeat – and the other choice of going with the 'Nazi' mass murderers and to continue working for them and to help preserve their evil regime. In the vast majority of cases, they chose to go with the 'Nazis.'

The momentous choice brings Shakespeare's Hamlet to mind:

"To remain, or not to remain; that is the question:" to remain and be liberated by Soviet troops and risk their slings and rifles in order to tell the whole world about the outrageous 'Nazis' – or, take arms and feet against a sea of cold and darkness in order to collaborate with the very same outrageous 'Nazis.' Oh what heartache – ay there's the rub! Thus conscience does make cowards of us all.

Considering all this, I contemplated revising my statements about this issue in a new edition of my book *Lectures*. However, since even just this one choice by Elie Wiesel is such a complex topic, and because the *Lectures* are designed to give a brief, encyclopedic overview of many facets of “the Holocaust,” there was simply no way to give this topic the room it deserved. Hence, in order to keep the *Lectures* at a reasonable size, I don't plan on elaborating in it more on Wiesel or on other similar “survivors” (who should more accurately be called “camp veterans,” just like soldiers returning from a war are not called “survivors” but war veterans). Still, something needed to be done to address this and other problematic statements by Wiesel.

The solution to this dilemma was a thorough, critical analysis of Elie Wiesel, his activities and his various published statements in a stand-alone monograph, to which I could then refer the reader in my *Lectures*. But who would undertake this effort?

* * *

In the spring of 2014, I was editing the English edition of yet another book by the prolific Italian revisionist Carlo Mattogno. I had edited the German edition in 2011, but the publishers of the English edition did not like its German title *Schiffbruch: Vom Untergang der Holocaust-Orthodoxie*,⁹ which translates to *Shipwreck: On the Sinking of Holocaust Orthodoxy*. They came up with a radically different yet catchy title, which describes the fact that the book addresses and debunks basically all the Nazi-gas-chamber claims ever made: *Inside the Gas Chambers: The Extermination of Mainstream Holocaust Historiography*.¹⁰

A few days after I had listed the book with Amazon, I checked its availability there by searching their website for that title. This is when I ran into Shlomo Venezia's book *Inside the Gas Chamber: Eight Months in the Sonderkommando of Auschwitz*, which had been published in 2009.¹¹ It's

⁹ Uckfield: Castle Hill Publishers, 2011.

¹⁰ Washington, D.C.: The Barnes Review, 2014.

¹¹ Cambridge, UK: Polity.

the story of a person who in 1992 suddenly decided to claim that he had been a former Auschwitz inmate who had worked in and around the gas chambers of Auschwitz.¹² On Amazon.com, Carlo's book debunking the gas chamber myth was listed right next to Venezia's alleged eyewitness account. A more jarring contrast was impossible.

First I was dismayed that we had picked a title which had already been taken. But then I realized that this accident was giving Carlo's book a fortuitous placement it would otherwise never have received.

That is when the idea crossed my mind that a thorough, scholarly critique of each of the more popular eyewitness accounts – rated by Amazon sales statistics – should be published, starting with the bestseller and then working down the ranks, one by one. We would give each of these monographs a title which includes the keywords people would search on when looking for the original, and – bingo! – next to the camp veteran's testimony, the interested reader would also find a critical study of it.

There can be no doubt that Elie Wiesel's *Night* is the best-selling book among all the "eyewitness" literature, just as Wiesel has for decades been the politically and socially most influential of all the camp veterans. Wiesel with his book *Night* was therefore the number one on my list, followed by Rudolf Höss, the former commandant of Auschwitz, and then the lesser so-called eyewitnesses like Miklos Nyiszli, Filip Müller, Rudolf Vrba and so on.

In early 2015, when I reached out to the usual revisionist suspects who would be interested in taking on such a project, I quickly found takers for Höss and Nyiszli, two narrowly defined and rather limited subjects. But for the omnipresent Elie Wiesel I did not find anyone. The challenge seemed too big.

A few weeks later I got contacted by Prof. Dr. Warren B. Routledge, who was completely unknown to me at the time. He mentioned that he was looking for a publisher of his revisionist book project on Wiesel and his novel *Night*. As a last-ditch resort he had thought of Castle Hill Publishers, since no established publisher would dare touch this debunking of a modern-day saint. Needless to say I was more than delighted to hear that what I had merely spelled out as a future project might already have been accomplished.

As it turns out, the book you are holding in your hands is much more ambitious in scope than what I had originally envisioned, which was basically limited to a critique of Wiesel's various statements about the so-called Holocaust. Routledge's study is in fact the first-ever critical biography of

¹² For a critique of this book see Carlo Mattogno "The Truth about the Gas Chambers?" Historical Considerations relating to Shlomo Venezia's 'Unique Testimony'," *Inconvenient History*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2010; www.inconvenienthistory.com/archive/2010/volume_2/number_1

Elie Wiesel. Interwoven with this critical review of Wiesel's writings and activities is an overview of the development of Holocaust revisionism, which is a resistance movement formed in reaction to what Elie Wiesel, the "Living Symbol of the Holocaust," personifies: the perpetuation of war-time propaganda for insidious political, social and monetary ends.

Another strength of the present study is that it deals with the festering subject of the betrayal of Pope Pius XII by his own Church. The author contends that Pius XII can actually be considered as a forerunner of the revisionists, since he clearly never believed that Nazi Germany was carrying out an extermination program against Europe's Jews.

Finally, Routledge points out the toxic effect which the orthodox Holocaust narrative has on ordinary Jews. It makes them paranoid and has driven them to the exits through intermarriage with non-Jews, which assures that most of their children will probably not be raised in the Jewish traditions. The author also reveals that there are Jewish revisionists who have come to understand the menace which the falsity and venality of the Holocaust cult pose for Jewry in general. Granted, this issue is not explored in depth here, but it may serve as a call to action for others to investigate and develop it more thoroughly.

For me as the editor of the series *Holocaust Handbooks*, of which this present study is the 30th volume, working with the author on this ambitious project was a pleasure not only because of its interesting and multifaceted contents, but also due to the many improvements we managed to put in place during our many exchanges. Hence I can wholeheartedly endorse the book's message. I hope the reader will find it just as edifying as I did.

Ultimately there was only one point on which Dr. Routledge and I agreed to disagree. The author refers repeatedly to the detrimental brainwashing effect today's omnipresent Holocaust propaganda has on young people. But when he runs into one concrete example of such an effect, he seems to side with Elie Wiesel. I am referring here to the case of Eric Hunt (see p. 335 of this book). Hunt was in his early twenties when he suddenly discovered that what he had been taught about the Holocaust might be profoundly wrong. At school he had been forced to read Elie Wiesel's *Night*, but now he came to understand that he had been duped. He became angry, understandably so. When he heard that Elie Wiesel would attend a conference near his home, he took matters into his own hands. He grabbed his copy of *Night* and a video camera and sought to confront Wiesel. He wanted to do "ambush journalism," that is to say, suddenly showing up in front of an unsuspecting individual with a running camera, asking some tough, provocative questions. But Hunt was too angry, too excited, and too disorganized. What unfolded when the two men met is unclear. Wiesel claims

that Hunt became violent, whereas Hunt insists that he merely grabbed Wiesel by his sleeve trying to get him to stand still and answer his questions. The court believed Wiesel, so Hunt ended up in prison for 18 months.

After reading the present study, readers should be well-equipped to judge for themselves whether they would believe at face value anything Wiesel claims. I am convinced that Hunt would not have ended up in court, let alone in prison, had the person he confronted been Joe Shmoe rather than the world's Holocaust High Priest. Hunt's fate merely shows how Wiesel handles opponents.

With all this said, the book's stance is clear: It shows unambiguously that Wiesel's confession with which I started this Foreword has to be taken more seriously than any mainstream critic has ever dared.¹³ Put bluntly, Wiesel's business is writing down lies. Exposing this shocking fact ineluctably required that the author, while writing the present study, had to defy the Holocaust taboo, or else he could not have gotten to the core of the many untruths spread by Wiesel in his various writings and public statements.

By revealing the unvarnished truth about Wiesel, his novel *Night*, and the Holocaust cult which Wiesel helped establish, this book has the potential to enlighten and therefore liberate readers from the conditioning they have received in schools and through the media.

But beware: when reading this book, you have a right to become upset, but your emotions *must* be harnessed to serve constructive and productive objectives. Violence is never an option.

Germar Rudolf
March 21, 2015

¹³ See for instance how Gary Weissman beats around the bush after having quoted this very passage in his book *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2004), 67ff. (<http://books.google.com/books?id=kXO9wXvYuAQC&pg=PA67>); Ruth Franklin takes a similar approach in her *A Thousand Darknenses: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 69ff. (<https://books.google.com/books?id=4jdOJO-XxQUC&pg=PA69>)

Introduction

The present study seeks to accomplish several goals simultaneously. Written both for non-revisionists interested in learning more about Holocaust revisionism and its relationship to the Jewish Holocaust Story of World War II, as well as revisionists of various information levels, the work does not presume any prior knowledge. Its first objective is to provide the reader with a general, introductory overview of the revisionist movement, including its main arguments, key players, and historiographical achievements. The study covers the period from the 1960s to the year 2010, and its purpose is not only to bring forth new revisionist arguments and information, but also to summarize and contextualize the accomplishments of the leading revisionist scholars. The terminus date of 2010 was selected because the close of the first decade of the twenty-first century corresponds roughly to a half-century of revisionist activity.

The book's second goal is to tell the story of the emergence and blossoming of Holocaust revisionism within the context of Elie Wiesel's life and career. His name has become synonymous with the Holocaust, and not a few people have called him the "Holocaust High Priest." Indeed, the vast majority of Holocaust devotees (both Jews and non-Jews) look upon him as a holy man of sorts, in part because of his supposedly miraculous survival at Auschwitz and Buchenwald, but also because of the key role he played in the founding of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

An additional benefit of this approach is that, by telling the revisionist story in the context of Wiesel's career, I have been able to add the theme of "Catholic-Jewish Dialogue" to the mix. This is so because Wiesel's greatest benefactor from the very beginning of his career was the French Catholic novelist, man of letters, and Nobel Prize winner François Mauriac (1885-1970). Mauriac "discovered" Wiesel, helped him to get his first book, the supposedly autobiographical *La Nuit* (1958), published in Paris, and wrote a flattering review of it when no one else seemed interested in it. He also had a very close personal attachment to Wiesel until his death in 1970. Their relationship is connected to another of the present study's themes: the problematic and at times abusive relationship that has existed

between the various international Jewish organizations and media outlets on the one hand, and the men who served as Pope of the Catholic Church from Pius XII to Benedict XVI. In exploring this latter theme, I document and analyze the subversive role played by various Catholic “Holocaustians.” Such men and women, nominally Catholics, often advance their careers in Zionist media or academic environments by claiming, without proof and to various degrees, that Pius XII and the Catholic Church as a whole somehow bear “guilt” for the Holocaust. It is a very cynical and mendacious game, but it pays quite well. The discussion of their activities, coupled with the surrender of the popes to the Zionist agenda, adds further insight into the reasons for the incredible and unprecedented decline of the Catholic Church over the past half century in every imaginable way.

While Holocaust revisionism is a truly international movement in which citizens of many nations are involved to varying degrees, the special focus here is on revisionism in France and the United States. In France, Professor Robert Faurisson has been the unquestioned leader in the effort for the past four decades. In the U.S., however, there has been a succession of actors over the years. From the emergence of Professor Arthur Butz in the 1970s, to the Institute of Historical Review in the 1980s and beyond, to the work of Bradley Smith and his Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH) for the past thirty years, many hands have lent themselves to this work. With regard to Elie Wiesel, Carolyn Yeager’s blog site, “Elie Wiesel Cons the World,” has played an enormous role in recent years by bringing to light a great deal of valuable information about Wiesel. I hope that her work, and that of other revisionists, will continue to flourish.

This study is divided into three main sections. The first contains four chapters dealing with the Mauriac–Wiesel relationship and the genesis of his novel *Night*, while the second section’s two chapters offer a close critical reading of Wiesel’s novel. In the third section, I seek to combine my unauthorized biography of Wiesel with an overview of the development of historical revisionism in the U.S. (and to a lesser degree in Europe), from the appearance of *Night* in English in 1960 to 2010. These themes are presented chronically in order to give the reader a sense of how far revisionist arguments have advanced in a mere half-century of activity, as well as to document the inability of the Holocaustians to rebut them. I have also woven into this narrative the related issues of the abandonment of Pius XII by the post-Conciliar Catholic Church, and the negative reaction among many Jews to both Wiesel and the Holocaust narrative in general. While this ambitious, but focused, narrative might seem disjointed at times to some readers, it does adhere to this general outline and seeks as much as possible to avoid repetitions.

Chapter I

François Mauriac: Waiting for the Modern-Day Messiah

François Mauriac, Catholic Novelist and Man of Letters

François Mauriac (1885-1970) emerged in France in the 1920s as a “Catholic novelist” who used the traditions, symbolic world and belief system of Catholicism in his work. Although he rejected the term “Catholic novelist,” preferring instead to be known as a “Catholic who writes novels,” the term did nonetheless point up that his fiction portrayed a hidden and mystical world of divine grace active within every living person. In France, Mauriac was probably read by non-Catholics as much as by Catholics, for anticlerical readers enjoyed Mauriac’s fictional portrayal of the hypocrisy of upper-class Catholic families. In his novels of the interwar years, Mauriac mercilessly skewered and pitilessly laid bare the obsession with money and property that characterized the Catholicism of many members of his social class.

The theme of repressed sexual desire also figured prominently in his novels, with the result that fellow Catholics were often among his most hostile reviewers. For example, the Assumptionists, the religious order that owned and published the nationally distributed Catholic daily newspaper *La Croix*, often found fault with Mauriac’s novels on moral rather than esthetic grounds. Other opposition came from an influential Catholic priest with the improbable name of Louis Bethléem, who, during the interwar years, compiled a series of guidebooks on moral reading for Catholics. Of course, he warned them against reading Mauriac’s novels. One of the supreme rebuffs from this Catholic milieu came from a highly respected and widely read priest and literary critic, the abbé Jean Calvet. In his book *Le renouveau catholique dans la littérature contemporaine* (Paris: Lanore,

1927), he refused even to classify Mauriac as a Catholic novelist. In his assessment of Mauriac's work, Calvet reflected the widely held belief among French Catholics that Mauriac was obsessed by sexual desire and its repression. They were repelled by his exploitation of Catholic signs and symbols to covertly sell sex to his readers. Yet, for better or for worse, in the Catholicism of many members of what we can call "mainstream" French culture, during the interwar years Mauriac was as "official" a Catholic intellectual as any man in France. In somewhat altered form, the same could be said of the twenty-five years from the end of the war until his death in 1970, during which he remained active as a novelist, political journalist and man of letters.

Mauriac, the youngest of four boys, grew up in a very wealthy family. The Mauriacs' wealth was largely based on property that included pine forests, which were lucrative for the manufacture of turpentine and related products in the naval stores industry. His mother was a staunch Catholic, while his father, who died when Mauriac was a boy, was an unbeliever. Mauriac had the feeling of being "different" as a boy growing up in Bordeaux. He never felt at home playing with the other boys and showed little interest in their games. He was subjected to terrible teasing by his older brothers (he was the youngest of five children) as well as by his schoolmates. Mauriac scholars have known for the last twenty-five years that Mauriac led a secret homosexual life, despite being married and fathering four children. In part to avoid embarrassing his children and grandchildren, this hidden aspect of his life was sometimes alluded to, but never directly discussed.

However, this situation has changed following the publication of Jean-Luc Barré's new two-volume biography of Mauriac.¹ In it, Barré candidly addresses an aspect of Mauriac's life that had been hidden until now. Thus, we know today that Mauriac began to feel homosexual tendencies as a boy. During adolescence and in early adulthood, he had a close relationship with the openly homosexual François le Grix. In fact, Mauriac's engagement to Marianne Chausson, the daughter of a well-known composer, was broken off by her family in 1911 because of his relationships with other "out" homosexuals, including Lucien Daudet and Jean Cocteau. Homosex-



Illustration 1: François Mauriac postage stamp on the 100th anniversary of his birth (fifteen years after his death)

¹ Jean-Luc Barré, *François Mauriac, biographie intime I, 1885 – 1940*, vol. 1 (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 2009), and *François Mauriac, biographie intime II, 1940 – 1970*, vol. 2 (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 2010).

ual urges would trouble Mauriac throughout his life. It will be argued in the pages which follow that these proclivities probably played a role of some kind, never before discussed, in his bizarre “amitié,” or “friendship,” with the ambitious young Jew Elie Wiesel. In fact, it is inconceivable that Wiesel could have been unaware of Mauriac’s homosexuality when he burst into Mauriac’s life, completely unannounced and unexpected, in 1955. Wiesel’s main reason for trying to establish contact with Mauriac was because he was perceived by fellow Jews in Paris as a loyal friend of the Jewish people. At the same time, his Jewish informants almost certainly told him of the rumors that circulated in Parisian literary circles at the time with regard to Mauriac’s ongoing attraction to young men.

Mauriac Abandons the French Right and Supports the Jewish People

When Mauriac was elected to membership in the ultraconservative Académie Française, that is, as one of the forty “living immortals” of French culture, in 1933, he was still politically a man of the French Right. He belonged to the right-wing nationalist strain in French politics led by Charles Maurras, and depended on support from key conservative members of the Academy for election to that body. For Maurras, French Jews were dangerous not only because they were a culturally alien element in the French body politic; even worse, they also tended to be pro-German. In 1933, Mauriac implicitly shared such views.

By 1936, however, he began to move leftward and to support Jewish political causes. After criticizing Mussolini in 1936 for his invasion of Ethiopia, in 1937 Mauriac joined with the Catholic novelist Georges Bernanos and the neo-Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain in denouncing General Franco’s revolt against the Spanish Republic. To Mauriac, who had supported Franco during the first few months of rebellion, Catholics could not make common cause with Fascists. Most European Catholics, including of course the Vatican, rightly recognized Franco as an authentic anti-Communist, and supported him for this reason, but Mauriac could not be persuaded. To him, the execution of fourteen Basque priests by forces under Franco’s control for having supported the Republican government could not be excused.² While Mauriac had a valid point, at the same time

² Jean-Jacques Bozonnet, “Des évêques basques défient leur hiérarchie en honorant la mémoire de prêtres tués par des soldats de Franco,” *Le Monde*, July 14, 2009. www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2009/07/13/des-veques-basques-defient-leur-hierarchie-en-honorant-la-memoire-de-pretres-tues-par-des-soldats-de-franco_1218241_3214.html. These deaths are still an issue in Spain. In July 2009, Basque bishops apologized for having kept silent about these deaths over the years. Yet, these same bishops have never questioned the myth of the angelic nature of those who fought for the Spanish Republic, and have never demanded an apology from those who slaughtered thousands of non-combatant and defenseless priests and nuns.

he turned a blind eye to the deaths of the thousands of priests and nuns who had been slaughtered by the Spanish Republicans and their Communist allies. The death toll of 6,832 victims included 13 bishops, 4,172 diocesan priests and seminarians, 2,364 monks and friars, and 283 nuns.³ He also discounted the vast inventory of Church property that was confiscated and destroyed by the Republicans. The Catholic Mauriac's position on Franco was thus closer to that of most of the pro-Stalinist intellectuals of the day.

Luckily for the Spanish people and for Western Europe, the Communists did not win the Spanish Civil War. Franco's victory meant that Spaniards were not forced into Marxist servitude, as were over a hundred million innocent people in Eastern Europe (most of them Catholics) after World War II. For many years, it was fashionable for Western leftist intellectuals to denounce certain repressive aspects of Franco's regime as it continued into the 1970s. But Franco's rule over Spain, in comparison to the Communist regimes that persecuted the peoples of Eastern Europe after the war, was relatively benign. It also had the virtue of being homegrown, rather than imposed and enforced from without, as were the governments of the Soviet satellites.

By 1938, Mauriac was a fully-committed and fervent supporter of Jews and Jewish causes, and had begun to denounce the German government's policy of pressuring Jews to emigrate from the Reich. When many French intellectuals, fearful that Jews were trying to get France involved in another war with Germany, were urging caution and moderation regarding events within the borders of another sovereign nation, Mauriac called for direct involvement. By this time, he had come to reject the Maurrasian idea that Jews were foreigners on French soil. In February 1938, he wrote:⁴

If there is an issue that requires our intervention, it's the one that engulfs Israel [Jewry] with such a wave of hatred. The question is not to know what we think of the Jews as Jews any more than what we think of Auvergnats as Auvergnats. Before examining the problems created by this exodus of the persecuted [Jews], we must begin by means of a public act of opposition to anti-Semitism.

³ Julio de la Cueva, "Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities against the Clergy during the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33 (1998), 355. See also: Arnaud Imatz, *La Guerre d'Espagne revisitée* (Paris: Economica, 1993) [2nd edition, revised and expanded], pp. 47-50; Vicente Orti, *La Persecución religiosa en España durante la segunda república (1931-1939)* (Madrid: Rialp, 1990).

⁴ François Mauriac, *Mémoires politiques* (Paris: Grasset, 1967), 73f.: "S'il est un drame qui exige notre intervention, c'est bien celui qui dresse Israël contre une telle vague de haine. La question n'est pas de savoir ce que nous pensons des Juifs en tant que Juifs, pas plus que des Auvergnats en tant qu'Auvergnats. Avant d'examiner les problèmes que soulève déjà l'exode des persécutés, nous devons commencer par un acte public d'opposition à l'antisémitisme."

Taking aim at the Maurrasian beliefs that revolved around the doctrines of integral nationalism and anti-Semitism, and that had played a major role in his life as a youth, he wrote:⁵

So let us be even more watchful against anti-Semitism, even unconscious, especially since all of us – yes all of us, without exception – are the heirs to this age-old hatred. If it's not actually hatred, it is at least a form of hostility that has been kept alive within us, we must admit in our defense, by the faults and missteps of the Jewish people as well as by the fearsome flame that persecution keeps alive within their breast.

Mauriac then concludes his essay with his own advice about overcoming feelings of anti-Jewish hatred:⁶

To this element of hatred I have always contrasted the admiration that I feel for certain Jews, deceased or living, and the affection that more than one of them has inspired in me. There is no better antidote against racial hatred than to center our thoughts on certain people who are dear to us. There is no better response to anti-Semitic doctrines than to recall what both French and German culture owe to its Jewish ingredient – and what, in return, the Jewish genius owes to Western civilizations.

This kind of statement exposed Mauriac to criticism from some of his former friends on the Right. But it also showed his deep commitment to justice for his Jewish friends and for the Jewish people as a whole.

Mauriac Supports the Allied War Effort

Mauriac completed his move to the Left during the war years. As early as 1940, de Gaulle's follower, Robert Schumann, in his BBC broadcasts from London, identified Mauriac by name as a writer and intellectual who had remained in France and who incarnated the virtues of traditional Republican France. Unlike so many other writers who quietly went into exile abroad, Mauriac remained sequestered at his home in the southwest of France. There, under terms of the 1940 armistice, he could be required to provide lodging for German military personnel. Thus, an SS officer, Major Westman, who commanded the German garrison in the nearby town of

⁵ *Ibid.*: "Gardons-nous d'autant plus de l'antisémitisme, même larvé, que nous sommes tous – oui, tous et sans exception – les héritiers de cette haine séculaire; sinon de cette haine, du moins de cette hostilité entretenue en nous, il faut le dire à notre décharge par les fautes, par les maladroites d'Israël; et par cette flamme redoutable que la persécution attise en lui."

⁶ *Ibid.*: "A ce ferment de haine, j'ai toujours opposé l'admiration que je ressens pour quelques Juifs, morts ou vivants, et l'affection que plus d'un m'inspire. Il n'est pas de meilleur antidote à la haine de race que d'arrêter sa pensée sur certains êtres qui nous sont chers. Il n'est pas de meilleure réponse aux doctrines antisémites que de constater ce que la culture française et la culture allemande doivent au ferment juif – et ce que doit en retour, le génie d'Israël aux civilisations occidentales."

Langon, presented Mauriac with a requisition order a few days after Christmas 1940. The next day he moved in, occupying an upstairs bedroom, while his orderly slept on a cot in the dining room. The demarcation line between the free (Vichy-ruled) and occupied zones ran right through the grape vines surrounding his home.

Mauriac watched and waited, while also spending the dark days between the fall of France in the summer of 1940 and Christmas of that year writing the novel *La pharisienne* (*Woman of the Pharisees*). Despite a shortage of paper, which limited the number of copies that could be printed, and the refusal of the pro-Vichy press to review his book, since they considered Mauriac to be a Jewish puppet, *La pharisienne* sold thirty thousand copies in the first two months, and went through several editions. It was widely read by the French people, who looked upon it as the quintessential “roman de l’Occupation” (novel of the Occupation). Amazingly, even though Mauriac had intended to write a “roman catholique,” or Catholic novel, about his dominating and smothering mother and those whose lives she affected, his readers, for reasons that lack of space does not permit exploring here, saw the book as an allegory of their own condition under German occupation.

The pro-German Vichy intellectuals despised Mauriac, and portrayed him as a traitor to his nation, his class and his religion. They mocked his obsession with sex in his novels, and hinted, correctly as we now know, that he was a closet homosexual. In other words, certain vices that these same intellectuals routinely associated with the Jews were attributed to Mauriac.

Mauriac Is “Silent” about the Jews in *Le Cahier Noir*

Mauriac’s most significant achievement on behalf of the Allies during the war was the publication of his pro-Allied propaganda pamphlet *Le cahier noir* in 1943. Smuggled out of France and rapidly translated in Britain as *The Black Notebook* by the Catholic intellectual (and future biographer of Mauriac) Robert Speaight, it became a success overnight. Mauriac’s little book expressed the ideals espoused by the Allies in a way that no one in the United States or Great Britain had yet been able to achieve.⁷

Le cahier noir, and Mauriac’s strategy in writing it, tells us much about the context in which we must understand the alleged World War II “silence” about the supposed extermination of the Jews that Mauriac, and many others, imputed to Pope Pius XII after the war. Mauriac, writing under the pseudonym of “Forez,” had as one of his many goals in the book

⁷ Robert Speaight, *François Mauriac: A Study of the Man and the Writer* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1976).

the arousal of sympathy for Jewry. His problem, as he wrote this piece of pro-Jewish propaganda, was to communicate his message without leaving himself open to the accusation, readily leveled by the pro-Vichy intellectuals and others, that those who championed the Jews were simply political puppets in Jewish hands. To be sure, by publishing *Le cahier noir* he was also risking his life, for the Germans could probably see through his pseudonym. Since the French press, whether in the occupied zone or in the Vichy-controlled area, repeated the principal German propaganda line throughout the war, namely, that the Allies were fighting a self-destructive war for the Jews and that Aryan boys were needlessly dying for Jewry, Mauriac chose to make his case indirectly, by writing of the travails of Jews in France but not referring to them by name.

Faced with the challenge of making a special plea for Jews without mentioning them as such, Mauriac used coded language. The code he followed involved the use of a simple little story in which the reader had to fill in the blanks. He told his readers that he had seen a train carrying a group of children at Austerlitz Station in Paris about a year earlier. This station was one of about a half-dozen major stations in Paris at the time, and provided train service to cities like Toulouse and Bordeaux in the southwest of the country. Since Jews at the time were being deported from Austerlitz Station to the transit camp at Pithiviers, it was likely that the children in question were Jewish.

The key point here is that Mauriac, like Pius XII, did not mention that these children were Jewish. He wrote:⁸

To accomplish Machiavelli's plans, groups of people have been shuffled around and deported, and whole races have been condemned to perish. At what other moment in history have jails enclosed so many innocent people? At what other time have children been ripped out of their mothers' arms, and piled into cattle cars, as I saw one sad morning at Austerlitz Station?

Mauriac did not witness this event; he heard about it from his wife and son. He also gratuitously added the detail about "cattle cars," which his wife and son had not mentioned. Mauriac left it to his readers to fill in the blanks as to the children's being Jewish. This anecdote was very effective, for readers in Britain and the U.S., under the sway of the Allied propaganda that filled the "mainstream" press, were easily able to identify the children as Jewish. Furthermore, they could just as easily pencil in the idea that they were being sent to a concentration camp. Thus, there was no need to

⁸ François Mauriac, *Le cahier noir*, in: *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 10 (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 1952), 366f.: "Pour accomplir les desseins de Machiavel, les peuples sont brassés et déportés, des races entières sont condamnées à périr. A quel autre moment de l'histoire les bagnes se sont-ils refermés sur plus d'innocents? A quelle autre époque les enfants furent-ils arrachés à leurs mères, entassés dans des wagons à bestiaux, tels que je les ai vus par un sombre matin à la gare d'Austerlitz?"

tell these readers that the children were Jewish, for the Allied public would assume that otherwise the story would not have been told in the first place. Similarly, the propaganda movies that Hollywood studios made to support the war effort generally refrained from mentioning the Jewish dimension of the war. This fact is especially salient in the explicitly propagandistic series *Why We Fight*. Here, the predominantly Jewish producers followed the same script as Mauriac had in *Le cahier noir*, and largely sublimated the Jews, at most equating their sufferings with those of Christians.

It is in the context of this resounding “silence” by both Mauriac and Hollywood, of which the above are only two examples, that we must understand the supposed “silence” of Pope Pius XII. In following the strategy of “silence,” these entities behaved much as did the Pope, who also undeniably favored the Allies and world Jewry. They all observed this “silence” for the same reason: because outright and explicit support of the Jews would have lent support to the Axis claim that they were acting as Jewish stooges and puppets.

Even after the war was over, Allied leaders and publicists – many of them Jewish – observed what was for all practical purposes a similar sublimation at the main Nuremberg tribunal. Mention of the Jews was virtually absent from the original indictment. In an edition of his father’s letters from Nuremberg, where the latter had been a prosecutor, former Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) expressed shock at this, although lead U.S. prosecutor Justice Robert Jackson and the rest of the prosecution team were following a protocol of “silence” analogous to, though different from, that of Pius XII during the war years. After all, the Allies were utterly and unconditionally triumphant at Nuremberg, with Axis propaganda no longer a factor. Yet, as the letters reveal, concern lest the Allied populations see the war as a “Jew’s war” was widespread among the Jews and the gentiles who conducted the Nuremberg tribunal. Mauriac’s refusal during the occupation to describe child deportees as Jewish, Hollywood’s downplaying the Jewish issue to ensure gentile support for the war, and the comparative neglect at Nuremberg of the alleged genocide of the Jews are but three instances of a policy of “silence” that was carried out by various participants on the Allied side. The Allied policy has been largely forgotten, while accusations of a culpable “silence” that has been wrongly attributed to Pius XII have grown louder and more frequent since the war.⁹

⁹ Christopher J. Dodd, Larry Bloom, *Letters from Nuremberg: My Father’s Narrative of the Quest for Justice*. (N.Y.: Crown, 2007), 135f. In September 1945, Thomas Dodd wrote to his wife that the prosecution staff was overwhelmingly Jewish, a fact that has been erased from the official history of the event. Is it any wonder that the Germans were denied justice there? Dodd wrote: “The staff continues to grow every day. Col. Kaplan is now here, as a mate, I assume, for Commander Kaplan. Dr. Newman has arrived, and I do not know how many more. It is all a silly business – but ‘silly’ isn’t the right word. One would expect that some of these people would have sense enough to put

This book, which addresses the various silences of, and accusations of silence by, François Mauriac and Elie Wiesel, will examine the chief charge against Pope Pius XII in some detail – that he knowingly failed to speak out against an extermination of the Jews. Here it should also be recalled that the Catholic Church was officially a neutral party between Nazi Germany – whom Pius XII had not hesitated to speak against before the war – and the Communist Soviet Union. Those Jewish leaders in the U.S. who, somewhat hypocritically, requested that Pius XII explicitly “speak out” on behalf of the Jews in his various Christmas messages during the war years knew in advance that he could not. He simply could not speak specifically about the Jews without compromising his credibility as a neutral party. Even worse, with his loss of credibility would have come the charge by the Germans that he was just another Jewish puppet. In reality, as Professor Faurisson has pointed out in his study *Le révisionnisme de Pie XII*,¹⁰ Pius XII was committed to the Allied cause, and his public “neutrality” was a smokescreen intended to hide that fact. Yet the Jewish leaders in the U.S., so selfish, so short-sighted and so self-referential, as if nobody else in Europe was suffering, made their demand, knowing full well that the Pope could not comply with it. They also knew that the Pope, like the Allies – including many influential Jews – and like Mauriac, relied on the perspicacity of the public to recognize that Jews were included in his condemnation of persecution. He could no more do their bidding than he could allow himself to publicly endorse the French Catholics who fought Communism on the eastern front. The volunteers of the *L.V.F. (Légion des Volontaires Français)* and later the Frenchmen of Germany’s Charlemagne Division, would have appreciated such recognition. Yet the Pope always refused to give his blessing to such Catholic anti-Communist crusades, whether or not he would have liked to support them. When he turned them down, he did so for precisely the same reason he turned down the impossible requests from U.S. Jewish leaders. He had to maintain his public posture of neutrality.

Let us now return to Mauriac’s simple little story. He was able to arouse sympathy for Jews indirectly, without mentioning them by name, by recounting in *Le cahier noir* that he had seen the Jewish children on the train. Yet, he himself had not seen them. Mauriac simply repeated his wife and

an end to this kind of a parade. You know better than anyone how I hate race or religious prejudice. You know how I have despised anti-Semitism. You know how strongly I feel toward those who preach intolerance of any kind. With that knowledge – you will understand when I tell you that this staff is about seventy-five percent Jewish. Now my point is that the Jews should stay away from this trial – for their own sake. For – mark this well – the charge ‘a war for the Jews’ is still being made, and in the postwar years it will be made again and again.”

¹⁰ Robert Faurisson, *Le révisionnisme de Pie XII* (Genoa: Graphos Edizioni, 2002). English translation: *Pope Pius XII’s Revisionism* (Uckfield, UK: Historical Review Press, 2006).

son's account, but made two important changes. First, he claimed that *he* had seen the children with his own eyes, which was not true. He no doubt felt that he was prevaricating on behalf of a good cause, the fight against anti-Semitism, but he was in fact bearing false witness. A lie, even a white lie told with the best of intentions, is still a lie. Thus, ironically, Mauriac, a Catholic, became one of the first of the many false witnesses in what would later become the Jewish Holocaust narrative, a genre in which false testimonies proliferate, even dominate. The second change that he made in the story was to delete specific mention that the children were Jews, for reasons mentioned above. Mauriac, like Pius XII, could do this because he knew that, given the power of Allied propaganda during the war, his readers would be able to fill in the gaps and supply the word "Jew."

The publication of *Le cahier noir* won Mauriac many Jewish friends around the world. In addition, during the war years, French Catholics and Jews (primarily under the auspices of the Communist party) worked very closely together. Both groups, despite their many differences, supported de Gaulle and his call for internal "resistance" to the occupier. Judged security risks by the Germans, many resisters, Catholic and Jewish, were deported to work camps in Germany and Poland. Many of them died there, primarily of disease. And, finally, both groups shared the short-lived euphoria that followed the Liberation, with their respective ordeals being read into the record – however inaccurately – at Nuremberg. Mauriac was, in short, a living icon of the Catholic-Jewish alliance that had existed, however briefly and imperfectly, during World War II.

At the liberation of Paris in August 1944, Mauriac was commissioned to write the lead article in the first post-occupation edition of *Le Figaro*. Since that prestigious newspaper, which had been banned during the occupation, wanted a patriotic piece in honor of General de Gaulle, Mauriac penned "Le premier des nôtres" ("The First among Us").¹¹ Mauriac's selection as author of this article was laden with symbolism, for he was not only a Catholic, but one deeply committed to the Jews. His devotion to Catholicism and to French republicanism mirrored the symbolism of de Gaulle's flag, the French tricolor emblazoned with the Cross of Lorraine. The Catholic Church and the French Republic had been engaged in a cultural and political war since the separation of Church and State in 1905. When de Gaulle decided to include the Cross of Lorraine, invoking the memory of Joan of Arc, who had come to the aid of the nation in a time of crisis centuries earlier, he was imposing a symbol of traditional Catholic France on the ultimate symbol of the anti-clerical Republic. In terms of the political and ideological realities of occupied France, this flag embodied the temporary alliance of the many Catholics in the French Resistance with the Jews and

¹¹ François Mauriac, "Le Premier des nôtres," *Le Figaro*, August 25, 1945, 1.

Communists who played a disproportionate role in its ranks and leadership. The general reluctance to mention the Jewish role even after Allied propaganda was no longer a factor underlines yet again how strong the inclination was to downplay Jewish prominence for gentile eyes. As times changed, the major role that Jews, many from Eastern Europe, especially Poland, had played in the Resistance began to be acknowledged by the influential “Nazi-hunters” Serge and Beate Klarsfeld as well as other Jewish voices.¹²

In a word, Mauriac incarnated de Gaulle’s Catholic-Jewish alliance quite well. Of course, once the war was over and the alliance had dissolved, the Cross of Lorraine would disappear from the French flag. But for this brief moment, Mauriac’s authoring this first article in liberated France was tangible proof that he had behaved during the war like a true patriot. He was a living symbol, however briefly, of what de Gaulle liked to call *la France éternelle*.

Flash Forward: Seeds Planted for the 1952 Nobel Prize for Literature

Mauriac’s support of the Jews during the war, more than his work as a novelist (he had not written a novel since 1940!), would be rewarded in 1952, when, most likely with Jewish support, he received the Nobel Prize for Literature. Due in part to the fact that the wording of the award was rather vague, most observers were astonished at his selection, especially during the heyday of existentialism, when names like Sartre and Camus dominated the headlines. Many had the distinct impression that Mauriac was receiving the prize as much for his political support of de Gaulle and the Allied cause during the war as for his fiction. After all, his best novels, *Thérèse Desqueyroux* (1927) and *Le noeud de vipères* [*Vipers’ Tangle*] (1932), belonged to another era, and the literary pulse of France had changed dramatically since then. In fact, as François Durand reminds us, Mauriac’s literary fortunes had hit rock bottom in the late 1940s. Not only had his last play, *Passage du malin* (December 1947), been a total flop, he spent a good part of the next two years in “an almost constant battle,” in his newspaper columns in *Le Figaro*, “against the Communists and their sympathizers, and their exchanges were often lively. In addition, a new generation of writers and thinkers was reaching the crest of fame – with Sartre and Camus in the lead – for whom Mauriac belonged to the past: Mauriac’s failure with *Passage du malin* coincided in time with the success of Sartre’s play *Les mains sales*.”¹³ Thus Mauriac, with his career in a tailspin, and the ob-

¹² Monique-Lise Cohen, Jean-Louis Dufour, *Les juifs dans la résistance suivi de la présence juive en Europe et l’écriture de l’histoire* (Paris: Tirésias, 2001).

¹³ François Durand (ed.), *Mauriac: Œuvres autobiographiques* (Paris: Pléiade, 1990), 993: “Il est depuis deux ans en lutte, dans les colonnes du *Figaro*, contre les communistes et

ject of ridicule in the eyes of many of the rising literary stars of the younger generation, would be open by then to friendly gestures coming from young Jews. They admired him for his courageous defense of Jews and Jewish interests during the war years, and were determined to show their gratitude. Mauriac's receipt of the 1952 Nobel Prize for Literature shocked his enemies, but did not inspire them to change their opinion of him as a vestige of a dead past. It did, however, re-ignite his career, for he began writing novels again, and found renewed inspiration and a younger audience as a political commentator.

Another reason for the consternation of many Parisian literati when Mauriac was awarded the 1952 Nobel was their naïve assumption that the Nobel awards are free of politics. They did not understand that there were forces, including influential Jews, behind the scenes who appreciated what Mauriac had done for the Jews during the war years. In addition, Mauriac's literary jousting with France's Communists at a time when Communist influence was a distinct threat to France's role as a U.S. ally in the opening years of the Cold War must have endeared him to the CIA. We now know that the CIA brought its influence to bear on the selection for the 1958 Nobel Prize for Literature when CIA efforts enabled the Russian dissident Boris Pasternak to win out over the Italian Communist Alberto Moravia. They did so to embarrass the Soviet Union. Did they also do the same thing for Mauriac in 1952?¹⁴ In summary, only the naïve would believe that his novels of the 1920s and 1930s secured the 1952 award, and it is not an accident that the inner workings of the Nobel selection process remain hidden from view.

Mauriac, a Bridge between Catholics and Jews

Wiesel has never given a straightforward answer to the question of why he sought out Mauriac. But part of the affinity can be explained by the feeling among French Jews that Mauriac was very sympathetic to them, a feeling Wiesel came to share as a young man living in France. He claims to have been a "voracious reader of Holocaust Literature. [...] I still want to understand what happened."¹⁵ In keeping abreast of books being published

leurs sympathisants et les échanges sont souvent très vifs; d'autre part, une nouvelle génération d'écrivains et de penseurs arrive au zénith, Sartre et Camus en tête, pour qui l'œuvre de Mauriac appartient au passé: à l'échec de *Passage de Malin* succède la réussite des *Mains sales*."

¹⁴ Mark Franchetti, "How the CIA Won *Zhivago* a Nobel," *Sunday Times* (London), January 14, 2007, 6; Anatoly Korolev, "Doctor *Zhivago* and the 1959 Nobel Prize: The CIA's Secret Triumph," *RIA-Novosti*, January 20, 2009. <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20090119/119705315.html>

¹⁵ Harry James Cargas, *Harry James Cargas in Conversation with Elie Wiesel* (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1976), 89.

on the camps as they came out in the early 1950s, he must have noticed that Mauriac was widely known for supporting publication of memoirs associated with the war, even writing forewords for such works.

Thus, for example, Mauriac wrote a foreword for a memoir by a Belgian professor of history named Léon-Ernest Halkin. Entitled *À l'ombre de la mort* [*In the Shadow of Death*] (Tournai: Casterman, 1947), the book recounted how Catholics had clandestinely practiced their faith in the German camps. The fact that Mauriac had contributed a moving foreword probably did not hurt the book's fortunes, for it was awarded the *Prix Littéraire de la Résistance* in 1947. Mauriac also wrote an introduction for *Pays de rigueur* [*Land of Hardship*] (Paris: Seuil, 1951) by Boris Bouïeff, a young friend who had been imprisoned by the Germans during the war. Sickly before his arrest, Bouïeff, thanks to his religious faith, was able not only to survive, but to care for others. In Bouïeff's experience Mauriac found yet further evidence not only of man's inhumanity to man, but also of the power to overcome it through union with Christ. He wrote a third foreword for *Un camp très ordinaire* [*A Quite Ordinary Camp*] (Paris: Minuit, 1957), a memoir written by Micheline Maurel. A *lycée* teacher in Lyon in 1941-42, she joined the Resistance in 1943 and was arrested as a security threat shortly thereafter. Her book told of her twenty-month incarceration in Germany. Mauriac's foreword might have helped the book to succeed, for it received the *Prix des Critiques* in 1957. This foreword is of special interest because it was written while Mauriac was helping Wiesel prepare the proofs of *La Nuit* for publication by the same publisher, *Les Éditions de Minuit*.¹⁶

Mauriac Was the First Major Cultural Figure to Accuse Pius XII of "Silence"

We cannot be sure if Wiesel was familiar with the forewords discussed above. But there was another foreword by Mauriac that he almost certainly read, for it introduced a book that indicted the Nazi regime for what we call today "the Holocaust:" Léon Poliakov's *Bréviaire de la haine* [*Harvest of Hate*] (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1951). Mauriac's foreword to this book would prove to be an additional factor in his favor when the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to him a year later. That Poliakov asked Mauriac to write the foreword to his book, and that the author agreed to do it,

¹⁶ Another important foreword that Mauriac wrote in these years introduced *Cinq Années de ma vie* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1962). This book was the "édition définitive" of Captain Alfred Dreyfus's 1901 autobiography. Although published only in 1962, when Wiesel was already established in New York, it showed Mauriac's ongoing commitment to Jewish causes. He seemed to want to make public penance for the anti-Dreyfus opinions held and expressed by his mother and siblings over the years.

testifies once again to the prestige that Mauriac enjoyed within the Jewish community of France.

Bréviaire de la haine is essentially a rehash of the Nuremberg documents as presented in the Blue Set (containing the transcripts of the main trial and documents presented in evidence). What Poliakov did was to rearrange the various atrocity claims found therein and present them by theme and in chronological order. Poliakov gave a great deal of importance to the supposed “confession” of former SS officer Kurt Gerstein. Thus, thanks in no small part to Mauriac’s involvement, Poliakov became a historian of repute, while Mauriac earned another stripe on his sleeve as a friend of the Jews, and took a step up on the ladder that would lead to the Nobel Prize a year later. Yet the same nagging question that dogged Mauriac’s wartime *Le cahier noir* bedevils his foreword to *Bréviaire de la haine*: was Mauriac a friend of the Jewish organizations, or their puppet?

The title of Poliakov’s book was not chosen at random, for the word “breviary” refers to the book of scriptural readings that Catholic priests are enjoined to read each day. The provocative and scornful use of the word “bréviaire” by Poliakov contains a powerful dose of anti-Catholic venom, for it implies that the Catholic Church was the wellspring of Nazi-sponsored, anti-Jewish hatred. Poliakov purports to provide “readings” of his own that supposedly document German plans of extermination during the war. In Poliakov’s view, Catholics were heavily responsible for Jewish suffering during the war years because many of the principal Nazis had been baptized as Catholics. Poliakov overlooks the Nazi persecution of the Catholic Church, including the thousands of Catholic priests who died in the camps, for he had no interest in writing a balanced history. His chief concern was to defame the Catholic Church and to help launch the attack on Pope Pius XII as the man responsible for Jewish suffering during the war.

In support of Poliakov’s attack on the Pontiff, Mauriac, in his foreword, contrasts Pius’s behavior with that of the local clergy who, according to him, were more heroic and charitable. He writes:¹⁷

¹⁷ François Mauriac, foreword to Léon Poliakov, *Bréviaire de la haine* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1951), 63: “Mais ce bréviaire a été écrit pour nous aussi Français, dont l’antisémitisme traditionnel a survécu à ces excès d’horreur dans lesquels Vichy a eu sa timide et ignoble part – pour nous surtout, catholiques français, qui devons certes à l’héroïsme et à la charité de tant d’évêques, de prêtres et de religieux à l’égard des Juifs traqués, d’avoir sauvé notre honneur, mais qui n’avons pas eu la consolation d’entendre le successeur du Galiléen, Simon-Pierre, condamner clairement, nettement et non par des allusions diplomatiques, la mise en croix de ces innombrables ‘frères du Seigneur.’ Au vénérable cardinal Suhard qui a d’ailleurs tant fait dans l’ombre pour eux, je demandai un jour pendant l’occupation: ‘Eminence, ordonnez-nous de prier pour les Juifs [...]’, il leva les bras au ciel: nul doute que l’occupant n’ait eu des moyens de pression irrésistibles, et que le silence du pape et de la hiérarchie n’ait été un affreux devoir; il s’agissait d’éviter de pires malheurs. Il reste qu’un crime de cette envergure retombe

But this breviary has also been written for us Frenchmen, whose traditional anti-Semitism has survived all the horrors in which the Vichy government played its timid and shameful role. And it has been written especially for us, French Catholics, whose honor was preserved by the heroism and charity of so many bishops, priests and members of religious orders who protected Jews, but who never had the consolation of hearing the successor of the Galilean, Simon Peter, condemn clearly, openly and not by diplomatic allusions the crucifixion of innumerable "brothers of the Lord." One day during the Occupation, I asked the venerable Cardinal Suhard [of Paris], who did so much behind the scenes for the Jews, "Your Eminence, order us to pray [publicly] for the Jews [...at Notre Dame Cathedral]." He lifted his arms up to heaven: there can be no doubt the occupiers had irresistible means of bringing pressure to bear, and that the silence of the Pope and the hierarchy was in fact a horrible duty; they wanted to avoid even worse misfortunes. Nonetheless, the guilt for a crime of this size falls to a large extent upon those who did not cry out, whatever might have been the reasons for their silence.

How ironic it is that Mauriac, who knew enough not to mention the word "Jews" in his 1943 *Le cahier noir* lest his enemies dismiss him as a Jewish apologist, should reveal here that he had asked Cardinal Suhard to break the code of silence that he himself had observed in his book! Here he is also impugning Pius XII, who had followed the same pro-Allied protocol – and for the same reason – during the war years. Pathetically, Mauriac also tries to offer Cardinal Suhard as an example of heroism, yet the latter evaded responding to Mauriac's request to pray publicly for the Jews at Notre Dame. Instead, he raised his hands to heaven. He could not pray publicly for the Jews in his parish church, the seat of the Archbishop of Paris, for the same reason that Pius XII had been "silent" and that Mauriac had been "silent." Overt support of the Jews by a man who was supposedly neutral would have been tantamount to admitting that he too was a Jewish puppet, and Cardinal Suhard could not do that. Furthermore, there were instances when denunciations of German Jewish policy by Catholic clergy had led to reprisals, as when the Germans deported Jewish converts to Catholicism from the Netherlands after condemnation of Jewish deportations from the pulpits.

Elie Wiesel later declared, with characteristic magnanimity:¹⁸

For many centuries the Christian defined himself by the suffering he imposed on the Jew. [...] Mauriac was sensitive to the problem. We became so close because of his recognition of Christian responsibility. He understood the part of

pour une part non médiocre sur tous les témoins qui n'ont pas crié et quelles qu'aient été les raisons de leur silence."

When the English translation of Poliakov's book was published by Syracuse University Press in 1954 under the title *Harvest of Hate*, Mauriac's foreword was replaced with a new one by Reinhold Niebuhr.

¹⁸ Cargas, *Conversation*, 35.

the Vatican, and he was the first to come out against Pius XII. It wasn't Rolf Hochhuth, it was Mauriac.

Of course, in this instance Wiesel is correct, and his words clearly indicate familiarity with Mauriac's foreword to Poliakov's *Bréviaire de la haine*.

In writing this foreword in 1951, Mauriac provided cover and legitimacy for those extremists in the French Jewish community who wanted to stigmatize Pope Pius XII. He apparently gave no thought to how his words would be manipulated in the future, nor did he understand that he was entering into conspiracy with the Jewish organizations, the forerunners of today's Holocaust fundamentalists, that backed Poliakov. Yet, in attacking the Pontiff he was acting in a way that could bolster his candidacy for the Nobel Prize a year later. When he cashed his Nobel check in late 1952, he not only secured financial independence for his family, he also established a paradigm for later generations of ambitious Catholic intellectuals. Here the names of three such persons come to mind: the Rev. Robert Drinan, S. J.; Sr. Carol Rittner, RSM; and the former Paulist priest, James Carroll. All of them have advanced their careers by denying their religious heritage in order to cater to powerful Zionist Jewish interests.

Ironically, Mauriac's foreword for Poliakov in 1951 came back to haunt him in 1963. In that year, Mauriac's words about never having the consolation of hearing "the Galilean, Simon Peter, condemn clearly, openly and not by diplomatic allusions, the crucifixion of innumerable 'brothers of the Lord,'" were used to promote an anti-Catholic indictment of Pius, Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy*. Hochhuth and his producers excerpted the line and placed it in a prominent place in the program distributed to theatergoers. When Mauriac, who had not been informed in advance of this use of his words, found out about it, he was thunderstruck and terribly embarrassed. He must have come to a sudden realization that certain of his Jewish "friends" were now using his words in a context that he could not have imagined possible back in 1951. But if he had received help and support from European Jews when he was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1952, certain chickens were coming home to roost, and he had nothing to complain about. To add insult to injury, Mauriac's verbal assault on Pius XII still appears in the foreword to printed versions of Hochhuth's theater production.

Mauriac's Four Jewish Messiah Figures Prior to Meeting Wiesel

When Elie Wiesel burst into Mauriac's life in 1955, he fit neatly into Mauriac's philo-Semitic worldview. In fact, Mauriac's obsession over – and abusive relationship with – Wiesel, which would span the years 1955-1967, was not the first attachment he formed to a Jewish figure. At the top

of his list was Jesus, whom he revered as a member of the Trinity and Son of God. Then there was Captain Alfred Dreyfus, whose guilt had been taken on faith in his right-wing family during his childhood. (Mauriac's mother, a traditional Catholic, referred to the chamber pot that graced each bedroom as "le zola," in memory of the journalist Emile Zola, who had defended Dreyfus.) Such was the political background from which Mauriac had come: contempt for Dreyfus as a German spy. But, as I have shown above, after his abrupt move to the left and his alliance with Jewish interests after 1936, Dreyfus became a hero to him.

The third Jewish figure to whom he developed a strong personal attachment was the converted Jew and Catholic priest Jean-Pierre Altermann. Of Russian-Jewish heritage, Altermann was seven years Mauriac's junior. He had started out in life as a poet, painter and art critic before converting to Catholicism and studying for the priesthood. He was baptized at the age of 27 and, six years later, ordained a priest in 1925 at age 33. It was in part through Mauriac's friendships with Jacques and Raïssa Maritain and with the lesser-known writer Charles du Bos that Altermann entered Mauriac's life in the late 1920s. Altermann, who had been instrumental in converting du Bos to Catholicism about 1927, became Mauriac's confessor on du Bos's recommendation in 1929. At this time, Mauriac's life was in turmoil. In his forties, married and the father of four children, he had been involved for the past few years in an adulterous homosexual relationship with a young Swiss diplomat whose identity remained a taboo subject for years. Jean Lacouture, for instance, in his highly detailed but conformist 1980 biography of Mauriac, dismisses the question completely.¹⁹

Details about the personal crisis he had just been through are of little interest.

But thanks to the publication of the new Mauriac biography by Jean-Luc Barré, we know that this lover was Bernard Barbey, an extremely handsome man who was fifteen years Mauriac's junior. A novelist as well as diplomat, he and his wife Andrée would remain closely tied to Mauriac until the latter's death in 1970. Thus, it seems that both wives tolerated their husbands' relationship for many years. In the late 1920s, however, Mauriac seems to have undergone a spiritual crisis over this relationship with Barbey, since it was putting a severe strain on his family life.

¹⁹ Jean Lacouture, *François Mauriac* (Paris: Seuil, 1980), 231: "Peu importe les détails de l'épreuve affective qu'il vient d'affronter." Mauriac's detractors would later hint that he had been a closet homosexual. Robert Brasillach, the novelist and columnist for the collaborationist newspaper *Je Suis Partout* during the Occupation, made reference to such rumors. Later, Roger Peyrefitte made the same accusation. Writing in a deliberately scandalous and exaggerated manner, he nonetheless encapsulated comments that Mauriac's enemies liked to repeat about him. Peyrefitte's "Lettre ouverte à François Mauriac" appeared in *Arts*, May 6, 1964, 1.

Altermann arrived on the scene just as Mauriac was writing the novel *Ce qui était perdu* [*That Which Was Lost*] (Paris: Grasset, 1930), in which he was trying to bring closure to the experience he had just been through. Incredibly, Altermann, as Mauriac's confessor, read drafts of the book as it progressed and made suggestions for improvement. Thus, he not only combined his two vocations, to literature and to the priesthood, he also had a decisive influence on *Ce qui était perdu*, the only one of Mauriac's novels that gives prominence to a homosexual character. By May 1930, Altermann had been du Bos's confessor for several years, but du Bos was growing tired of the man, and complained to Mauriac about him. Mauriac reminded him that they should not allow Altermann's domineering personality to become an obstacle to spiritual progress, but rather chalk up their problems with Altermann to differences in ethnic origin, education and personality. The period of deepest rapport and understanding between Mauriac and his confessor occurred while Mauriac was writing *Ce qui était perdu*, but from then on it was all downhill. Although the priest was invited to attend Mauriac's inauguration into the French Academy in 1933, he stayed away, for by this time their friendship was over.

Lacouture attributes their breakup to a number of factors, including the fact that religion and literature had been too intimately combined, with Altermann abusing his entree into Mauriac's life to trespass even further into his creative life. He fails to consider the possibility that there might have been a homosexual dimension to the relationship between the two men, and Jean-Luc Barré seems to agree with him. Nonetheless, Mauriac's relationship with Altermann, a Jewish man with a domineering personality, was one-sidedly abusive and self-destructive. This experience prefigures the nature of his later deep attachment to Wiesel. Mauriac would later write that Altermann was a holy man:²⁰

[...] *on the border-line between the two Testaments* [...] *the ideal priest for helping a lost sheep who was worn out and who did not put up a fight, asking only to be carried on strong shoulders, and letting himself be carried along.* [...] *But as he got his strength back, he felt more and more uncomfortable about being led along in this way* [...]

Mauriac would later use the same image to describe Wiesel, stating that, "like John the Baptist, he stands on the border between the two testaments."²¹

²⁰ Mauriac, *Ceuvres autobiographiques*, 748: "[...] à la frontière des deux Testaments [...] le prêtre le mieux fait pour secourir une brebis exténuée qui ne se débat plus, qui ne demande plus qu'à être prise sur des épaules robustes et à s'abandonner. A mesure que les forces lui reviennent, elle souffrira plus malaisément d'être portée [...]"

²¹ François Mauriac, *Bloc-Notes*, ed. Jean Touzot (Paris: Seuil, 1993), vol. 3 (May 29, 1963), 362: "Elie Wiesel se tient sur les confins des deux testaments: c'est la race de Jean-Baptiste [...]"

Mauriac's Admiration for Pierre Mendès-France

In 1954, Mauriac was still conscious of the debt he owed to those Jewish friends who had presumably helped him win the Nobel Prize in 1952. Thus, in his "*Bloc-Notes*" newspaper columns during 1953 and early 1954, he made much of a young politician named Pierre Mendès-France. His obsession with the man offers an eerie echo of his earlier obsession with Altermann. As Jean Lacouture has written: "It's slowly that Pierre Mendès-France, deputy from the Eure [Department], enters Mauriac's field of vision,"²² but by the time "PMF" came to power as prime minister in June 1954, Mauriac was beside himself. He wrote in his "*Bloc-Notes*" column as if "PMF" was nothing less than another expression of his long-awaited Jewish messiah. Although he belonged to the anticlerical Radical Party, he was acting in accordance "with our faith and our hope as Christians."²³ Mendès-France, who became prime minister on June 18, 1954, fourteen years to the day after de Gaulle's historic plea to the French people from London to continue the battle against Germany, was in Mauriac's opinion a Jew who brought Catholics and Jews together. When "PMF" was booted out after only eight months in office, Mauriac claimed that his fall was caused by the fact that he was too courageous and too honest, and compared him to Alfred Dreyfus, who had also been, in Mauriac's view, courageous and innocent.

Wiesel would fit neatly into Mauriac's world-view, for whom Jesus, Dreyfus, Altermann and Mendès-France all shared a common trait in their Jewishness. After getting to know Wiesel and hearing him talk, Mauriac would have no difficulty in comparing this foreigner from a mysterious background to Jesus himself. In fact, when he dedicated his book *Le fils de l'homme* (*The Son of Man*, 1958) to Wiesel, he called him a "crucified Jewish child." Unlike Dreyfus and Mendès-France, who were born into prominent Jewish families that were highly acculturated and thoroughly French, Wiesel had been raised as a Hasid in a ghetto atmosphere in Eastern Europe. Although Wiesel spoke French, his speech was accented, and he had no university degree. Nonetheless, Mauriac would embrace him without hesitation.

²² Lacouture, *Mauriac*, 542: "C'est lentement que Pierre Mendès-France, député de l'Eure, entre dans le champ de vision de Mauriac."

²³ Mauriac, *Bloc-Notes*, vol. 1, 118. "Pierre Mendès-France, tout radical qu'il est, a agi en Indochine, à Tunis et va agir demain au Maroc selon ce qu'exigent notre foi et notre espérance de chrétiens."

Chapter II

Wiesel before Mauriac: Inherited Hatreds and Suspicions

The Myth of Wiesel's Idyllic Childhood

The Zionist media fuel the myth that Elie Wiesel is a moral authority because he survived “the Holocaust.”³⁷ As *Time* put it in 1986, he is special not only because he survived to bear “witness to the century’s central catastrophe,” but also because his name is virtually synonymous with “the Holocaust,” “a term Wiesel brought into currency,” according to *Time*.³⁸ This hymn of praise arose from that influential pro-Zionist weekly as Wiesel’s career was at its zenith. He had just been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. He was now a living saint in a secular society.

This exalted status helps to explain why Jack Kolbert, his English-language authorized biographer, paints an idyllic picture of Wiesel’s childhood. If Wiesel is considered to be a saintly man today, the reasoning goes, his early life must have already given signs of his future sanctity. Kolbert, intent on delivering a work bordering on hagiography, wanted to show that the man’s sanctity and intelligence dated back to his ghetto childhood in Romania. Thus, he emphasizes Wiesel’s violin lessons, but studiously

³⁷ I shall argue below that “the Holocaust,” with its implications of a sacrificial offering and its generally accepted definition as the attempted extermination of European Jewry, resulting in some six million deaths, is far from describing the historical reality. Due to the prevalence of the term in this book, I have chosen to employ it without quotation marks or the skeptic’s “so-called” or “alleged.” The reader should bear in mind that my skepticism of the orthodox Holocaust narrative is implicit throughout.

³⁸ Richard Zoglin, Mitch Gelman, “Lives of Spirit and Dedication; The World Pays Tribute to Eleven Who Stirred Emotions and Laid Foundations; Peace: Elie Wiesel,” *Time*, October 27, 1986, 66f.

avoids mentioning his subject's childhood mental problems and neurotic fears. He writes:³⁹

Happy were the days of Wiesel's childhood. Growing up in a tightly knit family of loving parents and siblings was indeed a joyful period.

While Kolbert systematically omits the dark side of Wiesel's childhood, the great man's other authorized biographer, Philippe-Michel de Saint Cheron, who writes in French, is a bit more forthcoming.

There is very little objective documentation about the early years of Elie Wiesel's life. Most administrative records have either been lost or destroyed. Since Wiesel is still alive, various administrative organizations deny researchers access to what they consider private records. Thus, if we want to know about Wiesel's life before Auschwitz, we must depend in large part on what he has chosen to reveal about himself. The primary sources for reconstructing these years are the two volumes of autobiography, *Tous les fleuves vont à la mer* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), and *...et la mer n'est pas remplie* (Paris: Seuil, 1996).⁴⁰ In addition, there are various articles, interviews and nonfiction books that contain autobiographical material. Wiesel also claims that *Night* is an autobiography, and the opening pages of that work deal briefly with his life before being deported to Auschwitz.

As a boy, Wiesel was very frail, both physically and mentally. He was the third of four children, and the only boy. His parents owned a successful grocery store on the ground floor of their home. They had two Jewish employees at the store, and a gentile maid named Maria. Wiesel's father was often absent from the store, but his wife and two older daughters routinely stood in for him. Wiesel himself hardly ever did. Instead, he spent his time away from studying the Talmud or praying in the synagogue in hanging out with the village eccentric, a man called Moshe the Beadle. According to Saint Cheron, Wiesel "preferred by far to spend his time with Moshe the Beadle, also called Moshe the Madman, listening to him tell his weird stories."⁴¹ There is no evidence that Wiesel played with other children or that he had any friends, either boys or girls; he preferred to hear his bizarre adult acquaintance's tall tales. Moshe prefigures other "friendships" with older men in the years ahead, including his Talmud tutor in Sighet in 1943/44, when he was at the threshold of adolescence; the Jewish doctors at the Monowitz SS hospital in January 1945; a man calling himself "Shu-

³⁹ Jack Kolbert, *The Worlds of Elie Wiesel* (Selinsgrove, Pa.: Susquehanna University Press, 2001), 23.

⁴⁰ These works have been translated as Elie Wiesel, *All Rivers Run to the Sea* (N.Y.: Knopf, 1995), and Elie Wiesel, *And the Sea Is Never Full* (N.Y.: Knopf, 1999).

⁴¹ Philippe-Michel de Saint Cheron, *Elie Wiesel: Pèlerin de la mémoire* (Paris: Plon, 1994), 21: "Il préférerait de loin passer ses rares temps libres avec Moché-le-Bedeau, appelé également Moshé-le-Fou, l'écouter raconter ses histoires un peu bizarres."

shani” in Paris after the war, and of course the closet homosexual François Mauriac.

Wiesel had a neurotic attachment to his mother, which helps to explain why he liked to stay in bed all day. He simply wanted to be close to her at all times. He later wrote:⁴²

Does that make you smile, Dr. Freud? I was attached to my mother. Too attached? All she had to do was leave me to go help my father in the store, and I started to shake under the covers. If I was separated from her, even for a few moments, I felt rejected, exiled.

His parents could not understand why their son was so strange. According to Saint Cheron, “he was such a skinny kid, and his health caused his parents so much concern that they took him to one doctor after another.”⁴³ Of particular worry to them was another one of his neurotic obsessions, the one about being “buried alive.”⁴⁴ To their credit, they realized that a fear like this was abnormal. According to Saint Cheron, Wiesel’s father, “when he wasn’t waiting on customers, was an avid reader, including the works of Freud.”⁴⁵ One can only speculate that he might have been reading Freud in an attempt to find out what made his son tick. Because of Wiesel’s mental problems, his parents took him to a number of psychiatrists for analysis.⁴⁶

Childhood, for me, was sickness. I was often sick. My mother used to take me to Hasidic Jewish sages to have them bless me, and to consult eminent professors. That’s how I came to visit Budapest; doctors had referred me there to be examined by renowned specialists.

Clearly, Wiesel’s problem was psychological, not physical. As for his physical appearance, we have to imagine him “with his *payess*, the curly side-locks that hang down behind the ears of Orthodox Jews, his Hassidic hat, and his *talith qatane*, the little prayer shawl that the most pious of Jews wear daily under their clothes.”⁴⁷

⁴² Elie Wiesel, *Tous les fleuves vont à la mer* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 18f.: “Cela vous fait sourire, docteur Freud? J’étais attaché à ma mère. Trop? Il suffisait qu’elle me quitte, qu’elle aille aider mon père au magasin, pour que je me mette à trembler sous ma couverture. Loin d’elle, ne fût-ce que le temps d’une brève absence, je me sentais rejeté, exilé.”

⁴³ Saint Cheron, *Elie Wiesel*, 25: “[...] il était un enfant maigre, qui consultait médecin après médecin, tant sa santé causait d’inquiétude à ses parents. “

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 25: “Enterré vivant.”

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 22: “[...] entre deux clients, il lisait beaucoup, jusqu’aux ouvrages de Freud.”

⁴⁶ François Mitterrand, Elie Wiesel, *Mémoire à deux voix* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1995), 41: “L’enfance, c’est aussi pour moi la maladie. J’étais souvent malade. Ma mère m’emmenait chez les maîtres hassidiques pour leur bénédiction, et consulter des professeurs renommés. Si j’ai pu visiter Budapest, c’est parce que les médecins m’y envoyaient me faire examiner par les grands spécialistes.”

⁴⁷ Saint Cheron, *Elie Wiesel*, 16: “[...] avec ses *payess*, ces mèches de cheveux qui pendent derrière les oreilles des juif orthodoxes, son chapeau hassidique et son *talith qatane*, son petit châle de prière que les plus pieux portent sous leur vêtements en permanence.”

As a child, Wiesel admired his father. But since Shlomo Wiesel was devoted to helping others, Wiesel seldom saw him.⁴⁸

I used to see him only on the Sabbath. And the rest of the week he would go around taking people out of jail.

In a word, while Wiesel was zealously studying his religious texts, his father was a community activist. This physical and psychological distance between the two would be a real problem after the Germans deported them to forced labor. Since Wiesel and his father barely knew each other, the chasm between them would widen in the stressful atmosphere of Auschwitz and Buchenwald. Ironically, while Wiesel laments the fact that he hardly knew his father as a boy, later he became, like his father, a Jewish activist. While Elie's own son, Shlomo, was growing up, Wiesel was often absent:

As for my son, I can tell you one thing. Since he was born, I have become doubly involved in public affairs. Because I brought a life into the world, it's my duty to make the world better for him. (Journey, 83)

In any case, Wiesel has tended to present his father as a non-observant Jew who, philosophically, would be called a secular humanist today.

Ellen Fine, who taught courses in French literature at the City University of New York (CUNY) during the approximately seven years when Wiesel also worked there (1969-1976), struck up a friendship with him and became his first biographer. In her study of his literary career, she contrasts the secular humanism of Wiesel's father with his mother's religious beliefs and observance. His mother, she tells us, wanted him "to be both a rabbi and a Ph.D."⁴⁹ Fine, a pioneer in creating the Wiesel myth, tells us that, at the age of twelve, he wrote a long commentary on the Bible. His mother was understandably quite proud of this alleged accomplishment. Then, after the war, Wiesel is said to have made an astonishing discovery. According to Fine, who presumably relied on Wiesel for her information, his lengthy commentary, which had been written in 1941, was "found some twenty years later under a pile of discarded volumes in the only synagogue left in Sighet." (*Legacy*, 4) Fine accepts this tale at face value. Kolbert, who rivals Fine for sheer gullibility, also believes the story, and claims that it foreshadows great things to come:⁵⁰

Decades following his departure from Sighet, when he returned, he was surprised to find among the hundreds of Jewish books that still remained in an otherwise destroyed community a copy of a book containing the same boyhood

⁴⁸ John Joseph Cardinal O'Connor and Elie Wiesel, *A Journey of Faith* (N.Y.: Fine, 1991), 48f.

⁴⁹ Ellen Fine, *Legacy of Night* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1982), 4.

⁵⁰ Kolbert, *Worlds*, 22.

commentaries. This rediscovery confirmed his decision someday to become a professional writer.

Saint Cheron avoids any reference to the alleged discovery, thus telegraphing his doubts about the “commentary.”

Wiesel himself considerably downsized his claim to youthful brilliance in the first volume of his autobiography. Of his discovery at the former synagogue, he wrote:⁵¹

I wanted to see the synagogues again. Most were closed. In one I stumbled upon hundreds of holy books covered with dust. The authorities had taken them from abandoned homes and stored them here. In a frenzy, I began to look through them, and of course I discovered a few that had belonged to me. I kept on searching, and then searched some more. In a book of commentaries on the Bible, I stumbled upon yellowed and withered sheets of paper. I had written them at the age of thirteen or fourteen. It was my commentary on other commentaries. The writing style was clumsy, the thoughts confused.

Finally, in his interview book with François Mitterrand, *Mémoire à deux voix*, Wiesel seems to express remorse about the fibs he has told about himself over the years:⁵²

For me, it's a dialogue. A dialogue between the child in me and the adult that he has become. He [the child] weighs on my work. Sometimes I feel as though that child is with me, asking me questions, and judging me.

Wiesel's Divine Election Is Foretold

In addition to the tale of his youthful commentary on the Torah, Wiesel also concocted a tale according to which his divine selection as “a great man in Israel” had been revealed to his mother before her death. This story, repeated by Wiesel over the years, received its definitive form in the opening pages of *Tous les fleuves*. By then, Wiesel had been the High Priest of the “Holocaust,” the secular faith of the United States, since 1985, when President Ronald Reagan awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom at the White House. This high office would later be confirmed by Presidents Bush I, Clinton, Bush II and Obama. Perhaps his story of his desig-

⁵¹ Wiesel, *Tous les fleuves*, 477: “Je tiens à revoir les synagogues. La plupart sont fermées. Dans l’une, je bute sur des centaines d’ouvrages sacrés qui traînent dans la poussière: les autorités les ont ramassés dans les maisons abandonnées et déposés ici. Fiévreusement, je me mets à fouiller et, bien entendu, je découvre quelques livres qui m’appartenaient. Je fouille encore, et encore. Dans un livre de commentaires de la Bible, je tombe sur des pages jaunies, flétries: je les avais écrites à l’âge de treize-quatorze ans. Mon commentaire des commentaires. Ecriture maladroite, pensées confuses [...]”

⁵² Mitterrand, Wiesel, *Mémoire*, 31f.: “Pour moi, il s’agit d’un dialogue. Un dialogue entre l’enfant en moi et l’adulte qu’il est devenu. Il pèse sur mon œuvre. Parfois je sens que l’enfant m’accompagne, m’interroge, et me juge.”

nation as “a great man in Israel” is an effort to justify these undeserved honors.

According to the story, in 1936, when he was eight years old, a famous rabbi, the “Rabbi of Wizhnitz,” came to Sighet, and gave his blessing to those of the faithful who sought it. When Wiesel’s mother presented little Elie to him, he was able, through his mystical powers, to divine her son’s extraordinary calling to be a “great man in Israel.” When the rabbi prophesied Wiesel’s future greatness to his mother, she began to cry, but little Elie, unaware of the content of the prophecy, did not understand her tears. Thus, for the last years of her life, from 1936 to her untimely death in the summer of 1944, she never told him the reason why she cried. After the war, Wiesel learned the Rabbi of Wizhnitz’s secret from his cousin, Reb Anshel Feig, who was gravely ill in New York. Feig allegedly sent for Wiesel in order to have his blessing before he died. When Wiesel went to see him at the hospital, Feig told him the words from the rabbi that had made his mother cry:⁵³

Sarah, know that your son will become a gadol b’Israël, a great man in Israel, but neither you nor I will be there to see it; that’s why I’m telling you now [...]

Feig then went on to explain why he had summoned Wiesel before dying:⁵⁴

If the Rabbi of Wizhnitz had so much faith in you, your blessing must count for something in heaven.

Ironically, by the mid-1990s, Wiesel’s claim to be “a great man in Israel” was becoming increasingly less persuasive in that country. For while he could claim with some validity to be a “great man in the pages of the *New York Times*,” or a “great man in the Zionist-tilted U.S. media,” of all places on the planet it is Israel where Wiesel’s self-promotion is the most harshly criticized. In fact, one cannot help but think of the term used by the Israeli philosopher and man of letters, Avishai Margalit, to describe Wiesel: “kitschman of genius.”⁵⁵ The term seems a lot more precise than “great man in Israel.”

The rabbi’s alleged prediction of Wiesel’s future greatness shares a number of points with the story of the presentation of Jesus to the prophet Simeon in the Gospel of Luke (2: 33-5). There, Simeon, who has been assured by God that he will not die before seeing the Messiah with his own eyes, recognizes Jesus immediately. As he tells Mary and Joseph of their son’s future greatness, “the child’s father and mother stood there wonder-

⁵³ Wiesel, *Tous les fleuves*, 22: “Sarah, sache que ton fils deviendra un *gadol b’Israël*, un grand homme en Israël, mais ni moi ni toi ne serons là pour le voir; c’est pourquoi je te le dis maintenant [...].”

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 23: “Si le Rabbi de Wishnitz avait une telle foi en toi, ta bénédiction doit compter au ciel [...].”

⁵⁵ Avishai Margalit, “The Kitsch of Israel,” *NYRB*, November 24, 1988, 23.

ing at the things that were being said about him.” Simeon is explicit about Jesus’ calling: “You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected – and a sword will pierce your own heart too – so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.” In Wiesel’s telling of his life, the Rabbi of Wizhnitz reminds us of Simeon, his mother plays the role assigned to Mary (and Joseph), while he, of course, is the future “great man in Israel.” In his own personal mythology, as well as in the existential and absurdist religion of “the Holocaust,” Wiesel takes the place of Jesus.

Wiesel Taught to Hate Catholicism as a Child

Wiesel’s family and culture inculcated in him a dislike and distrust of Catholics. He developed these attitudes early in life. The Hasidic Jews among whom he was raised generally avoided contact with gentiles who, according to Wiesel, were about 60 percent of the population in Sighet.⁵⁶ Hasidic Jewish people, then and now, have considered non-Jews potential enemies, and this must be taken into consideration when evaluating Wiesel’s fierce and determined hatred of Catholicism. This hatred sprang in part from the system of segregation enforced by the town’s rabbis. To ensure that their flocks shunned gentiles (the fear of intermarriage was even stronger than it is today), they filled their heads with terrifying ideas. Thus, Wiesel grew up in a Judeocentric world with attitudes to match. Years later, he wrote:⁵⁷

My dream back then? To live in a Jewish world, completely Jewish, a world where Christians would have scarcely any access. Before the war, I avoided everyone who came from the other side – that is, from Christianity. Priests frightened me. I avoided them; so as not to pass near them, I would cross the street. I dreaded all contact with them. I feared being kidnapped by them and baptized by force. I had heard so many rumors, so many stories of this type; I had the impression that I was always in danger.

In addition to his strange obsession about being buried alive, mentioned by Saint Cheron, and his fear of being kidnapped, alluded to here, Wiesel had a neurotic fear of the incense used in some Catholic religious ceremonies. Of course, as an Orthodox Jew he was strictly forbidden by Jewish law from entering a Catholic church, but Wiesel’s obsession went a bit beyond what the law required. He later recalled:⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Elie Wiesel, “The Last Return,” *Commentary*, March 1965, 44. In this essay, Wiesel estimated Sighet’s Jewish population to have been 10,000 out of 25,000, or 40 percent.

⁵⁷ Elie Wiesel, *From the Kingdom of Memory* (N.Y.: Summit, 1990), 138. This same recollection is also presented in Wiesel’s essay “Recalling Swallowed-Up Worlds,” *The Christian Century*, May 27, 1981, 609.

⁵⁸ Mitterrand, Wiesel, *Mémoire*, 40: “Moi, j’avais peur de cette odeur-là. Chaque fois que

I was really afraid of that smell. Every time I walked in front of a church and smelled incense, I crossed the street.

The rumors and stories with which the rabbis had filled young Wiesel's head worked quite well.

Wiesel has always claimed that his dislike of Catholics was reinforced by experiences at school:⁵⁹

At school I sat with Christian boys of my age, but we didn't speak to one another. At recess we played separated by an invisible wall. I never visited a Christian schoolmate in his home. We had nothing in common. Later, as an adolescent, I stayed away from them. I knew them to be capable of anything: of beating me; of humiliating me by pulling my payess or seizing my yarmulka (skull cap) without which I felt naked.

Wiesel nursed his anti-Catholic fears and feelings, even though he was not required to attend public school every day. According to Saint Cheron, (who calls Wiesel by the diminutive name for Elieser, "Lazar," in this part of his book):⁶⁰

Lazar went to school very rarely, as he himself has admitted, because his father bribed his teachers, as was often done in the shtetl. During the last month of the academic year, he went to school only to prepare for his exams, which he passed without difficulty.

In other words, Wiesel benefited from special consideration as a child and in an environment in which his Jewish family lived above the laws that theoretically covered everybody. According to Saint Cheron, this special treatment was permissible because of the superior training he had received at his yeshiva school: learning how to study and to learn quickly.⁶¹ But in hindsight it clearly would have done this neurotic child good to interact with other youngsters, especially those from diverse backgrounds. Young Elie would have been far better off if he had had playmates. Instead, he spent too much time in the company of an adult, the eccentric Moshe, who would later be transformed into a character in *Night*.

Wiesel's Hatred of the Blessed Virgin

In 1991, Wiesel mentioned the Rabbi of Wizhnitz in *Journey of Faith*. There, however, instead of using the story to remind us of his own divine

je passais devant une église et que je sentais l'encens, je changeais de trottoir."

⁵⁹ Wiesel, *Kingdom*, 138.

⁶⁰ Saint Cheron, *Elie Wiesel*, 20: "Lazar alla fort peu à l'école, comme il le confie lui-même, car son père 'soudoyait' les maîtres, comme cela se faisait couramment au Shtetl. Au cours du dernier mois de l'année, il y venait pour se préparer aux examens, qu'il réussissait sans difficultés."

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 20: "C'était là l'un des précieux apports de la yeshiva, que de savoir travailler et apprendre rapidement."

selection, he used it to impugn Catholic veneration of the Blessed Virgin. Recalling a trip back to Sighet, he described discovering that another family was living in his former home. They were Catholics. He stated:

When I was seven or eight, the Rabbi of Wizhnitz, who was a kind, compassionate man, came to my town. He sat me on his knee and examined me. That was the custom. I was the last child to be examined. I loved him with passion and fervor. I remember when he died. I took his picture and put it on the wall over my bed. Now [...] the nail was there, but not his picture! There was, I think, a picture of the Virgin Mary. And that hit me with excruciating pain. I left silently, and in a way I'm still there. (Journey, 58)

Wiesel later modified this evidence of anti-Catholic bigotry, with its implication that the picture of the Virgin Mary was at least as offensive as the removal of the rabbi's picture, replacing the picture of the Virgin Mary with a crucifix. In *Tous les fleuves* he wrote:⁶²

The nail is still there, and a large cross is hanging on it.

This gratuitous change from the Blessed Virgin to Christ on the cross also suggests that the story is a pure invention to begin with. It is also important to understand that Wiesel's intent in including this incident in *Journey of Faith* was to offend his naïve and gullible "friend" and co-author, Cardinal O'Connor. Such insults are an essential part of the "dialogue" that has been taking place between Catholics and Jews since Vatican II, with the self-hating "interlocutors" on the Catholic side apparently enjoying every minute of the abuse they receive.

In a 1995 piece in the weekly magazine *Parade*, Wiesel put yet another spin on his return visits to his house in Sighet:⁶³

Dear Maria. If other Christians had acted like her, the trains rolling toward the unknown would have been less crowded. If priests and pastors had raised their voices, if the Vatican had broken its silence, the enemy's hands would not have been so free.

We have no way of knowing whether this person actually existed or is simply another creation of Wiesel's imagination. I say this because this particular type, the good-hearted Catholic servant in a Jewish household, or the Catholic of humble background who befriends Jews, is a standard feature of the master narrative of the Jewish Holocaust story. This character is thrust forward as a means of criticizing, by innuendo, Pius XII and the various Catholic institutional elites who were "silent" or who reacted to the Holocaust as "bystanders." Maria should thus be seen as a stock character who is used in counterpoint to Pius XII and the institutional Church.

Finally, the bigoted atmosphere in which Wiesel was raised brings to mind the words from the famous Rogers and Hammerstein song about

⁶² Wiesel, *Tous les fleuves*, 95: "Le clou y est toujours. Une grosse croix y est suspendue."

⁶³ Elie Wiesel, "The Decision," *Parade*, August 27, 1995, 6.

prejudice from *South Pacific*. In order to hate, “you have to be taught, carefully taught,” and that was how the rabbis of Sighet formed the young Wiesel.

Wiesel’s Abusive Relationships with Older Men

An interesting and very important subject ignored by the conformist academic critics who comment on Wiesel’s life and work is the tendency he exhibited as a young man to gravitate to, and then be abused by, older men. In the opening pages of *La Nuit*, when he talks of Moshe, the local eccentric, he makes it clear that this man had been watching him as he prayed in the local synagogue, and in fact it was there that Moshe initiated contact with Wiesel and began their liaison. As Wiesel sat lamenting the destruction of the Jewish temple in bygone days, the older man kept eyeing him. One evening, he approached and asked: “Why do you cry while you pray?”⁶⁴ The two whiled away days and nights together, supposedly in conversation on the Kabbala:⁶⁵

We would talk this way almost every evening. We would stay in the synagogue after all the faithful had left, sitting there in the darkness by the light of a few flickering candles.

In his autobiography, he relates a story of an abusive relationship with a Kabbalist master named Zalmen. He states that two other boys, Yiddele and Sruli, also joined in this relationship with Zalmen, but fell ill, losing the ability to speak. Neither the local rabbis and doctors, nor specialists brought in from as far away as Sweden, could cure them. Despite the consequences of this bizarre and sick relationship, Wiesel continued to see this man, against his father’s strong opposition (*Tous les fleuves*, 50-53). He was now completely under his master’s control. When, in 1943, his family decided to forgo its annual summer vacation, Elie was unperturbed: his “Kabbala master” needed him.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Elie Wiesel, *La Nuit* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1958), 17: “Pourquoi pleures-tu en priant?”

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 18: “Nous conversions ainsi presque tous les soirs. Nous restions dans la synagogue après que tous les fidèles l’avaient quittée, assis dans l’obscurité où vacillait encore la clarté de quelques bougies à demi consumées.”

⁶⁶ Wiesel, *Tous les fleuves*, 56: “D’autres familles partaient en villégiature mais, moi, j’étais content de rester à la maison [...] Mon Maître avait besoin de moi [...] je m’attardai chez mon Maître et nous veillâmes toute la nuit [...] je sentis qu’une force terrible m’attirait, me faisait tomber dans un précipice, puis dans un autre [...] je me réveillai en sueur, hors d’haleine. Je délirais, je ne savais plus quand je rêvais ou quand j’étais lucide. Je ne savais même plus qui ni où j’étais. Assis par terre, cognant sa tête contre un mur, mon Maître me sembla désespéré: des sanglots secouaient tout son corps. Je sentis alors que la folie nous guettait. Mais j’étais déterminé à poursuivre notre quête, coûte que coûte.”

Other families left on vacation, but I was content to stay at home. My Master needed me. [...] I stayed late at his house, and we stayed up all night. [...] I felt a terrible force pulling me, making me fall off one cliff, then another. [...] I awoke in a sweat, breathless. I was in a state of delirium and didn't know when I was dreaming or when I was lucid. I had lost touch with who and where I was. Seated on the floor and banging his head against the wall, my Master seemed desperate; his sobbing shook his whole body. I felt as if madness was overtaking the two of us. But I was determined to continue our quest, whatever the cost.

This relationship with Zalmen foreshadows Wiesel's later strange liaison with a man called "Shushani."

It is unclear when Wiesel's relationship with Shushani actually began, but it seems to have lasted for two or three years, ending in 1948. Much as he had been picked out by Moshe back in Sighet, he was picked up by Shushani. The event occurred on a commuter train returning from Paris to the town where Wiesel lived with other refugee children. Thus began a perverse relationship in which Wiesel would prove to be no match for his abuser. In 1985, as he was becoming our Holocaust High Priest, he put the following spin on this early relationship:⁶⁷

For three years, in Paris, I was his disciple. Alongside of him, I learned much concerning the perils of reason and language, concerning the ecstasies of the wise man and madman, concerning the mysterious evolution of a thought through the centuries.

If, as Wiesel claims, he was later able to "study at the Sorbonne," it was not because of his non-existent secondary school training, but because of Shushani:⁶⁸

Also, my teacher after the tempest, in the postwar tears, was Mordecai Shushani. [...] he was the man who made me become what I am, who left an imprint on my thought, on my feelings, on my language. I took him as a prototype for many of my messengers, for many of my teachers, in many of my tales. [...] he taught me philosophy. [...] He prepared me for the Sorbonne. Whatever I knew, I got from him.

A decade later, while writing his autobiography, Wiesel was more honest about this abusive relationship. He reveals that Shushani would force him to state that he hadn't learned anything yet, while demanding that he beg for further instruction. But what was the real subject being taught? (*Tous les fleuves*, 154) One day, his abuser, as a pleasant surprise after all his previous maltreatment, gave him a special present: he decided to learn the Hungarian language in a mere two weeks, so they could speak in Wiesel's native language from time to time! (*Tous les fleuves*, 155) Wiesel, of

⁶⁷ Irving Abrahamson, *Against Silence: The Voice and Vision of Elie Wiesel* (N.Y.: Holocaust Library, 1985), vol. 1, 27.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 134.

course, expects his reader to believe this nonsense. Yet, two weeks or not, this is a classic scenario of manipulation, in which the dominating abuser turns suddenly “nice.” Wiesel admits the extent to which he was dominated.⁶⁹

I couldn't and I didn't want to break with Shushani.

Shushani constantly played mind games directed at Wiesel, who described the process this way:⁷⁰

He would disappear, then come back again. Then there were his mood swings and temper tantrums, whether feigned or real.

Their relationship ended on a sour note in 1948, when Shushani dumped him and disappeared. They supposedly met again in Boston in the early 1960s. As he, Wiesel, was about to give a lecture there – Shushani magically materialized out of nowhere and would not let him speak. Seizing the microphone, Shushani cried out:⁷¹

But I know who he [Wiesel] is. A faker, that's who he is. I read an article he once wrote in a Yiddish newspaper in Paris. And he misquoted the Midrash. Anyone who misquotes the sources has no right to speak in public!

Needless to say, neither of Wiesel's authorized biographers, Kolbert or Saint Cheron, bothers to inquire into this strange relationship. Both prefer to play dumb, mentioning Shushani only in passing. Their reticence hints that Wiesel's relationship with this man has become a taboo subject too hot to touch.

It should be noted, however, that Wiesel learned, as a victim of abuse at the hands of Shushani, how to apply abuse to others as needed. An excellent example of such behavior occurred when, upon first meeting François Mauriac at his home in one of the swankiest neighborhoods in Paris, he got up and stormed out on his host for no apparent reason, as described below in Chapter III. This theatrical and manipulative gesture, which was a flagrant abuse of the manners practiced and expected in Mauriac's very much upper-bourgeois French social milieu, was abusive in both form and content. Wiesel's deliberate abuse of Mauriac's generous offer of hospitality apparently convinced his host that he had somehow, unintentionally, said or done something of an “anti-Semitic” nature. Since such an act would be

⁶⁹ Wiesel, *Tous les fleuves*, 157: “Mais je ne pouvais ni ne voulais me détacher de Shoushani.”

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 159: “Ses disparitions, ses réapparitions, ses changements d'humeur, ses accès de colère, feints ou sincères.”

⁷¹ Elie Wiesel, *One Generation After* (N.Y.: Random House, 1970), 122. This book is supposedly a “translation” of Wiesel's volume of essays, published a few months earlier, entitled *Entre deux soleils* [Between Two Suns] (Paris: Seuil, 1970). In reality, however, it contains only several chapters from the French book. The chapter in which the present quote is found, entitled “The Death of My Teacher,” has no corresponding equivalent in the French volume.

severely frowned upon in Mauriac's social sphere, he followed Wiesel down the hall and begged him to come back into his apartment.

Learning French in Paris

According to Wiesel, the four hundred Jewish children who were sent from Buchenwald to France were divided into two groups: one religious and the other secular. He belonged to the religious group, consisting of about one hundred children. Illustration 2 shown here on p. 52 shows some of these boys; this photo and the accompanying caption come from the website of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). The caption claims that Wiesel is pictured, but does not identify him. Wiesel began his studies in the town of Ambloy (Loir et Cher), and continued them at Taverny (Val d'Oise), a bit closer to Paris. Wiesel had continued to study the Talmud while at Auschwitz and Buchenwald, although the circumstances hardly lent themselves to such work. There exists no evidence to prove that Wiesel ever attended public schools in France or obtained a French *baccalauréat*, the secondary school graduation diploma, which is needed to enter the university system. The mystery surrounding the matter of his education as an adolescent, like that regarding his early sexual experiences, are taboo subjects that he passes over in complete "silence," and that friendly interviewers know is off limits.⁷² Thus, it should come as no surprise that "Professor Wiesel," as Cardinal O'Connor obsequiously addressed him in *Journey of Faith*, has not a word to say about his non-existent secondary school studies in his two-volume autobiography.

Yet Wiesel would have us believe that he studied at the Sorbonne:⁷³

I went on studying French – mainly to absorb the language – and I entered the Sorbonne to study literature, psychology, philosophy, psychiatry – in a very autodidactic manner. All I wanted was to study.

The trick word here is "autodidactic." Wiesel might have attended a public lecture or two, but he never enrolled in a degree program. Nonetheless, his hagiographer, the irrepressible Jack Kolbert, proclaims naively:⁷⁴

So proficient did he become that between 1948 and 1951 he felt comfortable enough with the language that he could enroll and study at the University of Paris's liberal arts program at the celebrated Sorbonne.

Despite Wiesel's claim that he entered the Sorbonne, and Kolbert's assertion that he enrolled "in the liberal arts program at the celebrated Sor-

⁷² The prolix Wiesel has made a career of denouncing gentiles' "silence," but is himself silent all too often about matters relating to various contradictory aspects of his published work and official biography. Another subject of silence concerns Jewish responsibility for the ongoing injustices committed against the Palestinians.

⁷³ Cargas, *Conversation*, 79.

⁷⁴ Kolbert, *Worlds*, 26.



Illustration 2: Group portrait of Jewish displaced youth at the OSE (Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants) home for Orthodox Jewish children in Ambloy. Elie Wiesel is said to be among those pictured. Ambloy, France, 1945.

bonne,” there is no record that Wiesel ever entered a degree program at the Sorbonne, much less received a degree. Yet Kolbert wants us to believe that Wiesel advanced to at least the point where he could write a doctoral dissertation.

Ellen Fine, in her generally uncritical and laudatory book on Wiesel, also misleads her readers about Wiesel’s education. She tells us that “a young French philosopher, François Wahl, helped him to learn French by introducing him to the great classical authors, beginning with Racine. Wiesel learned the language by listening in silence” (*Legacy*, x). Pious nonsense, of course, but it gets worse. Fine then claims that Wiesel embarked upon a plan of university study, but she is evasive, indeed totally silent, about dates, courses, programs and professors. Thus, she relates that “he took courses at the Sorbonne in philosophy and literature and, although he never officially completed his studies, he wrote a long dissertation on comparative asceticism” (5f.). In her narrative, Wiesel emerges as a hard-working student enrolled in a degree program at the university, not merely someone who hung out on the fringes in an “autodidactic manner.” As for the “long dissertation,” Fine identifies neither the subject of the thesis nor its director. One wonders, also in vain, which members of the Sorbonne faculty were on his dissertation committee. Unfortunately, Fine does not produce the name of even one former professor who is able to attest to having worked with the future Nobel laureate. Furthermore, it does not seem to

have dawned on Fine that the writing of a thesis is the last obstacle in the academic steeplechase. It comes only after one has passed the preliminary hurdles, *i.e.*, course requirements and general exams. When did Wiesel take these exams, and what results were obtained? Is there any record of Wiesel ever having been a student at the Sorbonne? Has Fine been able to locate former friends, classmates or professors from these years? These questions all beg for answers, but Fine offers none.

With regard to the enigmatic François Wahl, about whom Fine furnished no details other than that he was a “young French philosopher,” Wiesel claims in *Tous les fleuves* that the refugee organization in whose care he had been placed assigned the young Wahl to give him “private lessons” (“des cours particuliers,” 150), and that they took place at Wahl’s mother’s apartment (“nos leçons ont eu lieu chez sa mère,” 151). Did the other Jewish refugee children receive similar private tutoring services? It was Wahl, says Wiesel, who taught him to speak and read French, but the two broke up when Shushani reappeared in Wiesel’s life in 1947 (151). The unreliable Jack Kolbert, wanting to present Wiesel as a full-fledged French intellectual before beginning his career as a writer, completely transforms both Fine’s and Wiesel’s portrait of Wahl. For Kolbert, Wiesel already speaks French when he meets Wahl at the Sorbonne where he teaches. Thus, Wahl is not Wiesel’s language tutor, but his mentor in the field of philosophy. Bizarrely, Kolbert also changes Wahl’s first name to Gustave! He writes:⁷⁵

Elie Wiesel seems always to have been susceptible to influences by his greatest teachers. Throughout his life, he had [sic] generously acknowledged his indebtedness to them. One of these teachers was Gustave Wahl, a philosophy teacher in Paris.

Later in his book, Kolbert tells us more about their relationship. He writes:⁷⁶

Once he had gained sufficient competency in French, the young man moved to Paris, where he could pursue a university degree at the Sorbonne. Selecting mainly courses in philosophy and literature, he fell under the spell of his philosophy teacher, Gustave Wahl, who seems to have exerted much influence on his intellectual formation.

Despite the attempts by Wiesel and his biographers to blur François Wahl’s true identity, we know that he was born in 1925, accepted his homosexuality at the age of fifteen, and was an active homosexual for the rest of his life.⁷⁷ He also passed the very competitive civil service “*agrégation*” exam,

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 26-7.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Roudinesco, “François Wahl (éditeur et philosophe), est mort,” *Le Monde*, September 14, 2014. www.lemonde.fr/disparitions/article/2014/09/15/mort-de-l-editeur-et-philosophe-francois-wahl_4487663_3382.html

which entitled him to be employed in the state education system as a “*professeur agrégé*,” a prestigious title. His father, arrested by the Germans and deported to Auschwitz, died there in 1943, which helps to explain his interest in helping Wiesel. Wahl, like Wiesel, was also a member of the Zionist Stern Gang between 1945 and 1948. Later in life, Wahl lived as a couple with his partner of many years, the Cuban artist and writer Severo Sarduy, until the latter’s death in 1993.⁷⁸ Could Kolbert, whose book appeared nineteen years after Fine’s, have known more about François Wahl’s private life than Fine did? In fact, by 2001, Wahl was not only a well-known member of the Parisian intelligentsia, he was also an open and unapologetic homosexual. Did Kolbert change Wahl’s name to “Gustave” in order to throw readers off the track of the real François Wahl? Did he do so in order to protect Wiesel from any possible suspicions of homosexuality because of his youthful association with this openly homosexual man who had come out of the closet at the age of fifteen?

In *From the Kingdom of Memory*, Wiesel presents himself as a consummate loner during these years in Paris:

I practiced asceticism on my own: in my home, in my little world in Paris, where I cut myself off from the city and from life for weeks on end. I lived in a room much like a prison cell – large enough for only one. The street noises that reached me were muffled. My horizon became smaller and smaller: I looked only at the Seine; I no longer saw the sky mirrored in it. I drew away from people. No relationship, no liaison came to interrupt my solitude. I lived only in books, where my memory tried to rejoin a more immense and ordered memory. And the more I remembered, the more I felt excluded and alone. (142)

Yet Jack Kolbert presents a completely different and somewhat far-fetched view of the young man:

An almost instant convert to the Parisian lifestyle, Wiesel frequented the left-bank cafés, where as his favorite pastime he enjoyed playing chess. (*Worlds*, 181)

The neurotic loner has also claimed that during his “Sorbonne days” he held a two-year graduate-level internship in psychiatry at a Parisian teaching hospital. He told Brigitte-Fanny Cohen that he did this internship because he had always been interested in the problem of mental illness:⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Alain Badiou, “François Wahl ou la vie dans la pensée,” *Le Monde*, September 16, 2014. www.lemonde.fr/disparitions/article/2014/09/16/francois-wahl-ou-la-vie-dans-la-pensee-un-temoignage-d-alain-badiou_4488663_3382.html

⁷⁹ Brigitte-Fanny Cohen, *Elie Wiesel, qui êtes-vous?* (Lyon: La Manufacture, 1987), 63: “[...] les fous m’ont toujours fasciné. A Sighet, il y avait un asile de fous, et je m’y rendais tous les samedis pour leur porter de la nourriture. Après la guerre, à Paris, j’ai renoué avec eux; j’étudiais la littérature à la Sorbonne et j’avais choisi de préparer un certificat de psychothérapie. Pendant deux ans, tous les matins, je suivais des cours à l’hôpital Sainte-Anne. J’observais les malades.”

[...] *the insane have always fascinated me. In Sighet there was an insane asylum, and I went there every Saturday to bring them food. After the war I reestablished contact with them: I was studying literature at the Sorbonne, and had decided to prepare a minor in psychotherapy. For two years, every morning, I took classes at the Hôpital Sainte-Anne and observed the patients.*

His long-time friend, Jean Halpérin, also assures us that this is why Wiesel is so interested in mental illness:⁸⁰

It's important to realize that during his school years in Paris he spent two years studying psychiatry at Saint-Anne Hospital in Paris.

Nowadays, of course, neither Wiesel, in his autobiography, nor his two official biographers make any mention of these alleged advanced studies in psychiatry; the claim is just another one of Wiesel's many tall tales. The only scenario that makes sense is that Wiesel, lacking any diploma or training in medicine, came in contact with the renowned psychiatric hospital as a patient, not a practitioner. Did the morose and solitary Wiesel, battling doubts about his sexual, ethnic, religious, and linguistic identity, go there for outpatient counseling? Is that the real connection?

Despite his lack of either a secondary school degree or a college diploma, two major U.S. universities later gave Wiesel faculty appointments – appointments for which a Ph.D. degree is usually required. Since the early 1970s, he has taught first at the City University of New York and later at Boston University. At the latter institution, he still occupies his endowed chair, even though he has not been able to teach since June 2011, when he underwent open-heart surgery. It is possible that Wiesel invented the myth of his formal attendance at the Sorbonne and the internship at Saint-Anne Hospital in order to justify his academic appointments, for which he is clearly unqualified.

Wiesel's Trip to India

Wiesel made a trip to India in January 1952, traveling by boat, and seems to have stayed there for several weeks.⁸¹ This journey has now been deleted, more or less, from his life story and except for Downing his commentators generally do not discuss it. Yet at one time he seemed to be pretending that the trip to India was linked to his advanced studies at the Sor-

⁸⁰ Jean Halpérin, "Itinéraire, paysages intérieurs et message," in: David Banon *et al.*, *Présence d'Elie Wiesel* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1990), 29: "Il faut noter d'ailleurs, dans son itinéraire, pendant ses études à Paris, les deux années pendant lesquelles il fut étudiant en psychiatrie à l'Hôpital Sainte-Anne."

⁸¹ Frederick L. Downing, *Elie Wiesel: A Religious Biography* (Macon, Ga., Mercer University Press, 2008), 89.

bonne, for he claims to have gone there as a student of philosophy, seeking to broaden his philosophical base and to write his “dissertation”.⁸²

Later I went to India, having in mind to write a dissertation on comparative asceticism: Jewish, Christian, Hindu. I had written a huge volume, some six hundred pages or so, which I'm afraid to open – I'm sure it's not good. One day I will and probably will have to rewrite it. I didn't complete my studies. I had to work as a journalist, and it was hard work.

The impression he gives here is that he had been an “ABD,” an “all but doctorate,” someone who had finished all the course work and examinations for a doctorate from the Sorbonne, and had simply failed to complete his dissertation. Wiesel’s trip to India took place in 1952, and it enabled him to continue to work on learning English.⁸³ The trip was once touted as one of the major educational experiences of his life. In *From the Kingdom of Memory*, Wiesel expands somewhat on his statement above, which he had made to Harry Cargas some twenty years earlier. He tells us that in these years he was attracted to Eastern philosophy, but provides no dates or specifics:⁸⁴

Disgusted with the West, I turned toward the East. I was attracted by Hindu mysticism; I was interested in Sufism; I even began to explore the occult domains of marginal sects here and there in Europe.

These days, however, the importance of his trip to India has been downsized, and he says very little about it in *Tous les fleuves*.

Zionist Newspaperman

Wiesel started out in life earning his living as a teacher in the Jewish community in Paris. Ellen Fine tells us that “he earned a living as a tutor in Yiddish, Hebrew, and the Bible” (*Legacy*, 5). In *A Jew Today*, Wiesel said:⁸⁵

Ten years of waiting, of intense study, of earning my keep as best I could: as choir director, camp counselor, tutor, translator. I obtained a scholarship from OSE, the children's aid organization that brought me to France. I taught the Bible and Talmud in Yiddish to children of the rich who understood only French; after all, I had to pay the rent. There were times when I had only two

⁸² Cargas, *Conversation*, 79.

⁸³ Fine, *Legacy*, 6.

⁸⁴ Wiesel, *Kingdom*, 140-1.

⁸⁵ Wiesel, *Un juif aujourd'hui* (Paris: Seuil, 1977), 26: “Je gagnais ma vie comme je pouvais; chef de chorale, moniteur de colonie de vacances, boursier de l’OSE, précepteur, répétiteur. J’enseignais la Bible et le Talmud, en yiddish, à des gosses de riches qui ne comprenaient que le français. Il me fallait bien payer le loyer. Quant aux repas, il m’arrivait de n’en prendre que deux par semaine. La guerre était finie, mais je continuais à souffrir de la faim. Puis le hasard voulut qu’un journal m’acceptât comme collaborateur.”

meals in a week. The war was over, but I continued to live with hunger. Then, thanks to a stroke of luck, a newspaper hired me as a contributor.

Wiesel began working as a journalist as early as 1947, when he was only nineteen years old. He was hired by the Zionist paper *Zion im Kampf*, a mouthpiece of the Irgun Zvai Leumi, which, led by Menachem Begin, carried out numerous terrorist attacks and several massacres in furtherance of its Jewish apartheid policies. He eventually came to be an editor of this Yiddish newspaper and “in the late forties, published articles five, six times a week.”⁸⁶

His early association with this group confirms his commitment, from his youth on, to the quite narrow, parochial and ultimately racist worldview in which he had been raised.⁸⁷ Ironically, he refers romantically – and approvingly – to this Zionist Jewish terror group as the “Palestinian Resistance movement.”⁸⁸ Yes, terrorism is deplorable if Palestinians engage in it, but morally uplifting if Jews do so.

The Ten-Year Vow of “Silence”

After the success of *La Nuit* paved the way for Wiesel’s gradual ascent to media celebrity, he began claiming that, right after the war, he had decided to write a book about his wartime experiences. At the same time, however, he claimed that, in order to make sure he told the story correctly, he had also imposed a ten-year vow of silence upon himself. With regard to this alleged ten-year vow of “silence,” the only one of Wiesel’s commentators to have probed the subject with any degree of skepticism has been Brigitte-Fanny Cohen. In her book-length interview of Wiesel in 1987, she asked why he needed ten years, and he answered:⁸⁹

I felt that I needed ten years of preparation. Afterwards, it was time to leave the period of silence behind.

Dissatisfied with this response, she raised the question again, and Wiesel retreated into existentialist jargon to formulate his response:⁹⁰

[...] I had to act in such a way that silence would remain in the spoken word; silence and speech were not to be in opposition. And that takes time: I had to

⁸⁶ Wiesel, *One Generation*, 122.

⁸⁷ Wiesel, *Tous les fleuves*, 194-5.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 194: “mouvement palestinien de Résistance.”

⁸⁹ B.F. Cohen, *Qui êtes-vous*, 41: “Je sentais que j’avais besoin de dix ans de préparation. Ensuite, il a fallu sortir de l’ère du silence.”

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 44: “En même temps, il fallait faire en sorte que le silence demeure dans le verbe; la parole et le silence ne devaient pas s’opposer l’une à l’autre. Et cela exige du temps: je devais être sûr que je pourrais dire ce que j’avais à dire, et surtout que je saurais le dire.”

be sure that I could say what I had to say and especially that I would know how to say it.

What Wiesel was really saying here was that, before publishing his book, he wanted to be sure that any alleged German atrocities allegedly proven at Nuremberg were still a part of the official history. He also wanted to write something original, and not simply repeat what other survivors had already written on the topic of Auschwitz:⁹¹

As soon as the Other appears^[92], he must out of necessity influence our own project. And that frightened me. That's why I gave myself ten years of silence.

He also claimed that he waited ten years “because the number ten is a biblical number.”⁹³

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 41: “Dès que l’Autre apparaît, il influe nécessairement sur notre projet. Et cela me faisait peur. Voilà pourquoi je me suis accordé dix ans de silence.”

⁹² Probably a reference to Jean-Paul Sartre’s famous phrase: “L’enfer, c’est les autres,” meaning “Hell, this is other people.” Hence, for Wiesel, if someone else (l’autre) were to publish a work dealing with the Holocaust before his work in progress (notre projet) appeared, it would in some way or other influence what he would or could say in his book. Since that possibility frightened him, he let ten years go by before publishing his book.

⁹³ *Ibid.*: “Et aussi parce que le chiffre dix est un chiffre biblique.”

Chapter III

Mauriac and Wiesel: The First Meeting

Mauriac's Version of the First Meeting

There are two versions of the first meeting between the two men. In 1958 Mauriac described it in a laudatory column on Wiesel that appeared in his regular space in *Le Figaro littéraire*.⁹⁴ The content of the column mirrors the text he had written for the foreword to *La Nuit*. His intention in publishing this foreword as a newspaper article was to promote Wiesel's book. While Mauriac's column did little to boost sales, we are fortunate to have it today. It offers an important touchstone to the self-serving version of their first encounter that Wiesel would publish in 1977, seven years after Mauriac's death.

Mauriac's sense of modesty prompted him to say nothing in the 1958 column about his behind-the-scenes role in convincing *Les Éditions de Minuit* to publish *La Nuit*.⁹⁵ Nor did he mention his editorial work on the manuscript, after Jérôme Lindon, the editor at *Les Éditions de Minuit*, had agreed to publish it. Finally he neglected to specify that his first interview with Wiesel had taken place in 1955, three years before the book was published. (I shall return to each of these points later.) Mauriac did, however, write of the emotions he experienced when the young Jewish man first came to his home. He began by stating that he had always been wary of

⁹⁴ François Mauriac, "Un enfant juif," *Le Figaro littéraire*, June 7, 1958, 1, 4.

⁹⁵ This publishing house, founded clandestinely in February 1941 by Pierre de Lescure and Jean Bruller (*alias* Vercors), had published Mauriac's patriotic pamphlet *Le cahier noir* in 1943. Mauriac wrote under the pseudonym of "Forez," a mountain range in south-eastern France. Starting in 1948, when Jérôme Lindon, scion of a very wealthy Jewish family, became publisher, *Les Éditions de Minuit* gradually became associated with avant-garde writers like Beckett and Robbe-Grillet.

granting interviews to foreigners, who might distort what he said and use it against France:⁹⁶

That morning, the young Israeli who interviewed me for a Tel-Aviv newspaper inspired in me right away a sympathetic reaction that I couldn't fight off for very long because our conversation quickly touched on personal matters.

Mauriac was still remarkably clear-headed at the age of seventy-three, for he seems to remember quite well what it was like to have lived in Paris during the war years, and what most people felt when they saw or heard of Jews being sent off to work in the East.⁹⁷ If during the war years he was incapable of imagining what he terms in the article the “Nazi extermination methods,” he was certainly not alone. According to even the Jewish Holocaust narrative, scarcely anyone else, including the very well-informed Pope Pius XII, the Allied leaders, and even the various Jewish organizations, had any better information about an alleged “Nazi extermination,” and much information that contradicted such claims. After all, Germany, a small country, was at war with the rest of Europe and the United States. It had an insatiable thirst for manpower, especially since Nazi ideology dictated that women remain at home and, as a general rule, be discouraged from working in factories. It was partly for this reason that by 1943 there were already over a million Frenchmen voluntarily working in Germany under the *STO* (*Service du Travail Obligatoire*) program.⁹⁸

Jews drafted to be deported for work at Auschwitz were chosen for relocation to Poland not by the French or the Germans, but by the *Union Générale des Israélites de France* (*UGIF*), the governing body of the Jewish community in France that Marshall Pétain had created in 1941 specifically to look after Jewish interests during the Occupation. These people published their own newspaper, *Les Informations Juives*, and had a nearly complete registration list of all Jews residing in France. It was from these lists that the Jewish elders assembled the groups of people (mostly stateless Jews who had come to France from Eastern Europe) to be sent off to work in German factories in Poland.⁹⁹ Letters and packages came and went rou-

⁹⁶ Mauriac, “Enfant juif,” 1: “Ce matin-là, le jeune Israélien qui m’interrogeait pour le compte d’un journal de Tel-Aviv m’inspira dès l’abord une sympathie dont je ne pus guère me défendre longtemps car nos propos prirent vite un tour personnel.”

⁹⁷ Mauriac discusses these issues in his *Journal du temps de l’Occupation*, in *Œuvres Complètes*, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 347-351. Other relevant information is found in his book *Le Bâillon dénoué: Après quatre ans de silence* (Paris: Grasset, 1945), 18.

⁹⁸ Pierre Arnaud, *Les STO: Histoire des Français requis en Allemagne nazie, 1942-1945* (Paris: Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, 2010.)

⁹⁹ Ariel Goldman, “Dannecker,” in: Georges Wellers, André Kaspi, Serge Klarsfeld (eds.), *La France et la question juive, 1940-1944: actes du colloque du Centre de documentation juive contemporaine (10 au 12 mars 1979)* (Paris: S. Messinger, 1981), 281. Regarding the UGIF, see the two-volume study by Maurice Rajsfus, *Des Juifs dans la collaboration: L’UGIF, 1941-1944* (Paris: ÉDI, 1980); *Des Juifs dans la collaboration: Une Terre promise?* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1989). See also: Michel Lafitte, *Un engrenage fa-*

tinely, despite the obvious transportation problems caused by the war. In addition, many French people, that is, non-Jews, also had relatives and friends who were already working in Germany or Poland, called “the General Government” by the Germans at the time. Thus, as the detainee literature has amply demonstrated in retrospect, the many factories located at camps like Auschwitz, for example, contained a veritable hodgepodge of nationalities in their work force, with forced laborers working side by side with “free” workers. Given this context of people routinely departing, voluntarily or not, to support the German war effort in the East, and with Jewish children sometimes left in the care of the Jewish elders of the *UGIF* when their parents were shipped off to concentration camps, we can better understand an astonishing remark that Mauriac now makes to Wiesel.

Mauriac told Wiesel that he reminded him of the Jewish children he claimed to have seen on the train at Austerlitz Station in 1942. As noted in Chapter I, Mauriac was actually telling a white lie here, for he did not actually witness that particular event. In reality, it was his wife and his eldest son who had seen those children. Mauriac later wrote that he thought nothing of it at the time, for it was an everyday event. Mauriac writes: “I was far from thinking that they were going to the gas chamber and the crematorium,”¹⁰⁰ and his skepticism was justified. It was only after the war, when the Allies discovered numerous corpses in certain camps in Germany, that these same Allies were able to impose the myth of “extermination camps.” In so doing, they exploited the sufferings of men and women who had for the most part perished of disease, above all typhus, and who had often lacked proper treatment due to the interruption of food and medical supplies by Allied bombing. The newsreels and photos presented to the public became the basis of, and the justification for, the Allied version of what the war had been about. The new explanation was rolled out at Nuremberg, and came to undergird political arrangements in the postwar world. Mauriac, like the rest of those who had lived through the war, discovered only later that what had seemed like so ordinary, if deplorable, an event in 1942 now had to be completely reinterpreted. Some, including Pope Pius XII, never accepted this new interpretation of events. The Pope’s disbelief has resulted in decades of defamation at the hands of the Holocaust fundamentalists and the Zionist media.

Most of those who, like Mauriac’s wife, saw or heard of the deportations, gave them little thought at the time. Transferring the Jewish population to the East was growing in appeal to the Nazis, especially after a scheme for resettling European Jewry to Madagascar could not be realized.

tal: L’UGIF face aux réalités de la Shoah, 1941-1944 (Paris: L. Levi, 2003).

¹⁰⁰ Mauriac, “Enfant juif,” 1: “J’étais à mille lieues de penser qu’ils allaient ravitailler la chambre à gaz ou le crématoire.”

The pro-German writer and intellectual Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, writing even before the war began, on July 29, 1938, gives a good idea of what kinds of resettlement people were thinking of when they talked about this subject:¹⁰¹

As for a solution to the Jewish problem, it can only be settled on a worldwide basis. Since Palestine is not large enough, other territories must be found. The Russians have created two Jewish Republics in their huge empire, one in the Crimea and the other in Siberia.

Thus, when Mauriac wrote in 1958 that nobody, including him, had imagined that trains headed for the East meant extermination for the Jews on them, he was telling the truth. Similarly, his son Claude, who was with his mother on the morning they saw the Jewish children on the train at Austerlitz Station, speaks for both his father and the average Frenchman when he says:¹⁰²

I want to state categorically that at that time we had no knowledge of the [extermination] camps.

Here are the two future winners of Nobel prizes talking about the war years. One, the gullible older man, a closet homosexual, father of four, unfaithful husband and “Catholic writer,” is physically attracted to this young Jewish man who has suddenly appeared in his life. The other is applying to the utmost the lessons he has learned from his masters. As Mauriac tells his visitor how terrible he feels about the Jewish children on the train, Wiesel brusquely asserts that he was in fact one of those children. Wiesel, of course, is not speaking literally, for he was nowhere near France in 1942. His claim is that he and his family were deported from Sighet, at that time in Hungary, to Auschwitz in 1944. At least three of the six members of his family survived the war. Nonetheless, Mauriac proclaims:¹⁰³

He was one of them, he had seen the disappearance of his mother, a beloved little sister and his whole family, except his father, in the furnace fed by living creatures.

Mauriac was apparently overwhelmed by the atrocity stories – regardless of their veracity – that Wiesel told him that day.

¹⁰¹ Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, “Journal Politique: à Propos du Racisme,” in: Philippe Ganiér-Raymond (ed.), *Une Certaine France: l’Antisémitisme 1940-1944* (Paris: Balland, 1975), 46: “Pour ce qui est de la solution sioniste, elle ne peut être réglée que par une entente mondiale. Puisque la Palestine est insuffisante, il faut trouver d’autres territoires. Les Russes ont créé dans leur immense empire colonial deux républiques juives: l’une en Crimée, l’autre en Sibérie.”

¹⁰² Claude Mauriac, *Le temps immobile X: L’Oncle Marcel* (Paris: Grasset, 1988), 230: “Je précise que nous n’avions alors aucune connaissance des camps.”

¹⁰³ Mauriac, “Enfant juif,” 1: “Il était l’un d’eux; il avait vu disparaître sa mère, une petite sœur adorée et tous les siens, sauf son père, dans le four alimenté par des créatures vivantes.”

Wiesel's Version of Their First Meeting

Wiesel wrote nothing about his first meeting with Mauriac during the latter's lifetime. Instead, he waited until 1977, seven years after Mauriac's death, before describing the event. He did so in a collection of essays entitled *Un juif aujourd'hui (A Jew Today)*. Wiesel's story is that he first saw Mauriac in person at a reception held at the Israeli Embassy in Paris in 1954. This date is a complete invention on Wiesel's part, for he actually did not meet Mauriac until May 1955. With Mauriac dead, however, Wiesel seems to have thought that nobody would notice. Since it will be instructive to track him through this exercise in mendacity, let us play along with him.

First, why did Wiesel move the date of the first meeting forward one year? What role did Pierre Mendès-France play in his deception? Let us try to find out.

It was well known in 1954 that Mauriac's political affections were centered on Pierre Mendès-France, a Jew who had been prime minister since June 18, 1954. To Mauriac, he was France's new savior, replacing de Gaulle, who had gone into retirement in 1947. Mauriac heaped praise on the man in his newspaper columns. According to François Durand:¹⁰⁴

It was Pierre Mendès-France who, in Mauriac's view between 1954 and 1956, incarnated France's highest hopes. At most, both men [de Gaulle and Mendès-France] were equally venerated, but he preferred the one who was actually in power at the time.

When, in 1977, Wiesel claimed that his first meeting with Mauriac had taken place in 1954 rather than in 1955, he was unaware that Mauriac had mentioned, in his "*Bloc-Notes*" newspaper column of May 14, 1955, that he had recently made the acquaintance of a young, unidentified Jewish man. This entry had been generally lost from view until the eminent Mauriac scholar and Sorbonne professor Jean Touzot began publishing a paperback collection of Mauriac's "*Bloc-Notes*" newspaper columns. The article in question appeared in 1993 in the first of what would become Touzot's five-volume collection of reprints of Mauriac's newspaper columns, and when it did, Wiesel's claim to have first met Mauriac in 1954 was exposed as false. Mauriac wrote:¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ François Durand, "Mauriac et de Gaulle," in: Jean Serroy (ed.), *de Gaulle et les Écrivains* (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1991), 42. "C'est Pierre Mendès-France qui, de 1954 à 1956, représente pour Mauriac l'espoir de la France. Tout au plus associe-t-il les deux hommes [de Gaulle et Mendès-France] dans une même vénération, mais avec une préférence pour celui qui est aux affaires."

¹⁰⁵ Mauriac, *Bloc-Notes*, vol. 1, 271: "Que d'êtres différents m'ont longuement parlé tous ces jours-ci! Entre plusieurs autres, le professeur d'une université américaine; un Japonais, professeur lui aussi; des étudiants musulmans; un jeune Israélien qui fut un enfant juif dans un camp allemand où il a vu, à treize ans, tous les siens enfournés dans une

How many different people have come to see me in recent days! Among others, a professor at an American university, a Japanese professor, several Moslem students, and a young Israeli who as a child was interned in a German camp and, at the age of thirteen, saw his whole family killed in the gas chamber; but there was a revolt in the camp, and it was liberated on the very day when he was to be killed.

Obviously, that “young Israeli” was Wiesel. Putting aside the exaggerations that Mauriac would later ascribe to his Jewish visitor in his 1958 newspaper column, “L’enfant juif,” most notably that he saw “his whole family killed in the gas chamber,” a falsehood that Mauriac credulously accepted, and such lesser fibs as Wiesel’s claim that his “camp was liberated on the very day he was to be killed,” which Mauriac also seems to have believed, this column confirms that Mauriac first met Wiesel in 1955, not 1954.

I now return to Wiesel’s version of his first meeting with Mauriac. Wiesel claims in *Un juif aujourd’hui* that his editor in Israel had been urging him to arrange an interview with Mendès-France. He goes on to say that he decided that the best way to meet PMF would be to convince Mauriac, a Catholic, whom he did not know, to make the introduction.¹⁰⁶

Knowing the admiration the Jewish prime minister bore the illustrious Catholic member of the Académie, why not ask the one to introduce me to the other?

In retrospect, it is not too difficult to see why Wiesel, who was twenty-six years old in 1954, was drawn to Mauriac. The fact that he links Mendès-France to Mauriac also shows that he was well aware not only of Mauriac’s high regard for PMF, but also of his sincere sympathy for Jews and Jewish causes. He considered the aging Catholic writer to be what he called an “ayev Yisrael,” a friend of the Jewish people, and he was right. Wiesel clearly intended to exploit Mauriac’s philo-Semitic views to advance his own career. In order to understand why Wiesel waited until 1977 to float his tale of approaching PMF through Mauriac, it is necessary to situate Wiesel in relation to both PMF and to French culture. PMF came from an established and highly assimilated French Jewish family, and possessed university degrees and political connections. Wiesel was fully aware that he was an outsider in French culture. He spoke French with an accent, had no family connections, and, perhaps worst of all, lacked any evidence of formal education.

As Wiesel tells it, summoning his courage to ask the great writer for an interview, he approached Mauriac and was surprised at the cordial response

chambre à gaz, et le camp s’est soulevé et a été délivré le jour même qui avait été marqué pour lui.”

¹⁰⁶ Wiesel, *Un juif*, 28: “Sachant l’admiration que le président du Conseil (juif) vouait à l’académicien (catholique), pourquoi ne prierais-je pas celui-ci de me présenter à celui-là?”

he received. The great man actually asked whether he would like to visit him at home:¹⁰⁷

“Would you like to come next Tuesday or Wednesday?” he asked me in his gravelly voice after consulting his appointment book. “Would early afternoon suit you?”

As Wiesel relates the story, he was so overwhelmed that such a great man had turned out to be so approachable that he could not help but say to himself:¹⁰⁸

Would it suit me? “Yes, thank you.” I would have accepted any date, any hour. I felt myself blushing. I admired the great novelist’s work, but I had no intention of questioning him about his characters, his technique or his life. Imposter, I thought, I am an imposter.

Wiesel was indeed an impostor, for he wanted to ingratiate himself with Mauriac in the hope the aging Frenchman would be able to help him to find a publisher for a French version of his Yiddish novel, *Un di velv hot geshvign*, which was scheduled to appear a few months later, in November 1955, in Argentina.

Wiesel’s comments on this first visit supplement Mauriac’s and, on one key point, contradict them. He tells us that, as he listened to Mauriac, he became irritated at what he was hearing. As a Jew, he was indignant at having to listen to a Catholic intellectual compare the Jewish children on the train at Austerlitz Station to Christ. Forgetting the ostensible purpose of his visit, obtaining Mauriac’s introduction to Mendès-France, Wiesel relates that “For the first time in my life I exhibited bad manners.”¹⁰⁹ Before getting up to stomp out of Mauriac’s flat, Wiesel blustered:¹¹⁰

“Sir.” I said, “you speak of Christ. Christians love to speak of him. The passion of Christ, the agony of Christ, the death of Christ. In your religion, that is all you speak of. Well, I want you to know that ten years ago, not very far from here, I knew Jewish children every one of whom suffered a thousand times more, six million times more, than Christ on the cross. And we don’t speak about them. Can you understand that, sir? We don’t speak about them.”

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 29: “‘Voulez-vous mardi ou mercredi prochain?’ m’a-t-il demandé dans sa voix rauque en consultant son agenda, ‘En début d’après-midi, est-ce que cela vous va?’”

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*: “Si cela m’allait? ‘Oui. Merci.’ J’aurais accepté n’importe quelle date. Je me sentis rougir. J’aimais l’œuvre du grand romancier, mais je n’avais nullement l’intention de l’interroger sur ses personnages, ni sur sa technique, ni sur sa vie. Imposteur, me dis-je. Je suis un imposteur.”

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 17f: “Pour la première fois de ma vie, je manquai de manières.”

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 18: “Vous parlez du Christ. Les chrétiens aiment en parler. La passion du Christ, l’agonie du Christ, la mort du Christ. Dans votre religion, il ne s’agit que de cela. Et bien, sachez qu’il y a dix ans, pas trop loin d’ici, j’ai connu des enfants juifs dont chacun avait souffert mille fois plus, six millions de fois plus que le Christ sur la croix. Et nous n’en parlons pas. Pouvez-vous comprendre cela, Maître? Nous n’en parlons pas.”

In recounting this outburst, Wiesel displayed the bad manners he would later show with regard to popes and presidents, knowing full well that his “Auschwitz dividend” (*dividende d’Auschwitz*) would provide the necessary cover.¹¹¹ At this point, Wiesel arose and walked out on Mauriac without even saying goodbye. As he waited for the elevator in the hallway, Mauriac hastened after him. The guilt-ridden Catholic approached Wiesel and, “with an infinitely humble gesture the aged writer was touching my arm, asking me to come back.”¹¹²

Back inside, Mauriac sat sobbing as Wiesel began to tell his story. Wiesel describes him as follows:¹¹³

Motionless, his hands knotted over his crossed legs, a fixed smile on his lips, wordlessly, never taking his eyes off me, he wept and wept. The tears were streaming down his face, and he did nothing to stop them, to wipe them away.

Wiesel writes that he also felt uneasy. After all, what was he doing crashing into this man’s life and causing all this distress? He too felt guilty:¹¹⁴

This exemplary man, whose behavior had been irreproachable during the Occupation, this man of heart and conscience, what right had I to come and disturb him?

Wiesel even felt guilty over alienating Mauriac from his own feelings of love for Christ. He tells us:¹¹⁵

And then, inexcusable insolence on my part, on whose behalf had I allowed myself to cause him uneasiness and pain by detracting from his love for someone who, for him, represented Love?

Although these lines are perhaps among the most touching that Wiesel has ever written, they obscure the fact that his very pretext for barging into Mauriac’s life – to obtain from him an introduction to Mendès-France – was itself an outrageous lie. After all, Mauriac’s 1955 “*Bloc-Notes*” column makes no mention of this issue, and there exists no record that Mauriac ever tried to bring the two men together. In fact, Mauriac’s version of

¹¹¹ Elie Wiesel, *...et la mer n’est pas remplie* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 167-171. The idea of an “Auschwitz dividend,” first articulated by Jean-Marie Domenach, is a very valuable one, for it helps us to understand why some self-designated “survivors,” like Wiesel, behave the way they do. In a word, because of their experiences in the camps, they act as if they are entitled both to monetary compensation and the right to behave in an uncivil and rude manner.

¹¹² Wiesel, *Un juif*, 18: “[...] d’un geste infiniment délicat, le vieil écrivain me toucha le bras et me pria de revenir.”

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 18: “Immobile, les mains nouées sur les genoux croisés, un sourire figé autour des lèvres, sans dire un mot, sans me quitter des yeux, il pleurait et pleurait. Les larmes lui coulaient le long du visage et il ne faisait rien pour les arrêter, pour les essuyer.”

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18f.: “Cet homme irréprochable pendant l’occupation, cet homme de cœur et de conscience, de quel droit étais-je venu le déranger?”

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 19: “Et puis, l’insolence inexcusable de ma part, au nom de quoi m’étais-je permis de le troubler, de le peiner en amoindrissant son amour pour celui qui, pour lui, représentait l’amour?”

the event makes it clear that from the very beginning of the interview Wiesel insisted upon discussing the war years, not PMF.

Once his tears stopped, Mauriac wanted to know everything about Wiesel's sufferings. Wiesel has claimed that he refused to tell him, due to a vow he had made after the war to give himself ten years of silence in order to digest his sufferings before speaking and writing about them. (The decade-long vow would have been in force if the first meeting had occurred in 1954, but not for the actual date as recorded in Mauriac's "*Bloc-Notes*" article.) This claim contradicts Mauriac's version of events, given above, in which he speaks of Wiesel having told him he saw all his relatives killed at Auschwitz. In fact, the "ten-year vow of silence" is another one of Wiesel's fabrications, for he had already been working on his book for several years before he met Mauriac. Holocaust theologian Naomi Seidman, citing the Yiddish version of *La Nuit*, puts it this way:¹¹⁶

Eliezer began to write not ten years after the event of the Holocaust but immediately upon liberation, as the first expression of his mental and physical recovery.

Thus, Wiesel had completed his Yiddish book well before coming to see Mauriac, who, he hoped, would help him to find a publisher for it. Wiesel writes that, as he got up to leave, Mauriac encouraged him to record his experiences for posterity. On the way to the elevator, Mauriac impressed on him his duty to speak out, chastising Wiesel for his vow of silence:¹¹⁷

You are wrong not to speak. [...] Listen to the old man that I am: you have to speak [about your experiences], you also have to speak [in addition to writing about them].

In other words, according to Wiesel's 1977 version of their first meeting, at that point – because of the alleged "ten-year vow of silence" – he had not yet written anything, even in Yiddish. Thanks to Mauriac's exhortation, Wiesel would have us believe, he began to write furiously and, a year later, was able to show the old man a manuscript. He ends his account by writing:¹¹⁸

One year later I sent him the manuscript of Night, written under the seal of memory and silence.

¹¹⁶ Naomi Seidman, "Elie Wiesel and the Scandal of Jewish Rage," *Jewish Social Studies*, 3 (Fall, 1996), 7.

¹¹⁷ Wiesel, *Un juif*, 19: "Vous avez tort de ne pas en parler. [...] Ecoutez donc le vieillard que je suis: il faut parler – il faut parler *aussi* [...]"

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19: "Une année après, je lui fis parvenir le manuscrit de *La Nuit*, écrit sous le signe du silence et de la fidélité."

Why the Difference of One Year Matters

One year's difference between meetings might seem trivial, but it is of enormous significance, as I shall explain. In his 1977 *Un juif aujourd'hui*, Wiesel first propagated the myth that he wrote *La Nuit* in Paris between 1954 and 1955, only after Mauriac had encouraged him to put his experiences of the war in writing. This claim is an outright lie. Wiesel had two reasons for telling it. First, he had already written the original version of the book in Yiddish,¹¹⁹ and submitted it for publication before even meeting Mauriac in May 1955. His second reason for lying was to prop up his claimed "ten-year vow of silence" after the war. Even if, as Seidman assures us, Wiesel had been working on a book in the first days after liberation, it would have been impossible for him to meet Mauriac in mid-1955, decide to write the book, and then have it published in Yiddish in November of that year. Thus, when Wiesel claimed that he first met Mauriac in 1954, representing that he had sought him out as a conduit to Prime Minister Mendès-France, who was out of power by the next year, he was in effect allowing himself an extra year to account for the production of his book. Despite the clear evidence of a first meeting of the two men in Mauriac's "*Bloc-Notes*" column on May 14, 1955, Wiesel's lie went unchallenged for years.

Wiesel was quite explicit in *Un juif aujourd'hui* about his telling Mauriac at their first meeting that he had not yet begun to write:¹²⁰

I can't, I can't talk about it. He wanted to know why I hadn't written about all that stuff. I answered that I had forbidden myself to do so. He wanted to know why; so I told him. And, again, he sat there thinking.

Although Wiesel said nothing in *Un juif aujourd'hui* about the pre-existence of a Yiddish version of his book, he had, a year earlier, revealed for the first time to the gentile world that there was also a Yiddish version of *La Nuit*, telling Harry Cargas: "I wrote *Night* first in Yiddish in 1955."¹²¹ In other words, the existence of the Yiddish version of Wiesel's novel had for all practical purposes been suppressed for some twenty years, from 1955 until 1976. When Wiesel actually wrote the book remains open to conjecture, but it is probable that it had already been accepted for publication in Yiddish before he barged into Mauriac's life in May 1955. The book was then translated, shortened and condensed in French. The identity of the person or persons who helped Wiesel with this initial translation, or what I

¹¹⁹ *New York Times*, December 5, 1985, 17. According to this brief note, the book appeared in Buenos Aires in December 1955. It actually came off the printing presses on November 10, 1955, and appeared shortly thereafter.

¹²⁰ Wiesel, *Un juif*, 19: "Je ne peux pas, je ne peux pas en parler. Il voulut savoir pourquoi je n'avais pas écrit *tout cela*. Je lui répondis que je me l'étais interdit. Il voulut savoir pourquoi; je le lui dis. Et il se remit à méditer."

¹²¹ Cargas, *Conversation*, 88.

call below the “bridge text,” has never been divulged. “Meanwhile,” he tells us, “I met Mauriac and we had many conversations. I couldn’t find a publisher for that book in France or for that matter in America; Mauriac took the manuscript, and he brought it personally to one of his publishers. That was the beginning of my adventure in literature.”¹²²

When the news of the Yiddish version of *La Nuit* emerged after 1976, it was soon evident that Wiesel’s story of meeting Mauriac in 1954 – to gain an introduction to PMF – and of Mauriac’s exhortation to break his vow of silence was untrue. By way of damage control, he launched a new spin on the story in 1985:¹²³

Mauriac was not instrumental in making me write. He was instrumental in making me publish my work. I would have written anyway. It was he who prevailed upon me to publish.

Even here he refused to admit that the book had already been written before he met Mauriac. In his autobiographical *Tous les fleuves*, he made yet another claim: that he wrote the original version in 1954 while traveling on a ship to Brazil:¹²⁴

I spent all my time working on my narrative, in Yiddish, of my years in the concentration camps. [...] My vow of silence will soon come to an end; next year, it will be the tenth anniversary of my liberation.

By the time Wiesel began writing his autobiography in the 1990s, Mauriac’s 1955 newspaper column had apparently been brought to his attention, and the lie that he had first met Mauriac in 1954 exposed. Within Wiesel’s inner circle of admirers, it was P.-M. de Saint Cheron, his authorized biographer in French, who first corrected the record. Of course Saint Cheron was circumspect as to the details of Wiesel’s deceit. He writes:¹²⁵

Their first meeting took place at a reception at the Israeli Embassy, not in 1954, as Wiesel wrote without providing any further information, but at the beginning of May 1955, a date confirmed by Mauriac.

Saint Cheron conveniently omits mentioning Wiesel’s motives in dating that meeting a year earlier: to justify his claim to Mauriac that he had not begun writing about his wartime experiences. Nor does he explain that Wiesel’s intention in falsely dating that first meeting was to deceive his readers. Worse, Saint Cheron, who interviewed Wiesel while writing his authorized biography of the man, admits that he was unable to get the truth

¹²² *Ibid.*, 89.

¹²³ Abrahamson, *Against Silence*, vol. 3, 109.

¹²⁴ Wiesel, *Tous les fleuves*, 302: “Je passe tout mon temps dans ma cabine à rédiger en yiddish mon récit sur les années concentrationnaires [...] Mon vœu de silence arrivera bientôt à son terme: l’an prochain, ce sera le dixième anniversaire de ma libération.”

¹²⁵ Saint Cheron, *Elie Wiesel*, 148: “Leur première rencontre eut lieu au cours d’une réception offerte à l’ambassade d’Israël, non en 1954 comme Wiesel l’écrit sans autre précision, mais début mai 1955, date attestée par Mauriac.”

out of Wiesel about what Mauriac was encouraging him to do: whether “to write the manuscript of *Night* – or to rewrite it from the Yiddish original.”¹²⁶ Jack Kolbert, Wiesel’s other authorized biographer, tells us that the book had already been written in Yiddish when Wiesel met Mauriac, and that he “urged the young Jewish journalist to rewrite his Yiddish opus in French.” Then, according to Kolbert, “Wiesel allowed himself to be persuaded by the great French author, reducing the 888 pages of his Yiddish manuscript to 127 pages of gripping French text.”¹²⁷

Amazingly, in his interview with the so-called Academy of Achievement, now online and most recently updated on September 28, 2010, the mendacious Wiesel turned his back on the admission made in his autobiography that he had written his novel in 1954, a year before the expiration of his vow of silence. He now seems to have returned, for the most part, to the 1977 version of events. Speaking in his usual broken English, he states:¹²⁸

He took me to the elevator and embraced me. And that year, the tenth year, I began writing my narrative. After it was translated from Yiddish into French, I sent it to him. We were very, very close friends until his death. That made me not publish, but write.

Wiesel has a blank check to contradict at any time the already-established facts of his career without any fear of academic or media criticism. In this respect, he truly incarnates the master narrative of the Jewish Holocaust story which, despite its many internal contradictions, is always considered to be true.

Use of Retroactive Continuity to Explain the Genesis of *La Nuit*

The official line now seems to be that Mauriac talked to Wiesel only about rewriting the Yiddish book in French, not writing *La Nuit* from scratch. But this claim undercuts the legend of Wiesel’s “ten-year vow of silence.” It is on this point of contradiction that we can see clearly the connection between the Holocaust myth and other forms of lowbrow popular culture like television series, soap operas, comic books, professional wrestling and similar continuous narratives. In each of these genres, the creators employ a narrative tool known as “retroactive continuity.” Thanks to it,

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 154: “[...] écrire le manuscrit de *La Nuit* – ou le récrire à partir de l’original yiddish.”

¹²⁷ Kolbert, *Worlds*, 29. Kolbert insists that Wiesel compressed the original Yiddish version of the novel from 888 to 127 pages! Seidman, however, disputes this page count, claiming that the comparative page count of the two books is 245 in Yiddish to 158 in French. She comments: “What distinguishes the Yiddish from the French is not so much length as attention to detail, an adherence to that principle of comprehensiveness so valued by the editors of the Polish Jewry series.” (“Elie Wiesel,” 5)

¹²⁸ www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/wie0int-3

they are able to create new episodes that contradict earlier ones, usually through the suppression of earlier characters and events from the narrative if they impede further development of the plot line. There is no problem in such a situation, for they disappear as if they had never existed. Since the Jewish Holocaust tale is essentially a work of fiction, it too must have continual recourse to rewriting through the use of “retroactive continuity.” Thus, a lesser myth like Wiesel’s “ten-year vow of silence” is slowly being deleted from the Holocaust story as if it had never existed. Likewise, numerous more grandiose claims, such as the lampshades made out of human skin, the bars of soap made from Jewish fat, and the four million dead at Auschwitz,¹²⁹ are also slowly being phased out of the official narrative of the Holocaust as if they had never existed.

The Mystery of Mauriac’s Initial Attachment to Wiesel

After getting to know Wiesel and hearing him talk of his life experiences, Mauriac became very attached to Wiesel. Indeed, he had no difficulty in comparing the foreigner from a mysterious background to Jesus himself. When he later dedicated his book *Le fils de l’homme* (*The Son of Man*) to Wiesel in 1958, he called him a “crucified Jewish child.” Unlike Dreyfus, Altermann and Mendès-France, each of whom had been born into highly acculturated Jewish families that were thoroughly integrated into French culture, Wiesel had been raised as a Hasid in a ghetto atmosphere in Eastern Europe. Although he spoke French fluently, his speech was accented, and he had no formal education. Nonetheless, Mauriac embraced him, literally and figuratively, without hesitation. These cultural and class barriers crumbled before the reality of Mauriac’s hidden homosexual life.

Mauriac’s homosexuality, from its awakening during his student days in Paris in 1906 through the rest of his life, is a theme running through his unpublished *journal intime* or private diary. It is unclear how many of these diary entries Mauriac’s son Jean (b. 1925) allowed Jean-Luc Barré to see, but in the end he was only allowed to quote from a limited number of them. As a result of his two-volume biography, however, there can no longer be any doubt about Mauriac’s hidden homosexual desires and behaviors. His obsession, throughout his life, with the beauty of the masculine, not the female, body was the cause of his lifelong interest in meeting young men. Barré writes that Mauriac “understood at an early age that he couldn’t share his secret with anyone, neither with his mother, for fear of the pain it would cause her, nor his brothers, who would be shocked.”¹³⁰

¹²⁹ On the development of claims regarding the Auschwitz death toll, see Robert Faurisson, “How many deaths at Auschwitz?”, *The Revisionist*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2003, 17-23; www.codoh.com/library/document/1424.

¹³⁰ Barré, *François Mauriac*, vol 1, 115: “Il a compris très tôt qu’il ne pourrait partager son

One of Mauriac's lovers was Louis-Gabriel Clayeux, who would later become the part owner and artistic director of the famous Parisian art gallery, la Galerie Maeght. Described by Barré as a *jeune esthète homosexuel* (*François Mauriac*, vol. 1, 459), he was a student in the mid-1930s when he began his affair with the fifty-year-old Mauriac. For the latter, this was his preferred type of relationship. Obsessed as he was with the esthetic beauty of young men's bodies, the thirty-year difference in age between the two remained a key ingredient in his desire. Barré argues that this affair "allowed him to become once again, at about the age of fifty, the 'young man' he had been."¹³¹

Mauriac's obsession also helps to explain why he was so attracted to Wiesel when the latter introduced himself at the Israeli Embassy in 1955. The seventy-year-old Mauriac was not only accustomed to having young men seek his friendship, he also must have found Wiesel to be the physically attractive type he preferred. In addition, his Jewishness enabled Mauriac to conveniently insert him within his personal, philo-Semitic "Jesus, Dreyfus, Altermann, Mendès-France" pantheon. That is why he immediately invited Wiesel to his home and then volunteered to help him publish his book. He wanted at all costs to remain close to this young man. Their close relationship endured until their 1967 breakup over Israel's treatment of the Palestinians.

Although Mauriac was indeed attracted to Wiesel, there is no evidence that there ever existed a truly sexual dimension to this relationship. Strangely, one key to understanding this attraction can be found in Mauriac's belief, for a short time anyway, as adumbrated in the following chapter, that Wiesel was interested in converting to Catholicism. Since Mauriac ardently hoped that this would happen, he was able to project Wiesel as having been "crucified," and situated him "between the two testaments," like John the Baptist. Also, and more obviously, Mauriac probably thought that, in helping this young Jewish writer, he would be atoning for the French state's violation of the civil rights of many Jews during the war years. Misguided, he also probably wanted to compensate for his family's traditional "anti-Semitism."

secret avec personne, ni avec sa mère, par crainte de la faire souffrir, ni avec ses frères pour ne pas les scandaliser."

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 459: "lui permit de redevenir le 'jeune homme' qu'il avait été."

Appendix

Elie Wiesel – the “Symbol of the Shoah”

by Carlo Mattogno

Elie Wiesel in Italy

On 27 January 2010, the tenth “Holocaust Remembrance Day,” Elie Wiesel was invited into Montecitorio Hall, the seat of the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Republic, where he gave a brief speech peppered with fatuous rhetoric and risible nonsense, such as his call to “introduce a bill defining suicide bombings as crimes against humanity,” or his hope that Ahmadinejad “should be arrested and taken before the Hague Court and charged with incitement to crimes against humanity.”



Elie Wiesel with Gianfranco Fini

Wiesel’s most important statements, as we will see, are these:¹

I, the number A-7713, am here to bring you a message about events that happened two thousand years later. [...]

Just this week, seventy five years ago, my father Shlomo, son of Nissel and Eliezer Wiesel, number A-7712, died of starvation and disease in the extermination camp of Buchenwald. (My emphasis)

This is a slightly revised English translation of Carlo Mattogno’s Italian article “Elie Wiesel il ‘simbolo della Shoah,’” Feb. 16, 2015; <http://olodogma.com/wordpress/2015/02/16/0969>

¹ See the transcript in:

www.camera.it/cartellecomuni/Leg16/files/pdf/opuscolo_giorno_della_memoria.pdf

Gianfranco Fini, the president of the Chamber at that time, introduced Wiesel as follows:

This day today is an exceptional event, because it is the third time in the century-old history of the Italian Parliament that a guest speaks solemnly to the Assembly. It is an honor which Elie Wiesel richly deserves, because he really is an exceptional person. In fact, among the survivors of the Nazi concentration camps, he is the most authoritative living witness of the horrors of the Shoah. (My emphasis)

Then he continued:

For decades, Elie Wiesel has been encouraging us in this vital effort not to forget and to advance the cause of human rights and peace in the world through his moral teachings, the energy of his intellectual and human charisma, and the strength of his commitment. [...]
In addition to being an eyewitness of the Holocaust, Wiesel is also a person full of faith and love. (My emphasis)

Is Elie Wiesel an impostor?

In 2007, Nikolaus Michael (aka Miklós) Grüner published a book in English titled *Stolen Identity. Auschwitz Number A-7713*.² Grüner is a Hungarian Jew who was deported from Hungary to Auschwitz in May 1944 (where he received the inmate number A-11104), then transferred to the Monowitz camp and finally evacuated to Buchenwald in January 1945 (where he received the inmate number 120762). In his book, Grüner accuses Elie Wiesel, who received the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1986, of stealing the identity of another Jewish-Hungarian inmate of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, Lazar Wiesel, and also of stealing his memoirs, which he had published in 1956 in Buenos Aires under the name of Elizier Wiesel with the Yiddish title *Un di velt hot geshvign* (*And the World Remained Silent*).

In his book, Grüner declares that at Auschwitz he had made friends with two brothers, Lazar Wiesel, born in 1913, who had the inmate number A-7713, and Abraham Wiesel, born in 1900, with the inmate number A-7712. According to Grüner, Elie Wiesel appropriated the identity of Lazar Wiesel and usurped that of Abraham for his father. Grüner adds that, during a meeting with Elie Wiesel, who had been introduced as his friend Lazar Wiesel, Wiesel refused to show the serial number allegedly tattooed on his forearm. Grüner then researched the matter and discovered that an Elie Wiesel was never interned in a concentration camp, and that he was not included on any official list of deportees.

² self-published by the author; printed in Sweden, Stockholm, 2007; online at www.nazigassings.com/PDFs/StolenIdentity2.pdf.

Grüner's book contains documents of considerable importance, even if the author's interpretation of certain documents can be questioned.

Miklós Grüner's declarations have been repeated many times, but have not caused any major research effort. We will thus scrutinize them critically but soberly.

Grüner's credentials as a former deportee are impeccable. A letter from the Auschwitz Museum of July 7, 2003, addressed to Grüner states that a prisoner Miklós Grüner, a Hungarian Jew born on April 6, 1928, in Nyiregyhaza, received the inmate number A-11104 at Auschwitz. As for Buchenwald, Grüner's name and birthdate show up accurately in a "Concentration Camps Inmates Questionnaire" of the Military Government of Germany. The serial number is recorded by hand on the top left: 1207624 (see Document 1).³

About Elie Wiesel we only know that he claims to have been born in Sighet, Romania, on September 30, 1928, to Shlomo and Sarah Feig, daughter of Dodye Feig, and that he is said to have been deported to Birkenau on May 16, 1944.⁴ As to the father Shlomo, there is no document, and we do not even know the date of his birth.

In the minutes of the trial by the State of California against Eric Hunt on July 8, 2008,⁵ Elie Wiesel made under oath the following statements:

A. French Lanueit, L-A-N-U-E-I-T [La Nuit], and in English Night.

Q. And was Night your first book published in English?

A. Yes.

Q. First book published anywhere, correct?

A. First book published anywhere.

[...]

Q. And is this book Night that you wrote a true account of your experience during World War II?

A. It is a true account. Every word in it is true.

[...]

Q. And what was your – what day were you born in Sighet, Romania?

A. September 30th, 1928.

[...]

Q. And what [number] was tattooed on your left arm?

A. My number was A7713. My father's number was 7712. (emphasis added)

The key persons here are obviously Lazar Wiesel and his alleged father Abraham, who according to Grüner was actually Lazar's brother. Considering the documented age difference of just 13 years, and assuming that this

³ NARA, A 3355, RG 242.

⁴ *Elie Wiesel*, section on "Early life," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elie_Wiesel

⁵ Superior Court of California. County of San Francisco. Before the Honorable Robert Donder, Judge Presiding, Department Number 23. *People of the State of California, Plaintiff, v. Eric Hunt, Defendant*. Testimony of Elie Wiesel, July 8, 2008, pp. 7, 13; cf. <http://kuruc.info/r/6/51815/>.

is correct, then Abraham could indeed hardly have been Lazar's brother. Abraham's and Lazar's internment at Auschwitz and Buchenwald is well documented.

A letter dated 15 May 2002, addressed to Grüner by the Buchenwald *Gedenkstätte* (memorial), contains the following information (see Document 2):⁶

Lazar Wiesel, born on 4 September 1913 at Maromarosziget, arrived at Buchenwald with a transport from Auschwitz (Buchenwald archives, microfilm Auschwitz, p. 41). On this page 41, under entry number 2438, you will find the data on Lazar Wiesel: Buchenwald number 123565, born on 4 September 1913, Auschwitz number A-7713. These data are confirmed by the numerical file card at the camp office [Schreibstube]. Lazar Wiesel appears on the American questionnaire (NARA Washington, RG 242, microfilm 60) with the number 123165 and a different date of birth (4 October 1928); he went to Paris on 16 July 1945 with a convoy of surviving children (Buchenwald archives, 56-6-12, p. 9). Here, however, there is a disagreement with respect to the numerical file card. The Schreibstube file card numbered 123165 was made out for a Slovenian Jewish detainee, Pavel Kun, who died at Buchenwald on 8 March 1945.

The above-mentioned letter from the Auschwitz Museum to Miklós Grüner dated 7 July 2003 states that detainee ID A-7713 appears in a list of the SS Hygiene Institute dated 7 December 1944-Monowitz, and that it contains the following data:

*A-11104 Grüner Miklos, Hungarian Jew, born on 6 April 28 at Nyiregyhaza, El. Tech (electrical technician)
A-7712 Viesel Abram, born on 10 October 1900 at Marmarosz
A-7713 Wiesel Lazar, born on 4 September 1913 in Marmarosziget, Schlosser (locksmith)*

The above-mentioned list, which was published by Grüner,⁷ is not of much help, though, because the header is illegible and the meaning of the document is unclear. It is not even clear to what the date stamp of 7 December 1944 refers, i.e., whether it was a transfer of the listed prisoners to the Monowitz camp or something else.

In a letter dated March 15, 1987, the director of the Auschwitz Museum, Kazimierz Smolen, informed Mrs. Eva Kor, founder of CANDLES (*Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors*), as follows:⁸

2. In the concentration camp of Auschwitz, a Mr. Lazar Weisel [sic] was given A-7713. He was born 4/9/13. He was a Jew from Hungary, born in Marmarosziget. This particular prisoner arrived in Auschwitz 5/24/44. He was there until the end of 1944 in KL Auschwitz III called Monowitz. Towards the end of

⁶ *Stolen Identity*, Figure 11.1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Figures 19.1-3.

⁸ Reproduced at <https://kuruc.info/r/6/51815>

the evacuation he was transferred to KL Buchenwald. He was registered there on the day of 1/26/45.

The inmate file card concerning Lazar Wiesel's stay at the Buchenwald camp has in its upper left hand corner the handwritten entry "Ung. Jude" (Hungarian Jew), in the center, "Ausch. A 7713," i.e. "Auschwitz A-7713," the former Auschwitz ID number, and, on the right, "Gef.-Nr.: 123565," (Detainee number 123565, the new Buchenwald ID number). This detainee was born on 4 September 1913 (Lázár Wiesel's year of birth according to Miklós Grüner) at Maromarosziget and was the son of Szalamo Wiesel, who was at Buchenwald, and of Serena Wiesel née Feig, interned at KL Auschwitz. The stamp "26.1.45 KL. Auschwitz" indicates that Lázár Wiesel was registered at Buchenwald on 26 January 1945 coming from Auschwitz.⁸

Note: Maromarosziget [Máramarosziget in Hungarian], now Sighetu Marmatiei (in Rumanian) is the same place which Elie Wiesel calls Sighet.⁹ The name "Szalamo" is the same as "Shlomo," while "Serena" is phonetically close to "Sarah."

A detainee registration card, probably stemming from the Buchenwald memorial archives, has the following data:¹⁰

123565	
<i>Wiesel, Lazar</i>	<i>Polit.</i>
<i>geb. 4.9.13 Maromarosziget</i>	<i>Ungar</i>
<i>Schlosserlehrling</i>	<i>Jude</i>
<i>26. Januar 1945</i>	

The list of new arrivals of January 26, 1945 (*Zugänge vom 26. Januar 1945*), prepared at Buchenwald on the same day, lists both detainees (see Documents 4f.):¹¹

2438 123565 Lazar Wiesel 4. 9.13 Marmarosziget Schlol.^[12] A 7713

And:

2372 123488 Viezel Abram 10:10:00 Marmaross Schl. A 7712

One document shows that Abraham Wiesel died at Buchenwald February 2, 1945:¹³

Database: Record of Change Buchenwald
Dataset: 9315
Inmate No.: 123488 [A 7712]
Name: Viezel, Abraham
Born: 10.10.00

⁹ *Sighetu Marmatiei*, in: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sighetu_Marma%C5%A3iei

¹⁰ *Stolen Identity*, Figure 7.1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Figures 11.3 & 11.5.

¹² Abbreviation for *Schlosserlehrling*, locksmith apprentice.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Figure 11.4.

In the English version of the article, the title was instead given in Yiddish as *Un di Velt hot Gesvigen (And the World Remained Silent)*.¹⁵

A search for the title in Hungarian gave no result, whereas the Yiddish book is indeed documented. It is registered in the *Bibliography of Yiddish Books on the Catastrophe and Heroism*,¹⁶ no. 549 on p. 81. The entry, in Yiddish, states: Eliezer Wiesel, *Un di velt hot geshvign (And the World Remained Silent)*. Buenos Aires, 1956. Central Association of Polish Jews in Argentina. Series *Das poilische Jidntum*, vol. 117, 252 pages. There is an English translation of this book, which corresponds to chapter VII of *La Nuit*. We will discuss it further along in this article.

Michael Wiesberg provides some noteworthy details on this subject:¹⁷

Wiesel has often mentioned the story of how this book came about. Naomi Seidmann has noted that Wiesel himself, in Alle Flüsse fließen ins Meer [All Rivers Run to the Sea] has drawn attention to the fact that, in 1954, he gave the Argentinian publisher Mark Turkow the original manuscript of "La Nuit," written in Yiddish. According to Wiesel, he never saw it again, but Turkow strongly denies this. This manuscript was published at Buenos Aires in 1955 under the title Und di Velt hat Geshveyn (And the World Remained Silent). Wiesel asserts to have written it in 1954 while on a cruise in Brazil. However, in an interview he declared that it was only in May of 1955, after an encounter with François Mauriac,^[18] that he decided to break his silence. "And in that year [1955], in the tenth year, begins my story. It was then translated from Yiddish into French, and I sent it to him. We were very, very good friends until his death."

Naomi Seidmann, in her research on "La Nuit," brought to light that there are considerable differences between the Yiddish and the French versions, with respect to the length, the tone, the argumentation and the topics treated in the book. She attributes these differences to the influence of Mauriac who can be described as a very particular person

In this respect, hence, the least that can be said is that the origin of the book is quite uncertain and misty. I will return to this question further below.

Is Elie Wiesel a False Witness?

This having been stated, we have yet to establish whether Elie Wiesel is also a false witness on the subject of Auschwitz.

¹⁵ www.henrymakow.com/translated_from_the_hungarian.html.

¹⁶ YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, 1962.

¹⁷ Michael Wiesberg, "Unversöhnlich – Elie Wiesel zum 80," in: *Grundlagen*, Sezession 25, August 2008, p. 25; www.sezession.de/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/wieselberg_unversohnlich-elie-wiesel-zum-80.pdf

¹⁸ François Mauriac wrote the foreword to Elie Wiesel's book.

We will examine his “eye-witness account” as it is set out in his “masterpiece” (Fini), “*La notte*.”¹⁹ As early as 1986, Robert Faurisson wrote an article entitled “Un grand faux témoin: Élie Wiesel”²⁰ (A prominent false witness: Elie Wiesel). More recently, Thomas Kues wrote a further article entitled *Una donnola travestita da agnello*²¹ (A weasel in sheep’s clothing). Both authors approach the subject in general terms. Now the time has come for a more thorough analysis.

We must stress that the overall tone of the account in question is that it tells a tale rather than describing something factual. Elie Wiesel goes to great lengths to avoid any verifiable details, and what he says about Birkenau, about Auschwitz, about Monowitz or about Buchenwald is so vague that his story might have taken place just as easily somewhere in Siberia or in Canada.

Quotes are from Elie Wiesel *Night, His Record of Childhood in the Death Camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald*, Bantam edition (Translated from the French by Stella Rodway), New York 1982.

a) Deportation

Elie Wiesel does not specify the date of his deportation to Auschwitz. His narrative starts, though, with reference to a specific date:

On the Saturday before Pentecost [“Shavu’oth” in the Italian edition], *in the spring sunshine, people strolled, carefree and unheeding, through the swarming streets.* (p. 10)

In 1944, this holiday fell on 28 May 1944,²² a Sunday. The day in question was thus 27 May. The first transport of Jews left Sighet on the following day, hence, on 28 May. “Then, at last, at one o’clock in the afternoon, came the signal to leave” (p. 14). Elie Wiesel then speaks of “Monday” (p. 16), the dawn (p. 16), the day after tomorrow (pp. 15, 16) saying, at the end, “Saturday, the day of rest, was chosen for our expulsion” (p. 19) He then speaks about the traditional Friday evening meal and goes on to say: “The following morning, we marched to the station [...]” (p. 20), which means that the trip to Auschwitz began on Saturday, 3 June 1944.

The duration of the trip is not given, but transports from Hungary usually took three or four days to reach Auschwitz-Birkenau. Elie Wiesel spent the night at Birkenau and was moved to Auschwitz the following day

¹⁹ (Florence: Giuntina, 1986.

²⁰ In: R. Faurisson, *Écrits Révisionnistes (1974-1998)*, vol. II, De 1984 à 1989. Édition privée hors commerce, 1999, pp. 606-610. Online: www.vho.org/aaargh/fran/archFaur/1986-1990/RF861017.htm (French); www.ihr.org/leaflets/wiesel.shtml (English).

²¹ Kues, Thomas, “Elie Wiesel: la donnola travestiata da agnello,” January 28, 2010; <http://andrearancini.blogspot.com/2010/01/elie-wiesel-la-donnola-travestita-da.html>

²² www.hebcal.com/hebcal/?year=1944&v=1&month=5&yt=G&nh=on&nx=on&i=off&vis=on&set=on&c=off&geo=zip&zip=&m=72&cgifields=nx&.cgifields=nh&.s=Get+Calendar

where he was given the number A-7713, which was tattooed on his arm (p. 39). Yet, according to him, “It was a beautiful April day” (p. 37).

This sequence is pure invention. If he did leave Sighet on 3 June 1944, he could not have arrived at Auschwitz in April. Moreover, the ID number A-7713 was given out on 24 May, the day on which 2,000 Hungarian Jews were assigned the numbers A-5729 through A-7728.²³ According to Randolph L. Braham, a Jewish transport left Máramarossziget on 20 May 1944.²⁴ Allowing four days for the journey, this was the transport of Lázár Wiesel who was assigned the ID number A-7713 precisely on 24 May 1944. But it may confidently be assumed that Elie Wiesel was unaware of all these things, as well as of the possibility that they might later be discovered.

b) Arrival at Birkenau

Elie Wiesel writes:

But we had reached a station. Those who were next to the windows told us its name: ‘Auschwitz.’ No one had ever heard that name. (p. 24)

Toward eleven o’clock, the train began to move. We pressed against the windows. The convoy was moving slowly. A quarter of an hour later, it slowed down again. Through the windows we could see barbed wire; we realized that this must be the camp. [...] And as the train stopped, we saw this time that flames were gushing out of a tall chimney into the black sky. (p. 25)

In front of us flames. In the air that smell of burning flesh. It must have been about midnight. We had arrived – at Birkenau, reception centre for Auschwitz (p. 26)

From the spatial point of view, this tale is nonsense. The spur towards Birkenau left the main track at a station, (the so-called “old ramp”) some 500 meters from the camp – as the crow flies – and then ran obliquely to the east of the camp fence. The spur was about 700 meters long.

There were four crematoria at Birkenau, named II, III, IV and V. The chimneys of the crematoria closest to the “old ramp” (II and III) were some 1,400 m away, in a straight line, and the other two (IV and V) about 1,800 meters. Over the last 400 m, the spur ran perpendicularly to the camp fence, which means that Crematoria II and III could not be seen from the windows of the train, being situated straight ahead, as they were. The others were hidden behind at least 12 rows of barracks and had, moreover, two chimneys each (see Document 7).

As far as I know, no other witness ever spoke of having seen the chimneys of the crematoria from the deportation trains, and for good reason.

²³ Liste der Judentransporte, Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau, microfilm no. 727/27.

²⁴ R.L. Braham, *A Magyar Holocaust*. (Budapest/Wilmington: Gondolat/Blackburn International Inc., 1988), p. 514.

Elie Wiesel's arrival at the camp is described only vaguely in his account. He takes great care to skirt any detail that might be verifiable. Aside from the "chimney," which will be discussed later, he speaks only of "barbed wire" (p. 25), then, inside the camp, of "the square" (p. 29), a "ditch" (p. 30), "another and larger ditch" (p. 30), a "barracks" (pp. 31, 32), and "a new barracks" and "another barracks" (p. 34).

There is no mention of all the things which attracted the attention of the real deportees, as is shown in the photographs of the so-called *Auschwitz Album*²⁵ (which were taken a few days after the arrival of Lázár Wiesel's convoy): The entrance building (*Eingangsbäude*) with its archway through which the trains entered the camp, the ramp (the so-called *Judenrampe* or Jewish ramp) with its three railway tracks inside the camp, the fences, the innumerable rows of barracks on either side, the long roads which split the camp lengthwise and crosswise, the drainage ditches, the watch-towers, the water basins for fire-fighting, or Crematoria II and III at the far end of the ramp.

Then the tale becomes a little more specific:

A barrel of petrol at the entrance. Disinfection. Everyone was soaked in it. Then a hot shower. At high speed. As we came out from the water, we were driven outside. More running. Another barracks, the store. Very long tables. Mountains of prison clothes. On we ran. As we passed, trousers, tunic, shirt, and socks were thrown to us. (p. 34)

Again, this is pure invention: At the time, Birkenau had four disinfestation and disinfection installations (*Entwesungs- und Desinfektionsanlagen*). The main one was the so-called *Zentralsauna* (*Entwesungsanlage, Bauwerk 32* (*BW*, building) in the shape of a T near the western fence of the camp with its three hot-air disinfestation chambers (*Heissluftentwesungskammern*), three steam autoclaves (*Dampf-Desinfektionsapparate*), shower hall complete with undressing room and dressing room, barbershop. There were two more such installations, designated as *BW 5a* and *5b*, located in sectors BIb and BIa, similarly furnished with a shower hall, undressing room and dressing room, but one of them had a disinfestation gas chamber working with Zyklon B, the other one had two hot-air disinfestation chambers. Moreover, BIIa, the gypsy camp, had 8 electrical disinfestation devices (*elektrische Entlausungsapparate*).²⁶ In the first three installations, with their undressing rooms (*Auskleideraum*) and dressing rooms (*Ankleideraum*), all stages of the operation took place indoors. The disinfection procedure did not make use of petrol. But of all these things, Elie Wiesel did not have a clue.

²⁵ S. Klarsfeld (ed.), *L'Album d'Auschwitz* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1983).

²⁶ These installations have been well described by Jean-Claude Pressac in: *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*, (New York: The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1989), pp. 53-85.

We should also mention, at this point, the little tale of the “good” detainee, *en vogue* during the 1950s, who went around among the new arrivals, telling them to make themselves older or younger than their real age, in order to avoid being “gassed.” Elie Wiesel, who was not yet 15, was told to say that he was 18, while his father, who was fifty, was advised to say “forty” (p. 28). This is a foolish story, because each transport was accompanied by a transport manifest which contained, *i.a.*, the last name, first name and date of birth for each of the new arrivals, which means that any such calculated deception could be discovered immediately upon registration. It is also nonsense from the point of view of the orthodox holocaust historians, because, according to a publication of the Auschwitz Museum, all children below age 14 were systematically gassed,²⁷ whereas there was no age limit for adults. In the Auschwitz death registers (*Sterbebücher*) for 1943 we have 4,166 entries for persons between 51 and 90 years of age (registers for 1944 have not been found or made accessible).²⁸

c) “The” flaming chimney

Elie Wiesel had no idea how many crematoria there were at Birkenau, what they were like nor where they were located. Even though at one point he speaks of “six crematoria” (p. 64), he always talks about “the” chimney, as if there had been only one, without identifying the crematorium, as if there had been only one. Actually, there were six chimneys at Birkenau: *which one* was spouting flames?

He dwells on a single strange phenomenon: “Do you see that chimney over there? See it? Do you see those flames? (Yes, we did see the flames.)” (p. 28; my emphasis). Now at last we know where the chimney was: “over there”!

From the Birkenau ramp, in May 1944, the chimneys of Crematoria II and III, one for each, were perfectly visible (see Document 9), but, strangely, Elie Wiesel “saw” only one.

The tale of the flaming chimneys was very popular in the 1950s, when Elie Wiesel’s *Night* was published (1958). Nowadays, nobody treats the matter seriously, not even Robert Jan van Pelt, who made an effort to prove that smoke came out of the chimneys of the crematoria... period.²⁹ Actually, there is no technical basis to this tale of flaming chimneys, as I have shown in a specific article.³⁰

²⁷ Franciszek Piper, Teresa Świebocka (eds.), *Auschwitz. Il campo nazista della morte* (Auschwitz: Edizioni del Museo Statale di Auschwitz-Birkenau, 1997), p. 122.

²⁸ Thomas Grotum, Jan Parcer, “EDV-gestützte Auswertung der Sterbeeinträge,” in: Staatliches Museum Auschwitz (ed.), *Sterbebücher von Auschwitz* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1995), vol. 1, p. 248.

²⁹ R.J. van Pelt, *The Case for Auschwitz. Evidence from the Irving Trial* (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 2002), p. 504.

³⁰ “Combustion Experiments with Flesh and Animal Fat on cremations in pits in the al-

d) The “cremation pits”

We have here the most sensational part of his “eye-witness account”:

Not far from us, flames were leaping up from a ditch, gigantic flames. A lorry drew up at the pit and delivered its load – little children. Babies! Yes, I saw it – saw it with my own eyes... those children in the flames. (Is it surprising that I could not sleep after that? Sleep had fled from my eyes.)

So this was where we were going. A little farther on was another and larger ditch for adults.

I pinched my face. Was I still alive? Was I awake? I could not believe it. How could it be possible for them to burn people, children, and for the world to keep silent? No, none of this could be true. It was a nightmare...

Soon I should wake with a start, my heart pounding, and find myself back in the bedroom of my childhood, among my books...

My father’s voice drew me from my thoughts:

‘It’s a shame... a shame that you couldn’t have gone with your mother... I saw several boys of your age going with their mothers...’

His voice was terribly sad. I realized that he did not want to see what they were going to do to me. He did not want to see the burning of his only son.

My forehead was bathed in cold sweat. But I told him that I did not believe that they could burn people in our age, that humanity would never tolerate it...

‘Humanity? Humanity is not concerned with us. Today anything is allowed. Anything is possible, even these crematories...’

His voice was choking.

‘Father,’ I said, ‘if that is so, I don’t want to wait here. I’m going to run to the electric wire. That would be better than slow agony in the flames.’

He did not answer. He was weeping. His body was shaken convulsively. Around us, everyone was weeping. Someone began to recite the Kaddish, the prayer for the dead. I do not know if it has ever happened before, in the long history of the Jews, that people have ever recited the prayer for the dead for themselves.

‘Yitgadal veyitkadach shmé rabai... May His Name be blessed and magnified...’ *Whispered my father.*

For the first time, I felt revolt rise up in me. Why should I bless His name? The Eternal, Lord of the Universe, the All-Powerful and Terrible, was silent. What had I to thank Him for?

We continued our march. We were gradually drawing closer to the ditch, from which an infernal heat was rising. Still twenty steps to go. If I wanted to bring about my own death, this was the moment. Our line had now only fifteen paces to cover. I bit my lips so that my father would not hear my teeth chattering. Ten steps still. Eight. Seven. We marched slowly on, as though following a hearse at our own funeral. Four steps more. Three steps. There it was now, right in front of us, the pit and its flames. I gathered all that was left of my strength, so that I could break from the ranks and throw myself upon the barbed wire. In

the depths of my heart, I bade farewell to my father, to the whole universe; and, in spite of myself, the words formed themselves and issued in a whisper from my lips: Yitgadal veyitkadach shmé rabai... May His Name be blessed and magnified... My heart was bursting. The moment had come. I was face to face with the Angel of Death...

No. Two steps from the pit we were ordered to turn to the left and made to go into a barracks. (pp. 30f.)

Where does all this take place? As always, Elie Wiesel takes care not to furnish any kind of reference point as to the location. According to the orthodox holocaust narrative, the “cremation pits” were located at two sites: one was outside the camp, across from the *Zentralsauna* at the alleged “*Bunker 2*,”³¹ and another was in the yard north of Crematorium V. We must exclude the first site, because otherwise Elie Wiesel would have had to mention their leaving the camp and walking several hundred meters in open terrain.

What about the other site? In my study *Auschwitz: Open Air Incinerations*,³² I have shown, on the basis of an analysis of all available aerial photographs of Birkenau, that the story of the “cremation pits,” as far as their *number*, their *size* or their *purpose* are concerned, is not borne out by the reality on the ground. The *only* documented site of any kind of cremation that may have existed at Birkenau was a space behind Crematorium V, but it covered an area of merely some 50 square meters, as we can see from Document 10.

In contrast to this, if we follow the holocaust propaganda, the alleged extermination of the Hungarian Jews would have required “cremation ditches” with an area of about 6,000 square meters altogether.³³

We must remember, moreover, that in order to reach this point it would have been necessary to pass Crematoria IV and V, which surely would not have escaped the eye of as acute an observer of chimneys as Elie Wiesel – there were four chimneys, after all. What is more, there were no barracks in the vicinity, there was only Crematorium V. Finally, the nearest wire fence against which our witness wanted to throw himself (on the north side) ran along the far side of a drainage ditch.

Wiesel’s tale is not only historically unfounded, it is also absurd, because if Wiesel had really come within two steps of a real “cremation pit” – which would have had to be run at a temperature of about 600°C to be effective – he would have been killed by the intense heat.

The scene of the truck unloading children into a “cremation pit” is also one of the most-ludicrous propaganda arguments of the post-war era. It was

³¹ But no photograph shows the presence of smoke in this area.

³² (Chicago: Theses & Dissertations Press, 2005).

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

illustrated by one of David Olère's drawings in 1947 which was then to inspire a number of later "eye-witnesses" (see Documents 16a & b).³⁴

Wiesel's story thus turns out to be both false and absurd, but it is also a blatant subterfuge: if he and his father had really been "selected" for work, why were they then taken anywhere near the "cremation pit"? So that they would discover the "terrible secret" of Auschwitz and spread their story to other camps?

Regarding Wiesel's route, using a criterion of charitable interpretation, the following should be noted: Inmates slated to be registered walked from the ramp along the *Hauptstrasse* (main street), passed between Crematoria II and III, then turned to the right onto the *Ringstrasse* (perimeter road) and came to the *Zentralsauna*. After disinfection, they continued along the *Ringstrasse*, then turned right and turned onto the *Strasse B* (Avenue B), which passed between Crematoria IV and V, and separated Camp Sector BII from Sector BIII. Because the only small area where smoke can be seen on aerial photographs of the time was located in the northern courtyard of the Crematorium V, which was obscured by a pine grove, Elie Wiesel could not, under any circumstances, have gotten close to it, because there was no road leading to it. If his story were true, the SS escorts would have had to divert the column of prisoners who had left the *Zentralsauna* away from *Strasse B* for a sight-seeing trip in order to see the "cremation pits," and then bring them back onto *Strasse B* a little later.

It is obvious that we have here nothing but a simple subterfuge used by Wiesel to style himself as an "eye-witness" of a horrific but purely fictitious event.

e) The transfer to Auschwitz

After a night spent in a barrack of the gypsy camp, Elie Wiesel was moved to the Auschwitz main camp. Here too, the description is exceedingly vague:

The march had lasted half an hour. Looking around me, I noticed that the barbed wires were behind us. We had left the camp.

It was a beautiful April day. The fragrance of spring was in the air. The sun was setting in the west.

But we had been marching for only a few moments when we saw the barbed wire of another camp. An iron door with the inscription over it:

'Work is liberty!'

Auschwitz. (pp. 37f.)

He does not even seem to have noticed passing through the archway of the Birkenau entrance building. Along the way, he notices nothing, neither the

³⁴ See also my study *Auschwitz – The Case for Sanity: A Historical and Technical Study of Jean-Claude Pressac's "Criminal Traces" and Robert Jan van Pelt's "Convergence of Evidence,"* (Washington, DC: The Barnes Review, 2010), vol. 2, p. 607.

bridge across the railroad tracks, nor the long tree-lined road leading to the main camp. On the other hand, he immediately sees the inscription “*Arbeit macht frei*” (but does not render it in German), as could anyone who ever heard of Auschwitz.

Needless to say that he makes sure not to provide us with an even sketchy description of the new camp. On arrival, he was taken to *Block 17*, about which he does not tell the reader anything, for obvious reasons.

In the afternoon we were made to line up. Three prisoners brought a table and some medical instruments. With the left sleeve rolled up, each person passed in front of the table. The three ‘veterans,’ with needles in their hands, engraved a number on our left arms. I became A-7713. (p. 39.)

Even this facet is false. I have already spoken of the fraudulent ID number. Here, Tadeusz Iwasko informs us that

The new arrivals (Zugang) were taken to the bathhouses which, at Auschwitz I, were located in Block no. 26.³⁵

Elie Wiesel keeps quiet about all the preparatory operations prior to admission, which he is obviously unfamiliar with. Iwasko writes about it:³⁶

Registration took place immediately after the bath and the consignment of the clothes; it involved the filling-out of a form (Häftlings-Personalbogen) giving personal data and the address of the nearest relatives. [...] The detainee was then assigned a serial number which would be used instead of his name throughout his stay at the camp. Registration ended with this number being tattooed on his lower left arm.

Wiesel goes on to speak of the evening roll call:

Tens of thousands of prisoners stood in rows while the SS checked their numbers. (p. 39; my emphasis)

The Auschwitz camp strength, however, was far lower. On 12 July 1944, the camp held about 14,400 detainees.³⁷

f) The transfer to Monowitz

After having spent three weeks at Auschwitz (p. 41), Elie Wiesel was transferred to the Buna camp (p. 43), also called Auschwitz III, at Monowitz. Here, again, we have no verifiable particulars.³⁸ What few details he gives us are all fanciful. He starts out right away with a contradiction:

Our convoy included a few children ten and twelve years old. (p. 45)

Perhaps these youngsters, too, had told the Germans that they were eighteen years of age, so that they would be spared the gas chambers?

³⁵ Piper, Świebocka, *Auschwitz*, p. 52.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³⁷ D. Czech, *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau 1939-1945* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1989), p. 821.

³⁸ Except the mention of the barrack of the camp orchestra.

Then “[...] we were installed in two tents” (p. 45), as if Monowitz did not have the 60 barracks which Primo Levi told us about as follows:³⁹

Our Lager is a square of about six hundred yards in length, surrounded by two fences of barbed wire, the inner one carrying a high tension current. It consists of sixty wooden huts, which are called Blocks, ten of which are in construction. In addition, there is the body of the kitchens, which are in brick; an experimental farm, run by a detachment of privileged Häftlinge; the huts with the showers and the latrines, one for each group of six or eight Blocks. Besides these, certain Blocks are reserved for specific purposes. First of all, a group of eight, at the extreme eastern end of the camp, forms the infirmary and clinic; then there is Block 24 which is the Krätzeblock, reserved for infectious skin diseases; Block 7 which no ordinary Häftling has ever entered, reserved for the “Prominenz,” that is, the aristocracy, the internees holding the highest posts; Block 47, reserved for the Reichsdeutsche (the Aryan Germans, ‘politicals’ or criminals); Block 49, for the Kapos alone; Block 12, half of which, for use of the Reichsdeutsche and the Kapos, serves as canteen, that is, a distribution centre for tobacco, insect powder and occasionally other articles; Block 37, which formed the Quartermaster’s office and the Office for Work; and finally, Block 29, which always has its windows closed as it is the Frauenblock, the camp brothel, served by Polish Häftling girls, and reserved for the Reichsdeutsche.

When compared to this text, Elie Wiesel’s non-description can only be characterized as pathetic.

When he spoke at Montecitorio, Elie Wiesel boasted of having known Primo Levi:⁴⁰

At a certain point, both of us were assigned to the same barrack, but he was not there during the death-march towards the [railroad] cars which took us to Buchenwald, he stayed in the hospital. (My emphasis)

However, Primo Levi was assigned to *Block 30*,⁴¹ then to *Block 45*,⁴² and finally to *Block 48*.⁴³ Which *Block* was Wiesel’s? The answer is not as simple as that. Initially, Wiesel speaks of “the orchestra block”⁴⁴ which was, indeed, “near the door[!?] of the camp” (p. 47), then he mentions *Block 36* a couple of times – “With all my might I began to run to block 36” (p. 69), “I ran to block 36” (p. 72) – without telling us whether he was actually lodged there. Finally he says clearly that he stayed in *Block 57* (p. 80). In fact, Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi were never housed in the same barrack. A

³⁹ Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity* (re-titled edition of *If This Is a Man*) (New York: Collier, 1961), p. 27.

⁴⁰ www.camera.it/cartellecomuni/Leg16/files/pdf/opuscolo_giorno_della_memoria.pdf

⁴¹ Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz, op.cit.*, p. 33.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁴⁴ The *Block* for the orchestra was not counted with the other barracks of the camp, numbered 1 through 60.

little white lie right in the middle of Montecitorio, right smack in the face of so many listeners!

The little tale of ripping out gold teeth from the mouths of living detainees (p. 49) and the ensuing closure of the dental station (*Zahnstation*, p. 50) is unfounded. Gold teeth were removed from corpses, and the *Zahnstation*, located in *Block 15* and run by the SS, was never closed down.

Elie Wiesel then goes on to tell us about a detainee “selected” for death in the “gas chamber”:

When the selection came, he was condemned in advance, offering his own neck to the executioner. All he asked of us was:

“In three days I shall no longer be here... Say the Kaddish for me.”

We promised him. In three days’ time, when we saw the smoke rising from the chimney, we would think of him. Ten of us would gather together and hold a special service. All his friends would say the Kaddish.

Then he went off toward the hospital, his step steadier, not looking back. An ambulance was waiting to take him to Birkenau. (p. 73; my emphasis)

Our “eye witness” had either forgotten that he was at Monowitz where there was no crematorium or had such a keen eye that he could see the smoke from “the chimney” (one of six, the choice is yours) at Birkenau, something that would be rather improbable in view of the fact that the two camps were 5 km apart as the crow flies, and the town of Auschwitz stood between them.

Also, sending an ambulance to take *one* detainee to the gas chamber would really be an example of “*Sonderbehandlung*“, a very “special treatment”!

On the subject of “selections,” Elie Wiesel asserts that “the notorious Dr. Mengele” was present at one of them (p. 68). But Mengele was *Lagerarzt* of the gypsy camp (BIIE) at Birkenau, and certainly had other duties than to go to Monowitz and carry out “selections” there. Mengele, incidentally, is the only physician mentioned by Elie Wiesel, and is also the one who received him at Birkenau (p. 29). The name is very well known among those who never even came near Auschwitz.

Our eye-witness even mentions an occurrence that one can verify: an Allied air-raid. It took place “one Sunday” (p. 56). He remembers the day very well because he had decided “[...] to stay in bed late in the morning” (p. 56). “The raid lasted over an hour” (p. 57), and he comments:

To see the whole works [la fabbrica in the Italian edition, p. 62] go up in fire – what revenge! (p. 57)

In reality, the raid took place on 13 September 1944, which was a Wednesday; it lasted 13 minutes, from 11:17 through 11:30 a.m., and destroyed only part of the installations. Actually, at Monowitz there was not only one plant but quite a few.

We will not go into minor silly statements, such as the death sentence pronounced “in the name of Himmler [...]” (p. 59), and move on to his stay at the camp hospital (probably inspired by Primo Levi’s account). It took place “in mid-January” when his right foot swelled up because of chilblains, and he had to be operated on. He had to move into the hospital, and immediately noticed that “it was indeed true that the hospital was very small [...]” (p. 75). Actually, it consisted of *only* nine *Blocks*, two for recovery (13 and 22), two for surgery (14 and 16), one for internal medicine and dentistry (15), two for internal medicine (17 and 19), one for outpatients and reception (18), and one for infectious diseases.⁴⁵

In January 1945, 1,645 inmates were hospitalized at the Monowitz hospital (running numbers from 17,009 to 18,653). Needless to say, Elie Wiesel is not on this list, and there isn’t even a single inmate with an inmate ID number starting with A.⁴⁶

g) The transfer to Buchenwald

We do not have to go into the motivations for Wiesel’s decision to leave with the Germans rather than wait for the Soviets to arrive, because, in its literary context, it is psychologically explained by the (unfounded) fear that all those remaining behind in the camp would be shot.

Leaving aside all the vicissitudes of the evacuation march itself and the ride on the train, we will only consider the details of the arrival at Buchenwald, keeping in mind only the duration of the whole trip: three days’ stay at Gleiwitz (p. 91), plus one day for the march from Monowitz, and “ten days, ten nights of travelling” (p. 95) for a total of at least 14 days.

But during an interview in January 1995, Wiesel said:⁴⁷

We were evacuated on January 18 [1945]. On the 19th we were loaded on a train, that is, into open cars.

Since the detainees boarded the train in Gleiwitz, this happened both on January 19 and 22, 1945.

On arrival at Buchenwald we have the usual fogginess – no part of the camp can be identified in any way. Wiesel speaks of showers on “the third day after our arrival at Buchenwald” (p. 102), but avoids any kind of detail regarding the registration procedure.

In the above-mentioned interview he merely repeats this:⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Irena Strzelecka, Piotr Setkiewicz, “Bau, Ausbau und Entwicklung des KL Auschwitz und seiner Nebenlager,” in: W. Długoborski, F. Piper, *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Studien zur Geschichte des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslager Auschwitz* (Auschwitz: Verlag des Staatlichen Museums Auschwitz-Birkenau, 1999), Bd. I, p. 128.

⁴⁶ NI-10186, pp. 219-269.

⁴⁷ Jorge Semprun, Elie Wiesel, “Unüberbrückbare Erinnerungen. Ein Zwiegespräch zwischen Jorge Semprun und Elie Wiesel,” in: *Werkstatt Geschichte*, no. 13, 1996, p. 51.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 52

And we were welcomed. I remember it was already night. Finally to the shower. It was the small camp, and to me the small camp was initially almost worse than Auschwitz.

We have already seen that Miklós Grüner and Lázár Wiesel, who really did go to Buchenwald, were assigned the ID numbers 120762 and 123565, respectively.

If Elie Wiesel had in any manner wanted to speak of the registration which he had to go through like everyone else, he obviously would have had to say something about *two* ID numbers: his own and his father's. Worse still, there is neither a record of a person by the name of Elie (or Eliezer) Wiesel nor of any Shlomo Wiesel as his father in the Buchenwald files.

In his book Elie Wiesel stated that his father was ill with dysentery (p. 102) and told about his suffering until he died:

Then I had to go to bed. I climbed into my bunk, above my father, who was still alive. It was January 28, 1945.

I awoke on January 29 at dawn. In my father's place lay another invalid. They must have taken him away before dawn and carried him to the crematory. (pp. 106)

In the above-mentioned interview he told a different story instead:⁴⁸

It was the end of January. I remember that we were sprayed with water in front of the quarantine block with icy water. We turned into blocks of ice. I stood next to my father. And then suddenly my father was no more. My father had died.

Let us take a look at the account of his arrival at Buchenwald to see whether it agrees with the documents.

He states that he went to take a shower "on the third day after our arrival at Buchenwald" (p. 102); then "a week went by like this" (p. 104), and that it was then "January 28, 1945" (p. 106), which means that he had arrived at Buchenwald ten days earlier, on January 18, and hence must have left Monowitz two weeks before that, on January 4, reaching Gleiwitz three days later and starting the train ride on the 8th.

This chronology is inconsistent with what Wiesel writes about his last days at Monowitz, though: "Toward the middle of January, my right foot began to swell [...]. I went to have it examined." (p. 74) "The doctor came to tell me that the operation would be the next day" (p. 75). "Two days after the operation" (p. 76) he was told that "Tomorrow [...] the camp will set out" (p. 77), and so they did (p. 80). This would put the day he left the camp four days after "the middle of January", around January 19.

Actually, there were three convoys of deportees from the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex which went to Buchenwald in January of 1945:⁴⁹

Departure	Arrival	ID numbers	Number of detainees
18 January	22 January	117195-119418	2,224
18 January	23 January	119419-120337	919
18 January	26 January	120348-124274	3,927

No convoy left on January 8 (or on the 19th or 22nd), and no convoy took longer than 8 days to arrive. The one arriving on 26 January had both Lázár Wiesel and Miklós Grüner on board, as we can see from the ID numbers assigned to them – 120762 and 123565.

The sixth chapter of *Un di velt hot geshvign*, which is entitled *Der metim-zug* (The train of the dead), is very similar to the seventh chapter of *Night* (the account of the journey from Gleiwitz to Buchenwald).⁵⁰ The two texts are very similar, except that in the first book the number of detainees loaded into Elie Wiesel's car is not 100 (pp. 92, 98) but 120.⁵¹ Moreover, there is a mention here of the number of cars on the train: 20.⁵² On the other hand, the number of detainees in Elie Wiesel's car still alive on arrival at Buchenwald is the same in both: 12 (p. 98).⁵¹ This means that, in this car, there was a mortality of 88 or 90%, respectively. But the entire convoy would have had a similar death rate.⁵³

The journey lasted ten interminable days and nights. Each day claimed its toll of victims and each night paid its homage to the Angel of Death.

On the day of the arrival at Buchenwald, there were 40 deaths.⁵¹

Thus, initially there would have been $(20 \times (110 \pm 10) =) 2,200 \pm 200$ detainees altogether on this train, with most of them dying on the way.

On the other hand, it is known from the train manifests that the transport which reached Buchenwald on 26 January comprised, on departure, exactly 3,987 detainees.⁵⁴ If 3,927 of them were registered at Buchenwald on arrival, then there had been 60 deaths along the way, or a mortality of 1.5%.

Taking all these aspects into account, one can see that, regarding the journey from Gleiwitz to Buchenwald, neither the description given in *Night* nor the one in *Un di velt hot geshvign* can be true.

⁴⁹ Het Nederlandsche Roode Kruis, *Auschwitz*, Deel VI, 's-Gravenhage, 1952, p. 39.

⁵⁰ This chapter has been translated into English by Moshe Spiegel under the title "The Death Train," in: Jacob Glatstein, Israel Knox, Samuel Margoshes (eds.), *Anthology of Holocaust Literature*, A Temple Book (New York: Atheneum, 1968), pp. 3-10.

⁵¹ *Un di velt hot geshvign*, p. 217.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 216; the English translation just has "infinitely long" (p. 92).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁵⁴ Andrzej Strzelecki, *Endphase des KL Auschwitz* (Auschwitz: Verlag Staatliches Museum in Oswiecim-Brzezinka, 1995), pp. 338f. Reproduction of two pages of the original transport manifest.

The story, or more exactly the non-story, of Elie Wiesel's alleged presence at Buchenwald is further proof that his story is completely invented, for in his book he jumps within half a page from events which allegedly occurred on January 29, 1945 (p. 106), to those of April 5 (p. 107)! Wiesel writes there:

I was transferred to the children's block, where there were six hundred of us.

The Yiddish version reads as follows:⁵⁵

I was transferred to the children's block (Kinder-Block) no. 66, where there were about 600 children.

This block, as we shall see, is important for an accurate interpretation of the famous photograph taken on April 16, 1945.

In short, Elie Wiesel was never interned either at Birkenau, or at Auschwitz, or at Monowitz, or at Buchenwald.

Considering all this, Elie Wiesel's extreme reluctance to show his alleged serial number may be taken as a confession.

The Enigma of Lázár Wiesel

The letter by the Buchenwald Museum (*Gedenkstätte*) to Miklós Grüner of May 15, 2002, mentions a Lázár Wiesel, born on October 4, 1928, who was registered at Buchenwald with the ID number 123165. This results from a survey of the U.S. Military Government in Germany conducted in the Buchenwald camp (see Document 11).

This detainee was born at Máromarossziget on 4 October 1928, he was a student, was arrested on 16 April 1944 and interned at Auschwitz and Monowitz. According to the Buchenwald *Gedenkstätte*, he was sent to Paris on 16 July 1945 with a convoy of surviving children and is registered on the respective list. Is this Lázár Wiesel the writer Elie Wiesel?

We see right away that the dates of birth are not identical: Lázár was born on 4 October 1928, Elie on 30 September of the same year. Since Lázár Wiesel, by his own hand, signed the questionnaire mentioned above – using the last name “Wiesel” – we may exclude an error as far as the date of his birth is concerned.

The second important point is that the Auschwitz ID number of this Lázár Wiesel is not known, but it could not have been A-7713 in any case, because at the Auschwitz Museum there is only one ID number A-7713 in the men's series, assigned to Lazar Wiesel, born on 4 September 1913. What is more, on the transport manifest for the transport from Auschwitz to Buchenwald there is only one Lazar Wiesel, the one born on 4 September

⁵⁵ *Un di velt hot geshvign*, p. 239.

1913 and having the Auschwitz ID number A-7713. Where did Lázár Wiesel come from? And what connection is there between Lazar Wiesel and Lázár Wiesel or Lazar Vizel who have such similar record data (except for the dates of birth)?

At the moment, we cannot answer these questions.

To complicate matters even further, there is also a birth certificate of the “Central National Record Office” of Romania dated November 27, 1996, in the name of Lazar Vizel, born in Sighet on September 30, 1928, as a child of Solomon Vizel and Sura Feig. We will return to this record later.

The third point is the fact that the date for Lázár Wiesel’s arrest – April 16, 1944 – does not agree with that of Elie Wiesel’s: after May 27, 1944, as we have seen earlier.

The fourth point is the Buchenwald ID number; if Elie Wiesel is indeed Lázár Wiesel, why did he not mention the ID number 123165?

Even the name is significant. It is true that Lazar is a diminutive of Eliezer, but this name in Yiddish sounds like אליעזר (Eliezer), while Lazar is לייזער (Leizer) or לאזער (Lozer). Why did the alleged Elie Wiesel at Buchenwald sign his name as Lázár? And why did he never indicate his ID number for this camp?

Lázár Wiesel’s Buchenwald ID number fits into the range of numbers assigned on 26 January 1945 to the convoy of 3,927 detainees arriving from Auschwitz: 120348 – 124274. It does not follow, however, that Lázár Wiesel was included in this list.

Actually, the question is even more complicated than that, because we have yet a third detainee, assuming that Lázár Wiesel and Lazar Vizel are the same person.

About this Lázár Wiesel, Grüner has published two important documents. The register of Block 66 contains the following annotation (see Document 12):⁵⁶ “[123]565 Wiesel Lazar U. Jun. A 4”

Grüner explained several times what he believes happened. Lazar Wiesel was assigned to Block 66:⁵⁷

About a week later, I couldn’t believe my own eyes to see Lazar in our Block 66. He told me that Abraham had passed away four days after our arrival at Buchenwald. He made it clear that he had received special permission to join us children in Block 66, since he was so much older than us.

Several pages later he reaffirms Lazar Wiesel’s presence in Block 66.⁵⁸ So far nothing about this is strange. But then he states cryptically and confusingly:⁵⁹

⁵⁶ *Stolen Identity*, Figure 2.1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

From the ARCHIVE'S of Buchenwald: Sabine Stein; 08.12.00 and 15:05:02. Stating that; Lazar Wiesel's identity number; 123565 according to the MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY'S INMATES QUESTIONNAIRE (NARA Washington, RG 242, film 60) were changed to Number 123165 and the date of birth to 04.10.1928. With this new identity he (Lazar Wiesel) left Buchenwald with a HIAS convoy [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society] of 675 survived children (S-414) on the 16th of July 1945 to Paris. However there is a noticeable difference of contents between Lazar Wiesel's original registration card 123565 and the new Number 123 165; which did belong to a Jewish inmate from Slovakia; Pavel Kun, who died on the 8th of March 1945 in Buchenwald.

Later, commenting on the above-mentioned questionnaire, Grüner adds:⁶⁰

Concerning Number:123165 the inmate "Wiesel Lazar" Male; Born October 4. – 1928 Dated Buchenwald: April 22– 1945 to follow.

This Affidavit⁶¹ was drawn up in good faith to benefit Wiesel Lazar who was originally Born 04.09.1913 in Maramorossziget; and his registered Number in Buchenwald is 123565 was changed to 123165 for reason to suit Wiesel Lazar's future and the purpose to benefit his coming future.

In another passage he speaks of the "falsified Buchenwald ID number 123165."⁶²

According to Grüner, therefore, someone (he does not clarify who) would have written "in good faith (?)" false data into the above-mentioned questionnaire. But the reasons he gives are downright silly: how could a change of the date of birth and the inmate number have benefitted Lazar Wiesel's future? And who could seriously hope to pass a man of 32 years off for a boy aged 17? And why would a man of 32 years have been included in the transport of children to Paris?

Grüner published two documents (one page of the list of new arrivals from Auschwitz to Buchenwald on 26 January 1945, and a personal card) showing that the number of 123165 Buchenwald was actually assigned to the prisoner Pavel Kun, born on July 06, 1926, in Velka Bytca, and registered at Auschwitz with the number B-14131. He died on March 8, 1945.⁶³ But why would the number of this inmate have been re-assigned to Lazar Wiesel, "faking" his real number 123565?

One gets the impression that this number, precisely because it had already been assigned to Pavel Kun, is the result of an error: 123I65 instead of 123565. But how can the altered date of birth be explained: October 4, 1928?

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁶¹ This questionnaire can obviously not at all be considered an "affidavit," which would be a sworn statement.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Figures 7, 12.1 and 12.3.

The questionnaire was definitely filled out by one of three British officers listed in the document, which would certainly have been able to make such a mistake, but the person signed the document in his own hand with the last name “Wiesel,” endorsing either this alleged error or this falsification with his signature, so in both cases he would be the imposter.

In this Buchenwald questionnaire, answering the question “Give names and addresses, if known, of three reliable persons living in the locality where you intend to go, who can vouch for you,” Lázár Wiesel wrote:

Ur [Mr.] Ferenc Stark, Ferenc Pollak, Sámuel Jakobovits.

Sámuel Jakobovits was born on October 2, 1926, at Marmarossziget; his mother’s maiden name was Pollak, who may have been related to the inmate Ferenc Pollak mentioned by Lázár Wiesel. Jakobovits was deported to Auschwitz and registered there on May 24, 1944, with the ID number A-5763.⁶⁴ On January 26, 1945, he was transferred to Buchenwald. His file card (Document 14) indicates that his Buchenwald ID number was 121761.

That Lázár Wiesel and Sámuel Jakobovits knew each other is confirmed by Jakobovits’s questionnaire (Document 15) filled out at Buchenwald on April 22, 1945, which lists on the reverse side, as references, the names of Hersch Fischmann, Antal Meisner and, specifically, Lázár Wiesel. The front page also gives the date of Sámuel’s arrest – 16 April 1944, the same date as Lázár Wiesel’s.

This friendship between Lázár Wiesel and the 19-year-old Sámuel Jakobovits (or Jakubowits) and the fact that Lázár chose this Sámuel as one of his three trusted people, supports the hypothesis that this was a boy of 17 years of age choosing as a guarantor a boy of 19, rather than the theory that a 32-year-old man chose a boy of 19 as a sponsor.

It is therefore difficult to accept the explanation that Lazar Wiesel’s personal information was falsified, although this would explain the disappearance of 32-year-old Lazar Wiesel and the appearance of 17-year-old Lázár Wiesel.

Conversely, if these were two different people, then why is Lázár Wiesel, born on October 4, 1928, not on the list of new arrivals from Auschwitz to Buchenwald dated January 26, 1945? And why is he not on the list of Jews deported to Auschwitz?

At this point we are confronted with the enigma of Elie Wiesel. Grüner does not explain how he would have been able to partially take over the personal data of Lazar Wiesel. Perhaps he managed to do that based on documents? Lazar Wiesel, as we have seen earlier, appears in various doc-

⁶⁴ On this day 2,000 Hungarian Jews were in fact registered with the numbers A-5729 through A-7728; hence both Abram Wiesel [A-7712], and Lazar Wiesel [A-7713], born on Sept. 04, 1913, were part of this transport, although according to the questionnaire of April 22, 1945, Lázár Wiesel was born on October 4, 1928.

uments, but his parents' names are mentioned only in his Buchenwald inmate file, where, however, his date of birth is given as September 4, 1913. To impersonate Lazar Wiesel, Elie would have had to know Lázár Wiesel's documentation (especially in relation to his account on Block 66, where he joined the boys), but then why did he never mention either of the ID numbers of Buchenwald (neither 123565 nor 123165)?

The alternative is personal contact. Elie Wiesel may have known Lazar Wiesel and may have built his own history based on Lazar's stories, liberally revised. Fact is that Lazar and Abraham Wiesel lived in the same town of birth as Elie Wiesel, and it is likely that they knew each other. In 1910 this town had about 21,000 inhabitants, some 8,000 of whom were Jews; in 1930 the population had risen to about 27,000.⁶⁵ According to Braham, three transports with a total of 9,601 Jews (3,007 on May 16, 3,104 on May 20, and 3,490 on May 22) were deported from this town to Auschwitz,⁶⁶ hence virtually the entire Jewish community. It is therefore more than likely that Elie knew the two brothers Wiesel and their personal information.

The other possibility, that Elie Wiesel is actually identical with Lazar Wiesel, is already ruled out for chronological reasons, for he would be 102 years old today! On the other hand, why would he have "falsified" his date of birth 4 days backward to September 30, 1928, from the already "falsified" one on October 4, 1928?

On November 27, 1996, the "Central Services of Civil Status" of Romania provided a copy of a birth certificate in the name of a certain Lazar Vizel (see Document 13), born in Sighet to Solomon Vizel and Sura Feig. Even though it bears the date of birth of 30 September 1928,⁶⁷ this does not prove much, because it is unknown to whom it relates, by whom and why this certificate was requested, and especially, even if this refers to Elie Wiesel, it may merely be the result of Wiesel's own initiative, like the entry made by Elie Wiesel on October 8, 2004, about his father in the Central Database of Shoah Victims at Yad Vashem.⁶⁸

Currently, the correspondences between Lázár Wiesel's data and those of the three other Wiesels don't have an unequivocal explanation:

⁶⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sighetu_Marmației.

⁶⁶ R.L. Braham, *A Magyar Holocaust*, *op. cit.*, p. 514.

⁶⁷ See the text at <http://kuruc.info/r/6/51815>, image 8.

⁶⁸ www.yadvashem.org/wps/portal/TY_HON_Welcome

	LAZAR WIESEL	LÁZÁR WIESEL	LAZAR VIZEL	ELIE WIESEL
Auschwitz ID	A-7713	?	?	A-7713
Buchenwald ID	123565	123165	?	?
Date of birth	4 Sept. 1913	4 October 1928	30 Sept. 1928	30 Sept. 1928
Place of birth	Máramarossziget = <i>Sighet</i>	Máramarossziget	<i>Sighet</i>	<i>Sighet</i>
Father's name	Szalamo = <i>Shlomo</i>	?	<i>Solomon</i>	<i>Shlomo</i>
Mother's name	<i>Serena Feig</i>	?	<i>Sura Feig</i>	<i>Sarah Feig</i>
Residence, early 1945	<i>Buchenwald</i>	?	?	<i>Buchenwald</i>

It is beyond question, though, that Elie Wiesel can be neither Lazar Wiesel, nor Lázár Wiesel; the number A-7713 was not assigned to him, but to Lazar Wiesel, while the number A-7712 was not assigned to his father, but to Abram (or Abraham) Viesel (Wiesel).

The charge of identity theft raised against Elie Wiesel by Miklós Grüner does not merely concern Lazar Vazel, but Lázár Wiesel as well: from the former he took the Auschwitz ID number (A-7713), from the latter the stay at Buchenwald and the later transfer to Paris.

As far as his book *La Nuit* is concerned, what is the value of his sworn statement that “it is a true account. Every word in it is true,” in the face of the analysis I presented earlier?

In this respect, it is interesting to note that the book in question does not contain any mention of the alleged “gas chambers” of Auschwitz. Elie Wiesel is perhaps the only self-styled Auschwitz witness not to speak of “gas chambers,” something quite surprising, to say the least, which can – and must – be explained only by him.

Comparing *Night* and *Un di velt hot geshvign*

Grüner claims that Lazar Wiesel, with the new identity of Lázár, drafted a manuscript of 862 pages in Yiddish which the publisher Mark Turkov reduced to 253 pages.⁶⁹ The book, he wrote, was “published in Paris in 1955,”⁷⁰ but then he specifies it was only copyrighted to Eliezer Wiesel, aged 43, of Paris, and was actually published “in 1955, Buenos Aires. The copyright shall prove that he was tattooed in Birkenau with the number A-7713”;⁷¹ at another point Grüner writes “Copyright by Eliezer (in Yid-

⁶⁹ *Stolen Identity*, p. 43. To be precise, the story ends on page 245 with an explicit “Sof” (End). The following pages are advertisements (list of published works in the collection *Der poilische jidntum*, Polish Jewry).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

dish the name means the same meaning as Lazar) Wiesel, Paris 1954.”⁷² Elie Wiesel, usurping the copyright of Lazar Wiesel, published a summary of *Un di velt hot geshvign* in 1958 with the title *La Nuit*.⁷³

However, there is no evidence that the author of the Yiddish book is Lazar Wiesel. Grüner argues this, because on p. 87 of this book the author says he received at Auschwitz the ID number A-7713,⁷⁴ and on p. 239 that he had been housed in Block 66 while in Buchenwald,⁷⁵ but these data are not sufficient to identify with certainty Lazar Wiesel as the author.

The question of “copyright,” contrary to what Grüner seems to believe, says nothing about the book’s author. Indeed, it is unclear why the “copyright” was recorded in Paris, since the book was published in Buenos Aires. If Lazar Wiesel really were the author, he would have protested the blatant plagiarism allegedly perpetrated by Elie Wiesel just two years later, and the publisher, Mark Turkov, would have sued (unless he, or both, had an agreement with Elie Wiesel). But nothing happened.

Grüner seems to believe that the alleged plagiarist Elie Wiesel has somehow distorted the original text of Lazar Wiesel, inventing false stories and exposing authentic veterans to criticism by revisionists. In this regard he writes:⁷⁶

The book “Night” is a masterpiece designed to defame us and our Jewish God, while spreading lies about the Holocaust without any kind of reasonable explanation. To mention the horribly twisted story making account for the huge flames coming from the ditches holding incinerated bodies of men, women and children, without mentioning of course, that they were dead, or that they were under the circumstances, already suffocated to death on arrival at the flaming ditches.

At another point he observes:⁷⁷

I had never seen or even come close to ditches burning with open fire, where people or children could be seen burning on my way to washroom in Birkenau, as written in “Night” by Elie Wiesel.

In practice Grüner accuses Elie Wiesel of having invented at least the story of children being burned alive in “cremation pits,” which I analyzed above.

In fact, the same description can be found in the Yiddish text, as is apparent from a comparison of the two related passages (left column from *Night*, right column from *Un di velt hot geshvign*).⁷⁸

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 46. The book’s production was finished on November 10, 1955, and it was officially released in 1956; it says in its imprint “Copyright by: Eliezer Wiesel, Paris” and is undated.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 46 and Figure 17.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 55f.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 34f.

Not far from us, flames were leaping up from a ditch, gigantic flames. A lorry drew up at the pit and delivered its load – little children. Babies! Yes, I saw it – saw it with my own eyes... those children in the flames. [...]
A little farther on was another and larger ditch for adults. [...] Still twenty steps to go. [...]
Our line had now only fifteen paces to cover. [...]
Ten steps still. Eight. Seven. We marched slowly on, as though following a hearse at our own funeral. Four steps more. Three steps. There it was now, right in front of us, the pit and its flames. [...]
No. Two steps from the pit we were ordered to turn to the left and made to go into a barracks.

A hundred feet from us, flames are rising from a pit; huge flames; they are burning something there: but what?
A truck approaches the pit and automatically dumps its load; suddenly I see what it is transporting, what it dumps into the pit: small children! Babies! Toddlers! Yes, I saw it with my own eyes ... I saw how the children were thrown alive into the flames! [...] We really walk to the fireplace, in the direction of the flaming pit; evidently before [us], a little further; there is another and larger ditch: for adults, for us. [...]
Twenty steps to go. [...] Another fifteen steps. [...] Ten more steps, eight, seven steps [...] four steps.
Here, three steps, here, the pit, here, the flames.
Two steps before the pit we were ordered to turn left, into a bathing barracks.

The Yiddish book contains another passage, which is also rendered in *Night* (p. 28), which further enhances the doubt that Lazar Wiesel is its author. In this passage, an Auschwitz inmate asks the author for his age:⁷⁹

I am not quite 15 years, I said.
The inmate shouted, "No, 18." [...]
Then he asked my father the same question.
"I am 50 years old," my father replied naively.
The detainee was indignant: "No! Not fifty years! Forty!"

Why would Lazar Wiesel have claimed to have been not even 15 years old, when he was actually 31 years old at the time of his arrival at Auschwitz?

The only thing in this tangled story that is actually certain is that Elie Wiesel has lied about the Auschwitz ID numbers assigned to him and to his father, but would he have had a need to do this, if he and his father had actually been deported to Auschwitz? In this case they would have received numbers which would necessarily be different than A-7713 and A-7712. What reason could Elie Wiesel have to not declare their *real* numbers?

Regarding *Stolen Identity*, Grüner, as I pointed out, accuses Elie Wiesel of having discredited the true witnesses with his fantasies, but Grüner isn't

⁷⁸ *La Notte*, pp. 37f.; *Night*, pp. 30f.; *Un di velt hot geshvign*, pp. 67-70.

⁷⁹ *Un di velt hot geshvign*, p. 63; *La Nuit*, p. 54.

much better either. There is no need to dwell on this aspect of Grüner's book. Just one quote from it suffices:⁸⁰

They had saved my skin from being turned into lampshades or from being made into a burning torch. Most of all, I was spared from being turned into a cake of soap bearing the initials R.J.F. (reine jüdische fett)^[81] on it.

The Buchenwald Photograph

Finally, let us go back to the Buchenwald photograph in which Elie Wiesel is said to appear:⁸²

Photo by Harry Miller of slave laborers in the Buchenwald concentration camp after U.S. troops of the 80th Div. entered the camp. Taken on 16 April 1945. Miklos Grüner (Haft-Nr. 120762) is on the left at the bottom, while Elie Wiesel (Haft-Nr. 123565) is on the next row up, seventh along, nearest to the third pillar from the left.

However, the claim that the face of the person depicted in the photograph was that of Eli Wiesel is based only on a statement – on his self-recognition. As for “his” serial number – 123565 – it belonged to Lázár Wiesel!

Wikipedia has this to say about this photograph:⁸³

<i>Author</i>	<i>Unknown or not provided</i>
<i>Title</i>	<i>“These are slave laborers in the Buchenwald concentration camp near Jena; many had died from malnutrition when U.S. troops of the 80th Division entered the camp.”, 04/16/1945</i>
<i>Record creator</i>	<i>Office for Emergency Management. Office of War Information. Overseas Operations Branch. New York Office. News and Features Bureau. (12/17/1942 - 09/15/1945)</i>
<i>Date</i>	<i>16 April 1945</i>
<i>Current location</i>	<i>National Archives and Records Administration, College Park Still Picture Records Section, Special Media Archives Services Division (NWCS-S)</i>
<i>Record ID</i>	<i>This media is available in the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration, cataloged under the ARC Identifier (National Archives Identifier) 535560. [...] – Record group: Record Group 208: Records of the Office of War Information, 1926 – 1951 (ARC identifier: 535) [...]</i>

⁸⁰ *Stolen Identity*. unnumbered page headlined “In Gratitude”.

⁸¹ R.I.F. (rather than R.J.F.) was the acronym for *Reichsstelle für industrielle Fettversorgung*, Imperial Office of Industrial Fat Supplies. This office supplied the German army with cheap soap bearing those initials. Some of the fat used for its production may have come from slaughterhouse waste. The misinterpretation of this acronym as *reines Judenfett* (pure Jewish fat) is based on false rumors and propaganda lies.

⁸² Christopher Hitchens, “Elie Wiesel’s identity crisis,” March 10, 2009; <http://christopherhitchenswatch.blogspot.com/2009/03/elie-wiesels-identity-crisis.html>

⁸³ <http://commons.wikimedia.org>; NARA 535560; see p. 166 for a reproduction in the present study.

The date of 16 April 1945 is thus confirmed officially. In his book, however, Elie Wiesel writes (pp. 108f.):

On April tenth, there were still about twenty thousand of us in the camp, including several hundred children. [...]

Three days after the liberation of Buchenwald I became very ill with food poisoning. I was transferred to the hospital and spent two weeks between life and death.

The camp was liberated on 11 April 1945. Three days later, on 14 April, Elie Wiesel fell ill and was taken to the camp hospital where he stayed “between life and death” for two weeks, *i.e.* until 28 April.

But then, how could he have been in barrack 56 on 16 April, which was obviously a normal housing barrack for grown-up men, hence neither the children’s block nor the hospital? And how could he have signed the questionnaire mentioned above on 22 April as Lázár Wiesel?

Imposture, perjury and false testimony:

Elie Wiesel is indeed the appropriate “Symbol of the Shoah”!

Editor’s Caveat

Relying on the claims of yet another megalomaniac Auschwitz “survivor” – Nikolaus Grüner – to prove that Wiesel is an impostor is a risky business. To see this risk, it suffices to read Grüner’s book, which is replete with bizzare accusations against his host nation Sweden for allegedly having participated in the Nazi Holocaust, even though Sweden was neutral during the war and a haven for many refugees from Nazi-dominated Europe. Grüner also seriously claims that Sweden is in the advanced process of preparing yet another Holocaust!⁸⁴ Add to this that in early 2000 Grüner tried to get Wiesel’s support for his initiative to establish yet another Holocaust memorial organization, appealing to him as a former fellow inmate.⁸⁵ Only after Wiesel kept ignoring him did Grüner start out on his campaign to prove that Wiesel was an impostor. Hence it looks like this could be merely a case of “hell has no fury like a ‘survivor’ scorned.”

Thus, it is all the more important that Carlo Mattogno cross-checked Grüner’s claims and separated the wheat from the chaff. Still, it is possible that Grüner and Mattogno are wrong and that Wiesel was in both Auschwitz and Buchenwald. The wrong date of birth on the Auschwitz and Buchenwald documents allegedly referring to Elie Wiesel may merely be a matter of bureaucratic bungling.

⁸⁴ See for instance his letters to the Swedish government, Figures 1.3 and 1.10, in his book *Stolen Identity*.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Figure 14.

At any rate, the question whether Wiesel is an impostor or not may be interesting, but I think it distracts from the core issue: that Elie Wiesel's statements about so many things – his experiences during the war included – are grossly and obviously untrue, and that he therefore cannot be trusted, regardless of whether he ever was "there."

Documents

MG/PS/G/14

MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY
FRAGENBOGEN FÜR INSASSEN DER KONZENTRATIONSLAGER
CONCENTRATION CAMP INMATES QUESTIONNAIRE

Buchenwald Datum *6 May 1945*
 Name des Konzentrationslagers Date
 Name of Concentration Camp

Buchenwald

Ort Name des Lagerinsassen *Grüner*
 Location Name of Inmate

Zunahme *Grüner* Vorname *Miklós*
 Last First Initial

Geschlecht *male* Geburtsdatum *6 Nov 1918*
 Sex Date of Birth

Staatsangehörigkeit *Hungarian* Glaubensbekenntnis *jeu*
 Nationality Religion

Wohnungsschrift *Agyaegyháza 26. Str. 25.*
 Home Address

Beruf *electrician*
 Occupation

Datum der Verhaftung *26 Nov. 1944* Durch Wen *Hungarian police*
 Date of Arrest By whom

Ort der Verhaftung *Agyaegyháza*
 Place of Arrest

Grund für Verhaftung *being jew*
 Reason for Arrest

Anklage erhoben
 Charges Made

Erkennendes Gericht
 Court Trying Case

Namen der Richter
 Names of Judges

Urteil
 Sentence

Wo in Haft gewesen und wie lange *Buchenwald 6 days, Dora 2 months, Buchenwald 3 months*
 Place of Detention Giving Dates

Einzelheiten betreffend die Haft, im besonderen etwaige grausame Behandlung und Zeit derselben, Gründe hierfür und die Namen der Täter, falls bekannt:
 Give particulars of confinement including any inhumane treatment with dates, reasons and names of perpetrators, if known:
He was beaten at several times by camp leader SS Reichel.

Stellungen, die Sie während der Haft hatten
 Positions held during confinement:

Haben Sie jemals der NSDAP, deren Gliederungen, angeschlossenen Verbänden oder betreuten Organisationen angehört?
 Have you ever belonged to the Nazi Party or any of its affiliated or subordinate organizations?

Falls ja, geben Sie die Organisationen, die Zeit der Mitgliedschaft und die von Ihnen bekleideten Ämter an:
 If so, list Organizations, dates of membership and positions held:

(Bitte weglassen)
 Please omit

Document 1: Questionnaire concerning Miklós Grüner. Buchenwald, 6 May 1945.

Ung. Jude *Wiese 4 2213*

Konzentrationslager _____ Art der Haft: _____ Gef.-Nr.: 23 725

Name und Vorname: WIESEL Lázár

geb.: 4.9.13 zu: Maramarossziget Kom. Maramaros

Wohnort: Maramarossziget Kist. Csaky István

Beruf: Schlösserlehrling Rel.: mas

Staatsangehörigkeit: Ungarn Stand: led.

Name der Eltern: Vater: Kaufm. Szabó W. in Kl. Bu. Rasse: _____

Wohnort: Hinter Sereho W. auf Feld

Name der Ehefrau: Vater in Kl. Bu Rasse: _____

Wohnort: _____

Kinder: _____ Alleiniger Ernährer der Familie oder der Eltern: _____

Vorbildung: _____ **26.1.46 Kl. Anschwitz**

Militärdienstzeit: _____ von — bis _____

Kriegsdienstzeit: Mitglied Reserve von — bis _____

Größe: _____ Nase: _____ Haare: _____ Gestalt: _____

Mund: _____ Bart: _____ Gesicht: _____ Ohren: _____

Sprache: _____ Augen: _____ Zähne: _____

Ansteckende Krankheit oder Gebrauche: _____

Document 2: Personal file card for Lázár Wiesel (KL Buchenwald).

123565

W i e s e l , L a z a r Polit.
 geb. 4.9.13 Maramarossziget Ungar
~~Schlösserlehrling~~ Jude

26. Jan. 1945

Document 3: Buchenwald registration card for Lázár Wiesel, born Sept. 4, 1913

12194	Viezel	Kosch	3. 3.27	Felakownd	Maler	A 5887
12195	Viezel	Inse	19. 7.27	Kelkocvo	Schul. A	6521
12196	Viezel	Abraham	5. 1.29	Maart	Schul. A	5635
12197	Viezel	Viezel	10. 3.28	Botice	Schul. A	5780
12198	Viezel	Jan	4. 9.13	Mazharossiget	Schul. A	7713
12199	Viezel	Josief	14. 3.09	Ujpest	Schul. A	17869
12200	Viezel	Josif	6.10.15	Derecske	Schul. A	11809
12201	Viezel	Josif	26. 3.28	Sagy Kaszina	Schul. A	18715
12202	Viezel	Atvna	24. 8.25	Beregcsanak	Schul. A	1435
12203	Viezel	Josif	25.12.03	Felakownd	Schul. A	5780
12204	Viezel	Jan	22. 1.29	Legrad	Schul. A	18715
12205	Viezel	Marion	14.10.10	Legrad	Schul. A	18715

Document 4: List of new arrivals at the Buchenwald camp on January 26, 1945 (Zugänge vom 26. Januar 1945) prepared on the same day; here with Lazar Wiesel, A 7713, born on Sept. 4, 1913.

12195	Viezel	Manfred	28. 7.30	Nyirlypus	Schul. A	6422
12196	Viezel	Lothar	9. 9.02	Budapest	El. Ing.	A 17736
12197	Viezel	Salva	1. 6.06	Selakovic	Alampn.	A 4910
12198	Viezel	Ismael	16.10.28	Sekelove	Alampn.	A 4060
12199	Viezel	Abram	10.10.01	Marvarek	Schl.	A 7712
12200	Viezel	Sulasson	10. 1.20	Beregcsanak	Schl.	A 5699
12201	Viezel	Josif	11. 8.07	Nis. Versoki	Schul. A	1706
12202	Viezel	Gabriel	23. 9.01	Budapest	Fkard.	A 17437
12203	Viezel	Eugen	12.12.97	Belhian	Art.	A 11709
12204	Viezel	Inse	15. 9.17	Or. Fuzsina	Schl.	18715

Document 5: Same as Document 4, but here with Abram Viezel, A 7712, born on Oct. 10, 1900.

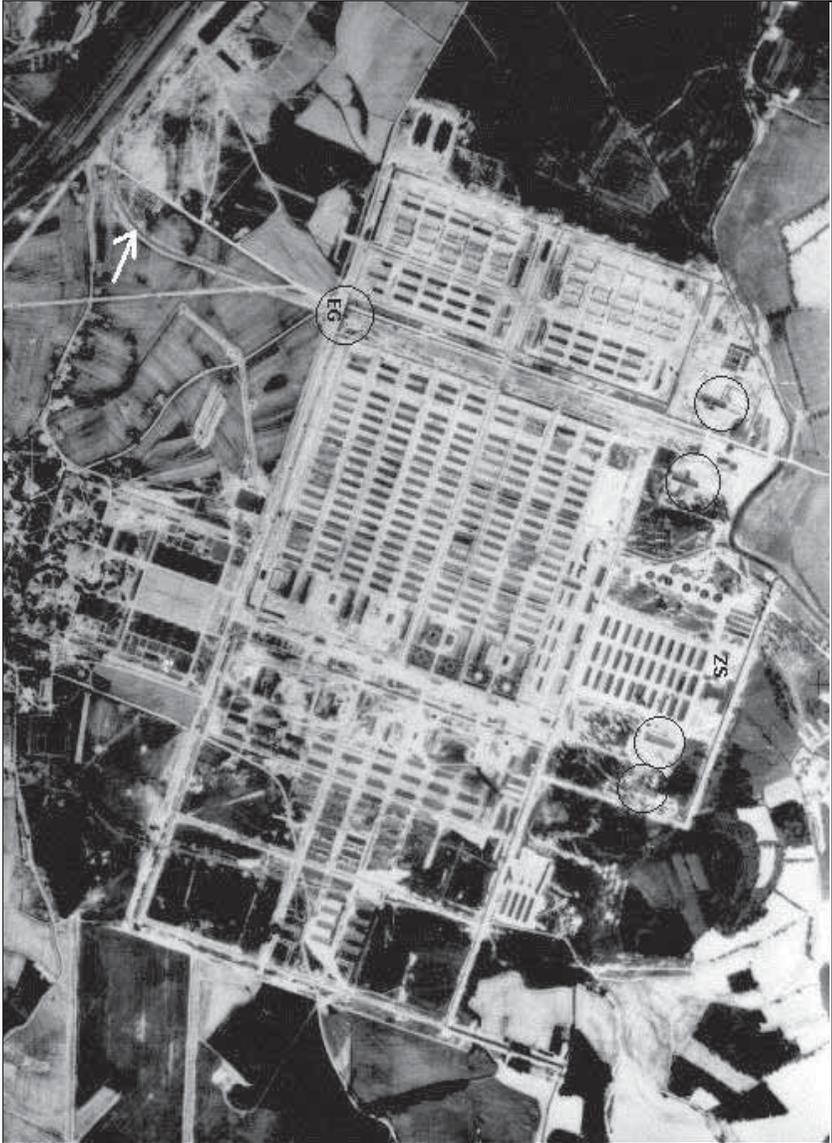
MAR 31 1954

NAME: Viezel, Abram No. 113482 TD.No. 5514

BU	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
MI	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
DA	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
FLO	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85
NZT	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105
MA	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125
V	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145
AUS:															
ZURUCK:															

15 Sept 52 08441 20 W

Document 6: Death certificate of Abram Viezel



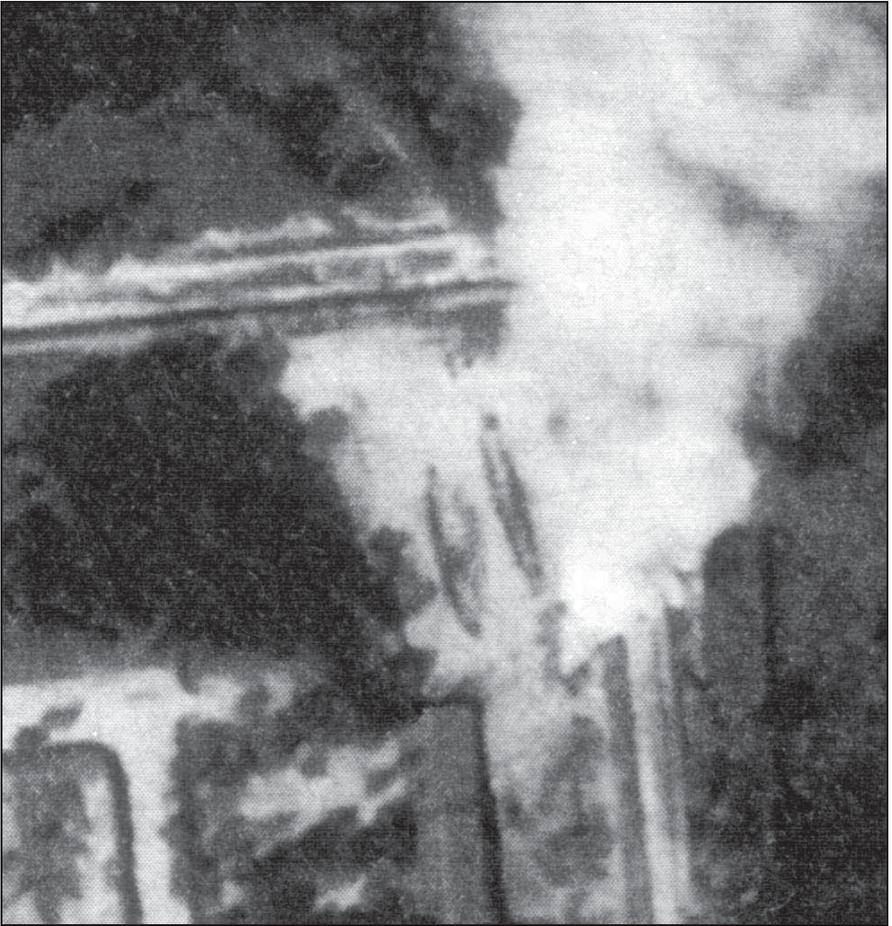
Document 7 (sideways): Aerial photograph of the Birkenau camp, taken on 31 May 1944 (NA, 60PRS/462, D 1508, Exp. 3056). The circles mark the crematoria; (left to right) II, III, IV, V. The building in the shape of a "T," marked "ZS" is the Central Sauna. "EG" is the entrance building (Eingangsbäude). The white arrow (at bottom) marks the railway spur.



Document 8: Entrance building (Eingangsbäude) of the Birkenau camp
© Carlo Mattogno



Document 9: A convoy of Hungarian Jews at the Birkenau camp – end of June 1944. The added arrows point to the chimneys of Crematoria II and III, without “flames” or smoke (from: L’Album d’Auschwitz)



Document 10: Aerial photograph of Birkenau taken on 23 August 1944 – northern yard of Crematorium V. The smoking site is very small, as can be seen from the size of crematorium V which was about 13 meters wide.

10.100 123 165 I.H.

123.165
MG/PS/G/11
74
Q-
S-

MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY
FRAGEBOGEN FÜR INSASSEN DER KONZENTRATIONSLAGER
CONCENTRATION CAMP INMATES QUESTIONNAIRE

Name des Konzentrationslagers *Buchenwald* Datum *April 22, 1945*
Name of Concentration Camp Date

Ort *Buchenwald*
Location

Name des Lagerinsassen *Wiesel* *Lázár*
Name of Inmate Last First Vorname Initial

Geschlecht *m* Geburtsdatum *Oct 4, 1928*
Sex Date of Birth

Staatsangehörigkeit *Rumänien* Glaubensbekenntnis *Jew*
Nationality Religion

Wohnungsanschrift *Alexandrușșiget* *Rumänien*
Home Address

Beruf *Student*
Occupation

Datum der Verhaftung *April 22, 1944* Durch Wen *Police*
Date of Arrest By whom

Ort der Verhaftung *Alexandrușșiget*
Place of Arrest

Grund für Verhaftung *being a Jew*
Reason for Arrest

Anklage erhoben
Charges Made

Erkennendes Gericht
Court Trying Case

Namen der Richter
Names of Judges

Urteil
Sentence

Wo in Haft gewesen und wie lange *Leucherts 11 months, Buchenwald*
Place of Detention Giving Dates

Leistungen etc. (und die Haft, um besonderen etwaige grausame Behandlung und Zeit derselben, Gründe hierfür und die Namen der Täter, falls bekannt)
Give particulars of confinement including any inhumane treatment with dates, reasons and names of perpetrators, if known.

Verfägen, die Sie während der Haft hatten
Positions held during confinement:

Haben Sie jemals der NSDAP, deren Gliederungen, angeschlossenen Verbänden oder betroffenen Organisationen angehört?
Has, you ever belonged to the Nazi Party or any of its affiliated or subordinate organizations?

Falls ja, geben Sie die Organisationen, die Zeit der Mitgliedschaft und die von Ihnen bekleideten Ämter an
If so, list Organizations, dates of membership and positions held:

(Bitte wenden)
(Please turn)

Document 11a & b (next page): Buchenwald questionnaire for Lázár Wiesel dated 22 April 1945 – front and back

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Geben Sie Ihre Militärdienstzeit unter Angabe der Organisationen, Daten und des Dienstgrades an:
List periods of military service giving organizations and dates as well as ranks held:

Ne

Geben Sie Tatsachen an, die Ihre etwaige Gegnerschaft gegen die Nationalsozialisten erkennen lassen, sowie dazugehörige Tätigkeiten:
List any facts indicating anti-Nazi attitude or activities:

Geben Sie Ihre Beschäftigung durch Regierungs- und NSDAP Behörden einschliesslich die Art der Beschäftigung und wie Sie diese Anstellung erhalten haben:
List any employment by governmental or Nazi Party agencies, giving nature of duties and method of appointment:

Waren Sie vom Militärdienst zurückgestellt?
Were you deferred from military service?

Y

Wann?
When?

Warum?
Why?

Sind Sie jemals wegen einer strafbaren Handlung verurteilt worden?
Were you ever convicted of any criminal offense?

Falls ja, geben Sie hier in jedem einzelnen Fall Datum, Gericht, Urteil, die strafbare Handlung und das Datum der Haftentlassung:
If so, give date, court, sentence, offense and date of release in each case:

Wohin beabsichtigen Sie zu gehen, falls Sie aus der Haft entlassen werden?
If released from detention, where do you intend to go?

Minimarscript Romania

Geben Sie die Namen und die Anschriften dreier vertrauenswürdiger Personen an, die in dem Orte wohnen, wohin Sie gehen wollen und die für Sie bürgen können:
Give names and addresses, if known, of three reliable persons living in the locality where you intend to go, who can vouch for you:

*Mr. Jerome Stark
Mrs. Lillian
Shirley Katschowski*

Minimarscript

Geszeichnet
Signed

Walter Lopez

Entscheidung des Ausschusses
Decision of the Board

R e l e a s e

Endgültige Verfügung betreffend den Lagermassen
Final disposal of inmates

Geszeichnet
Signed

Vorsitzender des Ausschusses
Presiding Officer of Board

Rang
Rank

Waffengattung
Branch

Datum
Date

AUSSCHUSS
BOARD

Allen B. Michell
Name
T. A. LUCIOBUZIO

Col.
Rank
Capt.

GSC
Branch
AUG

Leonard M. Bessman
Name

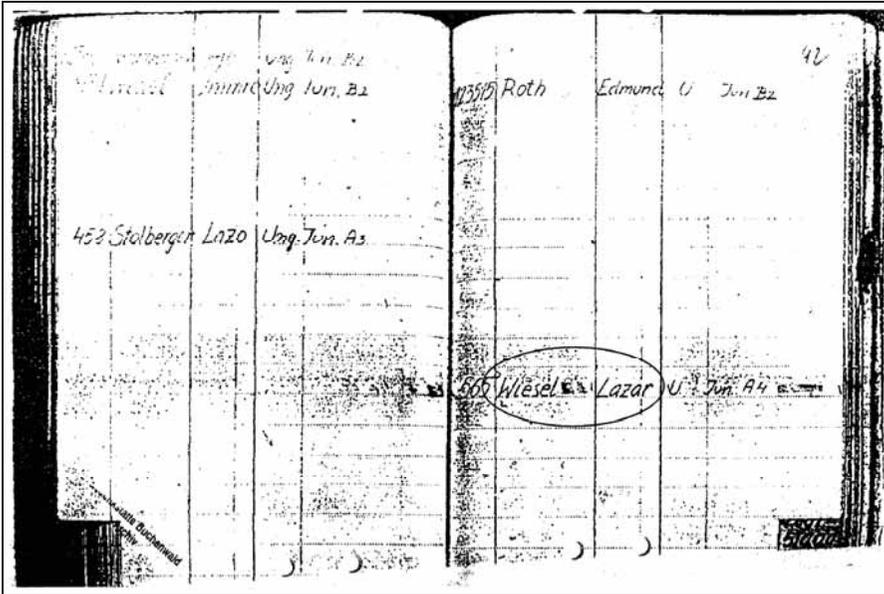
Capt.
Rank

Inf. (CIC)
Branch

Cyrus G. Sturis jr.
Name

1st Lt.
Rank

A.C.
Branch



Document 12: Register of Block 66 at Buchenwald: 405 Wiesel Lazar 4/10/28 Marmarossziget, " [Romanian]

ROMÂNIA
SERVICIUL CENTRAL DE STARE CIVILĂ

CERTIFICAT DE NAȘTERE

Numele de familie	VIZEL	Prenumele	LAZAR
de sex	BĂRBĂTESC	plăcut (1) în localitatea	SIGIET
județul	MARAMUREȘ	în anul	1928 luna
luna	SEPTEMBRIE	zile	30 TREIZECI
la ziua	VIZEL SOLOMON		FEIG SURA
Nașterea s-a înregistrat în localitatea			SIGIET
județul	MARAMUREȘ	în registrul de stare civilă la nr.	511
din anul	1928	luna	SEPTEMBRIE
		ziua	6
Data eliberării certificatului		1996 NOIEMBRIE 27	

SEFUL SERVICIULUI. SERIA E. N. Nr. 170737

Document 13: Romanian Birth Certificate for Lazar Vizel, born on Sept. 30, 1928; issued on No. 27, 1996.

U mde A5763 121761 ✓

Konzentrationslager Art der Haft: Det.-Nr.:

Name und Vorname: Jakubowits Samuel

geb.: 2.10.1926 zu Marmoros Sziget. Kom Marmoros

Wohnort: W.O. Moric Jamo 9

Beruf: Schüler (erlernter Tischler) Rel.: mos:

Staatsangehörigkeit: Ungarn Stand: ledig

Name der Eltern: Vater: Holzhandwerker Ferenc Jakubowits Rasse: Jeh. unbest.

Wohnort: Mutter: Jiter geb. Pollak — 11 —

Name der Ehefrau: _____ Rasse: _____

Wohnort: _____

Kinder: _____ Alleiniger Ernährer der Familie oder der Eltern: _____

Vorbildung: 26/1/45 **26.1.45 KL. Auschwitz**

Militärdienstzeit: _____ von — bis: 4959

Kriegsdienstzeit: _____ von — bis: 26.1.45 - 26.1.45

Größe: _____ Nase: _____ Haare: _____ Oestalt: _____

Mund: _____ Bart: _____ Gesicht: _____ Ohren: _____

Sprache: _____ Augen: _____ Zähne: _____

Document 14: Buchenwald file card of Samuel Jakobovits

18.179 129.761

MG/PS/G/14

MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY
FRAGEBOGEN FÜR INSASSEN DER KONZENTRATIONSLAGER
CONCENTRATION CAMP INMATES QUESTIONNAIRE

Name des Konzentrationslagers Buchenwald Datum April 22 - 1945
Name of Concentration Camp

Ort Buchenwald
Location

Name des Lagerinsassen Jakobovits Sámuel
Name of Inmate Zuname First Vornamen Initial
Last Date of Birth

Geschlecht male Geburtsdatum Oct 2 - 1926
Sex

Staatsangehörigkeit Roumanian Glaubensbekenntnis Jew
Nationality Religion

Wohnungsanschrift Maramureszeit Roumanis
Home Address

Beruf student
Occupation

Datum der Verhaftung April 16 - 1944 Durch Wen Police
Date of Arrest By whom

Ort der Verhaftung Maramureszeit
Place of Arrest

Grund für Verhaftung being a Jew
Reason for Arrest

Anklage erhoben
Charges Made

Erkennendes Gericht
Court Trying Case

Namen der Richter
Names of Judges

Urteil
Sentence 2 days 8 months 4 months

Wo in Haft gewesen und wie lange Auschwitz, Marnowitz, Buchenwald
Place of Detention Giving Dates

Einzelheiten betreffend die Haft, im besonderen etwaige grausame Behandlung und Zeit derselben, Gründe hierfür und die Namen der Täter, falls bekannt:
Give particulars of confinement including any inhumane treatment with dates, reasons and names of perpetrators, if known:

Stellungen, die Sie während der Haft hatten
Positions held during confinement:

Haben Sie jemals der NSDAP, deren Gliederungen, angeschlossenen Verbänden oder betreuten Organisationen angehört?
Have you ever belonged to the Nazi Party or any of its affiliated or subordinate organizations?

Falls ja, geben Sie die Organisationen, die Zeit der Mitgliedschaft und die von Ihnen bekleideten Ämter an:
If so, list Organizations, dates of membership and positions held:

(Bitte wenden)
(Please turn)

Document 15a & b (next page): Buchenwald questionnaire of Sámuel Jakobovits dated 22 April 1945 – front and back

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Geben Sie Ihre Militärdienstzeit unter Angabe der Organisationen, Daten und des Dienststranges an :
List periods of military service giving organizations and dates as well as ranks held :

No

Geben Sie Tatsachen an, die Ihre etwaige Gegnerschaft gegen die Nationalsozialisten erkennen lassen, sowie diesbezügliche Tätigkeiten :
List any facts indicating anti-Nazi attitude or activities :

Geben Sie Ihre Beschäftigung durch Regierungs- und NSDAP Behörden einschliesslich die Art der Beschäftigung und wie Sie diese Anstellung erhalten haben :
List any employment by governmental or Nazi Party agencies, giving nature of duties and method of appointment :

Waren Sie vom Militärdienst zurückgestellt ?
Were you deferred from military service ?

Wann ?
When ?

Warum ?
Why ?

Sind Sie jemals wegen einer strafbaren Handlung verurteilt worden ?
Were you ever convicted of any criminal offense ?

Falls ja, geben Sie hier in jedem einzelnen Fall Datum, Gericht, Urteil, die strafbare Handlung und das Datum der Haftentlassung :
If so, give date, court, sentence, offense and date of release in each case :

Wohin beabsichtigen Sie zu gehen, falls Sie aus der Haft entlassen werden ?
If released from detention, where do you intend to go ?

Maramuresch Romania

Geben Sie die Namen und die Anschriften dreier vertrauenswürdiger Personen an, die in dem Orte wohnen, wohin Sie gehen wollen und die für Sie bürgen können :
Give names and addresses, if known, of three reliable persons living in the locality where you intend to go, who can touch for you :

Mr. Hirsch Fischmann
" Antal Haisner
" Lazar Wiesel

Maramuresch

Gezeichnet / Signed
Jessen/Hamm

Entscheidung des Ausschusses
Decision of the Board

R e l e a s e

Endgültige Verfügung betreffend den Lagerinsassen
Final disposal of inmate

Gezeichnet / Signed

[Handwritten signature]

Vorsitzender des Ausschusses
Presiding Officer of Board

Rang / Rank

Waffengattung / Branch

Datum / Date

5. Mai 1948

AUSSCHUSS / BOARD

Allen B. Michell

Col.

GSC

T.A. Teracuzio

Capt.

AUS

Leonard M. Bessman

Capt.

Inf. (CIC)

Cyrus C. Sturgis jr.

1st Lt.

A.C.



Document 16a & b: The two 1947 drawings by David Olère showing a scene similar to the one described by Wiesel (taken from www.infocenters.co.il/).

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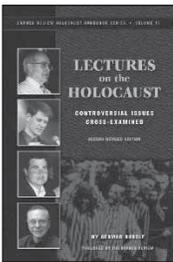
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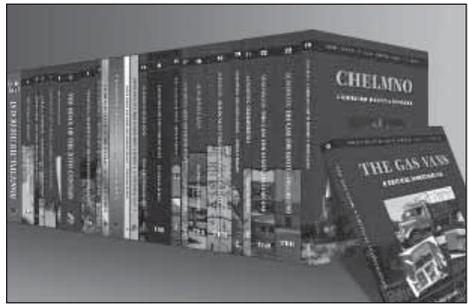
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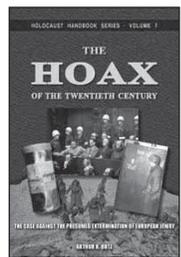
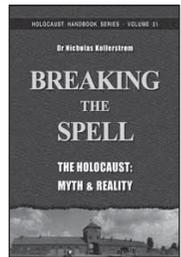


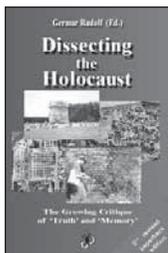
Pictured above are most of the scientific studies that comprise the TBR Holocaust Handbook Series published thus far. More volumes and new editions are constantly in the works.

Berlin headquarters were decrypted. The intercepted data refutes, the orthodox “Holocaust” narrative. It reveals that the Germans were desperate to reduce the death rate in their labor camps, which was caused by catastrophic typhus epidemics. Dr. Kollerstrom, a science historian, has taken these intercepts and a wide array of mostly unchallenged corroborating evidence to show that “witness statements” supporting the human gas chamber narrative clearly clash with the available scientific data. Kollerstrom concludes that the history of the Nazi “Holocaust” has been written by the victors with ulterior motives. It is distorted, exaggerated and largely wrong. With a foreword by Prof. Dr. James Fetzer. 256 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#31)

The Hoax of the Twentieth Century. The Case against the Presumed Extermination of European Jewry. By Arthur R. Butz.

The first writer to analyze the entire Holocaust complex in a precise scientific manner. This book exhibits the overwhelming force of arguments accumulated by the mid-1970s. It continues to be a major historical reference work, frequently cited by prominent personali-





ties. This edition has numerous supplements with new information gathered over the last 35 years. Fourth edition, 524 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#7)

Dissecting the Holocaust. The Growing Critique of 'Truth' and 'Memory.'

Edited by Gernar Rudolf. *Dissecting the Holocaust* applies state-of-the-art scientific technique and classic methods of detection to investigate the alleged murder of millions of Jews by Germans during World War II. In 22 contributions—each of some 30 pages—the 17 authors dissect generally accepted paradigms of the “Holocaust.” It reads as exciting as a crime novel: so many lies, forgeries and deceptions by politicians, historians and scientists are proven. This is the intellectual adventure of the 21st century. Be part of it! Second revised edition. 616 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#1)

The Dissolution of Eastern European Jewry.

By Walter N. Sanning. Six Million Jews died in the Holocaust. Sanning did not take that number at face value, but thoroughly explored European population developments and shifts mainly caused by emigration as well as deportations and evacuations conducted by both Nazis and the Soviets, among other things. The book is based mainly on Jewish, Zionist and mainstream sources. It concludes that a sizeable share of the Jews found missing during local censuses after the Second World War, which were so far counted as “Holocaust victims,” had either emigrated (mainly to Israel or the U.S.) or had been deported by Stalin to Siberian labor camps. 2nd, corrected edition, foreword by A.R. Butz, epilogue by Gernar Rudolf containing important updates; ca. 220 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography (#29).

Air Photo Evidence: World War Two Photos of Alleged Mass Murder Sites Analyzed.

By John C. Ball. During World War Two both German and Allied reconnaissance aircraft took countless air photos of places of tactical and strategic interest in Europe. These photos are prime evidence for the investigation of the Holocaust. Air photos of locations like Auschwitz, Majdanek, Treblinka, Babi Yar etc. permit an insight into what did or did not happen there. John Ball has unearthed many pertinent photos and has thoroughly analyzed them. This book is full of air photo reproductions and schematic drawings explaining them. According to the author, these images refute many of the atrocity claims made by witnesses in connec-

tion with events in the German sphere of influence. 3rd revised and expanded edition. Edited by Gernar Rudolf; with a contribution by Carlo Mattogno. 168 pages, 8.5”x11”, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index (#27).

The Leuchter Reports: Critical Edition.

By Fred Leuchter, Robert Faurisson and Gernar Rudolf. Between 1988 and 1991, U.S. expert on execution technologies Fred Leuchter wrote four detailed reports addressing whether the Third Reich operated homicidal gas chambers. The first report on Auschwitz and Majdanek became world famous. Based on chemical analyses and various technical arguments, Leuchter concluded that the locations investigated “could not have then been, or now be, utilized or seriously considered to function as execution gas chambers.” 3rd edition, 242 pages, b&w illustrations. (#16)

The Giant with Feet of Clay: Raul Hilberg and His Standard Work on the ‘Holocaust.’

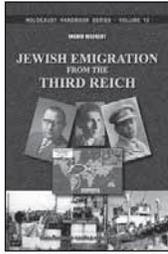
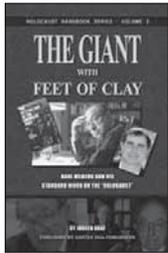
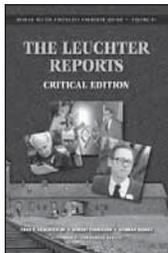
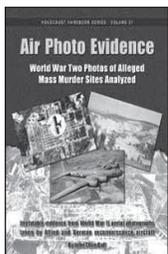
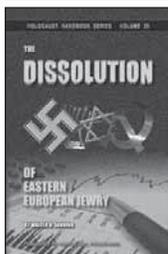
By Jürgen Graf. Raul Hilberg’s major work *The Destruction of European Jewry* is an orthodox standard work on the Holocaust. But what evidence does Hilberg provide to back his thesis that there was a German plan to exterminate Jews, carried out mainly in gas chambers? Jürgen Graf applies the methods of critical analysis to Hilberg’s evidence and examines the results in light of modern historiography. The results of Graf’s critical analysis are devastating for Hilberg. 2nd, corrected edition, 139 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#3)

Jewish Emigration from the Third Reich.

By Ingrid Weckert. Current historical writings about the Third Reich claim state it was difficult for Jews to flee from Nazi persecution. The truth is that Jewish emigration was welcomed by the German authorities. Emigration was not some kind of wild flight, but rather a lawfully determined and regulated matter. Weckert’s booklet elucidates the emigration process in law and policy. She shows that German and Jewish authorities worked closely together. Jews interested in emigrating received detailed advice and offers of help from both sides. 72 pages, index. (#12) (cover shows new reprint edition in preparation)

Inside the Gas Chambers: The Extermination of Mainstream Holocaust Historiography.

By Carlo Mattogno. Neither increased media propaganda or political pressure nor judicial persecution can stifle revisionism. Hence, in early 2011, the Holocaust Orthodoxy published a 400 pp. book (in German)



claiming to refute “revisionist propaganda,” trying again to prove “once and for all” that there were homicidal gas chambers at the camps of Dachau, Natzweiler, Sachsenhausen, Mauthausen, Ravensbrück, Neuengamme, Stutthof... you name them. Mattogno shows with his detailed analysis of this work of propaganda that mainstream Holocaust hagiography is beating around the bush rather than addressing revisionist research results. He exposes their myths, distortions and lies. 268 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography. (#25)

SECTION TWO: Books on Specific Camps

Treblinka: Extermination Camp or Transit Camp? By Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf. It is alleged that at Treblinka in East Poland between 700,000 and 3,000,000 persons were murdered in 1942 and 1943. The weapons used were said to have been stationary and/or mobile gas chambers, fast-acting or slow-acting poison gas, unslaked lime, superheated steam, electricity, diesel exhaust fumes etc. Holocaust historians alleged that bodies were piled as high as multi-storied buildings and burned without a trace, using little or no fuel at all. Graf and Mattogno have now analyzed the origins, logic and technical feasibility of the official version of Treblinka. On the basis of numerous documents they reveal Treblinka’s true identity as a mere transit camp. 365 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#8)

Belzec in Propaganda, Testimonies, Archeological Research and History. By Carlo Mattogno. Witnesses report that between 600,000 and 3 million Jews were murdered in the Belzec camp, located in Poland. Various murder weapons are claimed to have been used: diesel gas; unslaked lime in trains; high voltage; vacuum chambers; etc. The corpses were incinerated on huge pyres without leaving a trace. For those who know the stories about Treblinka this sounds familiar. Thus the author has restricted this study to the aspects which are new compared to Treblinka. In contrast to Treblinka, forensic drillings and excavations were performed at Belzec, the results of which are critically reviewed. 138 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#9)

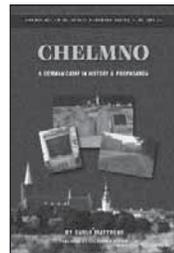
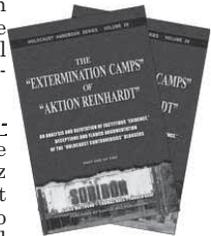
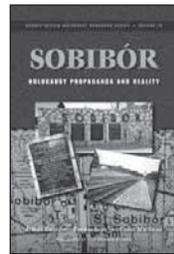
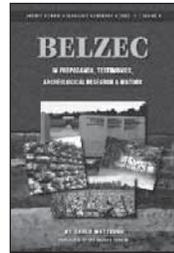
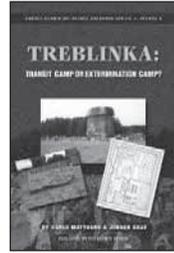
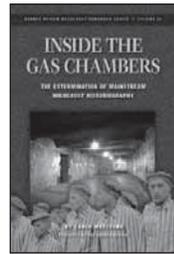
Sobibor: Holocaust Propaganda and Reality. By Jürgen Graf, Thomas Kues and Carlo Mattogno. Between 25,000 and 2 million Jews are said to have been killed in gas chambers in the

Sobibór camp in Poland. The corpses were allegedly buried in mass graves and later incinerated on pyres. This book investigates these claims and shows that they are based on the selective use of contradictory eyewitness testimony. Archeological surveys of the camp in 2000-2001 are analyzed, with fatal results for the extermination camp hypothesis. The book also documents the general National Socialist policy toward Jews, which never included a genocidal “final solution.” 434 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#19)

The “Extermination Camps” of “Aktion Reinhardt”. By Jürgen Graf, Thomas Kues and Carlo Mattogno. In late 2011, several members of the exterminationist *Holocaust Controversies* blog published a study, which allegedly refutes three of our authors’ monographs on the camps Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka (see previous three entries). This tome is their point-by-point response, which makes “mincemeat” out of the bloggers’ attempt at refutation. It requires familiarity with the above-mentioned books and constitutes a comprehensive update and expansion of their themes. 2 volumes, total of 1385 pages, illustrations, bibliography. (#28)

Chelmno: A Camp in History & Propaganda. By Carlo Mattogno. The world’s premier holocaust scholar focuses his microscope on the death camp located in Poland. It was at Chelmno that huge masses of prisoners—as many as 1.3 million—were allegedly rounded up and killed. His book challenges the conventional wisdom of what went on inside Chelmno. Eyewitness statements, forensics reports, coroners’ reports, excavations, crematoria, building plans, U.S. reports, German documents, evacuation efforts, mobile gas vans for homicidal purposes—all are discussed. 191 pages, indexed, illustrated, bibliography. (#23)

The Gas Vans: A Critical Investigation. (A perfect companion to the Chelmno book.) By Santiago Alvarez and Pierre Marais. It is alleged that the Nazis used mobile gas chambers to exterminate 700,000 people. Up until 2011, no thorough monograph had appeared on the topic. Santiago Alvarez has remedied the situation. Are witness statements reliable? Are documents genuine? Where are the murder weapons? Could they have operated as claimed? Where are the corpses? Alvarez has scrutinized all known wartime documents, photos and witness statements on this topic, and has examined the claims made by the mainstream.



390 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#26)

Concentration Camp Majdanek. A Historical and Technical Study. By Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf. Little research had been directed toward Concentration Camp Majdanek in central Poland, even though it is claimed that up to a million Jews were murdered there. The only information available is discredited Polish Communist propaganda. This glaring research gap has finally been filled. After exhaustive research of primary sources, Mattogno and Graf created a monumental study which expertly dissects and repudiates the myth of homicidal gas chambers at Majdanek. They also critically investigated the legend of mass executions of Jews in tank trenches (“Operation Harvest Festival”) and prove them groundless. The authors’ investigations lead to unambiguous conclusions about the camp which are radically different from the official theses. Again they have produced a standard and methodical investigative work, which authentic historiography cannot ignore. Third edition, 350 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#5)

Concentration Camp Stutthof and Its Function in National Socialist Jewish Policy. By Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf. The concentration camp at Stutthof in Prussia has never before been scientifically investigated by Western historians—until now. Third edition, 171 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#4)

SECTION THREE: Auschwitz Studies

Auschwitz: The Case for Sanity. A Historical & Technical Study. By Carlo Mattogno. Prof. Robert van Pelt is considered one of the best mainstream experts on Auschwitz and has been called upon several times in holocaust court cases. His work is cited by many to prove the holocaust happened as mainstream scholars insist. This book is a scholarly response to Prof. van Pelt—and Jean-Claude Pressac. It shows that their studies are heavily flawed. This is a book of prime political and scholarly importance to those looking for the truth about Auschwitz. 2 vols. (370 pages + 390 pages), b&w illustrations, glossary, bibliography, index. (#22)

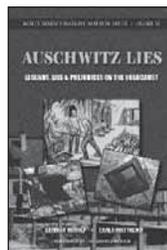
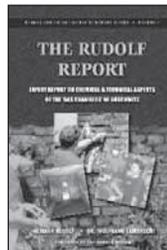
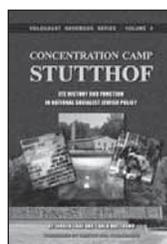
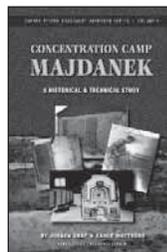
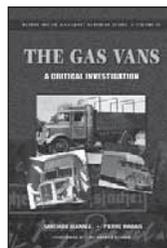
Auschwitz: Plain Facts—A Response to Jean-Claude Pressac. Edited by Germar Rudolf. French pharmacist Jean-Claude Pressac tried to refute recent findings with their own technical methods. For this he was praised by the mainstream, and they proclaimed victory over the “revisionists.” In *Auschwitz: Plain Facts*, Pressac’s works and claims are debunked. 197 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#14)

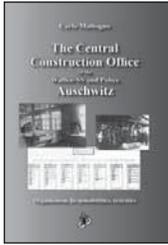
The Rudolf Report. Expert Report on Chemical and Technical Aspects of the ‘Gas Chambers’ of Auschwitz. By Germar Rudolf and Dr. Wolfgang Lambrecht. In 1988, execution expert Fred Leuchter investigated the gas chambers of Auschwitz and Majdanek and concluded that they could not have worked as claimed. Ever since, Leuchter’s work has been attacked. In 1993, Germar Rudolf published a thorough forensic study about the “gas chambers” of Auschwitz. His report irons out the deficiencies of “The Leuchter Report.” Second edition, 457 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#2)

Auschwitz Lies: Legends, Lies and Prejudices on the Holocaust. By Carlo Mattogno and Germar Rudolf. The fallacious research and alleged “refutation” of Revisionist scholars by French biochemist G. Wellers, Polish Prof. J. Markiewicz, chemist Dr. Richard Green, Profs. Zimmerman, M. Shermer and A. Grobman, as well as researchers Keren, McCarthy and Mazal, are exposed for what they are: blatant and easily exposed political lies created to ostracize dissident historians. In this book, facts beat propaganda once again. Second edition, 398 pages, b&w illustrations, index. (#18)

Auschwitz: The Central Construction Office. By Carlo Mattogno. Based upon mostly unpublished German wartime documents, this study describes the history, organization, tasks and procedures of the Central Construction Office of the Waffen-SS and Auschwitz Police. Despite a huge public interest in the camp, next to nothing was really known about this office, which was responsible for the planning and construction of the Auschwitz camp complex, including “the gas chambers.” 182 pages, b&w illustrations, glossary. (#13)

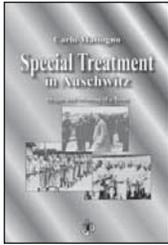
Special Treatment in Auschwitz: Origin and Meaning of a Term. By Carlo Mattogno. When appearing in German wartime documents, terms like “special treatment,” “special action,” and others have been interpreted as



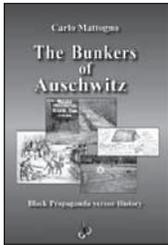


code words for mass murder. The author proves this is not true. 151 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#10)

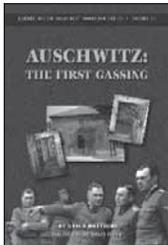
The Bunkers of Auschwitz: Black Propaganda vs. History. By Carlo Mattogno. The bunkers at Auschwitz are claimed to have been the first homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz specifically equipped for this purpose. With the help of original German wartime files, this study shows that these “bunkers” never existed, how the rumors about them evolved as black propaganda created by resistance groups in the camp, how this propaganda was transformed into a false reality. 264 pages, illustrations, bibliography, index. (#11)



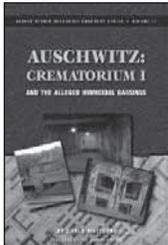
Auschwitz: The First Gassing—Rumor and Reality. By Carlo Mattogno. The first gassing in Auschwitz is claimed to have occurred on Sept. 3, 1941, in a basement room. The accounts reporting it are the archetypes for all later gassing accounts. This study analyzes all available sources about this alleged event. It shows that these sources contradict each other in location, date, preparations, victims etc, rendering it impossible to extract a consistent story. Original wartime documents inflict a final blow. Second edition, 168 pages, b&w illust., bibliography, index. (#20)



Auschwitz: Crematorium I and the Alleged Homicidal Gassings. By Carlo Mattogno. The morgue of Crematorium I in Auschwitz is said to be the first homicidal gas chamber there. This study investigates all statements by witnesses and analyzes hundreds of wartime documents to accurately write a history of that building. Mattogno proves that its morgue was never a homicidal gas chamber, nor could it have worked. 138 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#21)



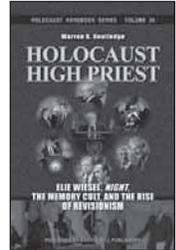
Auschwitz: Open Air Incinerations. By Carlo Mattogno. Hundreds of thousands of corpses of murder victims are claimed to have been incinerated in deep ditches in the Auschwitz concentration camp. This book examines the many testimonies regarding these incinerations and establishes whether these claims were even possible. Using aerial photographs, physical evidence and wartime documents, the author shows that these claims are fiction. A must read. 132 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#17)



The Crematory Furnaces of Auschwitz and Birkenau. By Carlo Mattogno. An exhaustive technical study of cremation technology in general and of the crematory ovens of Auschwitz in particular. Next to the alleged “gas chambers,” these ovens are claimed to have been the main “weapon of crime” said to have destroyed the traces of up to a million murdered individuals. On a sound and thoroughly documented base of technical literature, extant wartime documents and material traces Mattogno reveals the true hygienic function, *i.e.* the benign nature of the crematories of Auschwitz. 2 vols., ca. 900 pp., b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. Projected for 2016 (#24)

SECTION FOUR Witness Critique

Holocaust High Priest: Elie Wiesel, Night, the Memory Cult, and the Rise of Revisionism. By Warren B. Routledge. The first unauthorized biography of Wiesel exposes both his personal deceits and the whole myth of “the six million.” It shows how Zionist control has allowed Wiesel and his fellow extremists to force leaders of many nations, the U.N. and even popes to genuflect before Wiesel as symbolic acts of subordination to World Jewry, while simultaneously forcing school children to submit to Holocaust brainwashing. 468 pages, b&w illust., bibliography, index. (#30)



Further projects include:

Auschwitz: Confessions and Testimonies of the Holocaust. By Jürgen Graf
Commandant of Auschwitz: Rudolf Höss, his torture and his forced confessions. By Carlo Mattogno

Dr. Mengele's Assistant: Miklos Nyiszli's Auschwitz Tales. By Carlo Mattogno

Other planned monographs cover: Phillip Müller, Rudolf Vrba, Henryk Tauber, Yankiel Wiernik, Richard Glazar... Scholars interested in taking on any witness, please get in touch using the contact form at www.codoh.com/contact-us

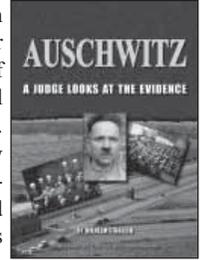
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BOOKS BY AND FROM CASTLE HILL PUBLISHERS

Below please find some of the books published or distributed by Castle Hill Publishers in the United Kingdom. For our current and complete range of products visit our web store at shop.codoh.com.

Wilhelm Stäglich, *Auschwitz: A Judge Looks at the Evidence*

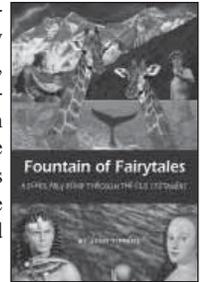
Auschwitz is the epicenter of the Holocaust, where more people are said to have been murdered than anywhere else. At this detention camp the industrialized Nazi mass murder is said to have reached its demonic pinnacle. This narrative is based on a wide range of evidence, the most important of which was presented during two trials: the International Military Tribunal of 1945/46, and the German Auschwitz Trial of 1963-1965 in Frankfurt. The late Wilhelm Stäglich, until the mid-1970s a German judge, has so far been the only *legal* expert to critically analyze this evidence. His research reveals the incredibly scandalous way in which the Allied victors and later the German judicial authorities bent and broke the law in order to come to politically foregone conclusions. Stäglich also exposes the shockingly superficial way in which historians are dealing with the many incongruities and discrepancies of the historical record. Second, corrected and slightly revised edition with a new preface and epilogue.



422 pp., 6"×9", pb, ill.

P. Angel, J. Tiffany: *Fountain of Fairytales: A Scholarly Romp Through the Old Testament*

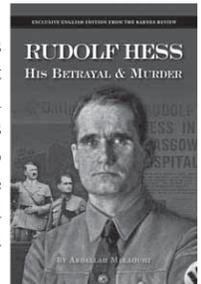
Some say the Old Testament is a collection of valuable parables with no basis in historical fact, while others have made a living of trying to prove that it is an accurate history of early man. *Fountain of Fairytales* takes us on a whirlwind tour of the Old Testament, telling us which stories are pure balderdash and which may have some basis in real archeology and authentic history. And also which tales seem to have been borrowed from other primary cultural sources including the Egyptians. If you want proof the entire Bible is a faithful transcription of the word of God – straight from mouth to Jewish scribe's pen – read no further, for this book is more of a light-hearted yet scholarly tour of the Old Testament, not a dense religio-historical treatise. If you're ready for a tour of the Old Testament like none other, get a copy of *Fountain of Fairytales*.



178 pp. pb, 5.5"×8.5"

Abdallah Melaouhi, *Rudolf Hess. His Betrayal and Murder*

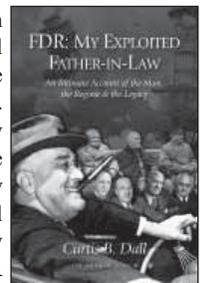
In May 1941, Rudolf Hess, Hitler's right-hand man, flew to England to make peace. His plane crashed, and he was made a prisoner of the Allies and kept in solitary confinement nearly the rest of his life. What truths about the war did Hess possess that were of such danger? The author worked as a male nurse caring for Rudolf Hess from 1982 until his death in 1987 at the Allied Prison in Berlin. Minutes after the murder he was called to the prison. Ask by the author what had happened, an unknown U.S. soldier replied: "The pig is finished; you won't have to work a night shift any longer." What he experienced there, minutely described in this book, proves beyond doubt that Mr. Hess was strangled to death by his Anglo-Saxon captors.



300 pp. pb, 6"×9", ill.

Curtis B. Dall, *FDR: My Exploited Father-in-Law*

The author was FDR's son-in-law and spent much time in the White House. He had an insider's view of who came to see FDR and Eleanor and how often. Dall also was a Wall Street banker and knew the tricks and tactics the financial predators use to deceive the public. The book is loaded with personal anecdotes of the people Dall met during his life. This included such notables as Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, Bernard Baruch, Henry Morgenthau Jr., Harry Dexter White, the Warburgs, Rothschilds, and more. Dall views the stock market crash of October 1929 as "the calculated shearing of the public triggered by the sudden shortage of call money in the New York money market." He views the Federal Reserve and their globalist cheerleaders as being against the interests of Americans. They plan and execute the wars that line their pockets and ravage the world. Dall portrays FDR as a man who began his career as an optimistic ladder-climber and ended up as one of the most manipulated presidents in U.S. history. Reprint with a foreword by Willis A. Carto.

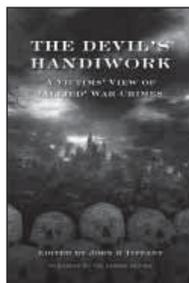


298 pp., 5.5"×8.5", pb

Herbert L. Brown, *The Devil's Handiwork. A Victim's View of "Allied" War Crimes*

An amazing compilation of war crimes committed by the "good guys" against the "bad guys." Many of the events covered in this book are to this day censored or twisted in mainstream history books. Chapters cover: Death camps in the Civil War; concentration camps in the Boer War; The Dresden Massacre – the worst war crime in history; the Ukrainian terror famine; the gruesome harvest in Eastern Europe; the myth of the 6 million; Operation Keelhaul; the Nuremberg Trials; the Katyn Forest Massacre; the Stuttgart Atrocity; bastardizing the Germans after WWII; the use of the atom bomb; Cuba betrayed; the Invasion of Lebanon; the policy of de-Nazification; the Malmedy Trial; the Dachau Trial; the Vinnytsia genocide; crimes during the occupation of Germany; FDR's Great Sedition Trial; the Morgenthau Plan; the propaganda of the Writers War Board; myths of civilian bombings; the Lend-Lease fiasco; truth about Auschwitz; Pearl Harbor; the Soviet genocide across Europe; much more.

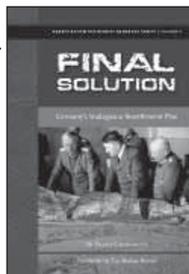
275 pp., 5.5"×8.5", pb



Ralph Grandinetti, *Final Solution. Germany's Madagascar Resettlement Plan*

Everyone "knows" the Germans had a "final solution" for their so-called "Jewish Problem." But Adolf Hitler's final solution did not involve homicidal gas chambers and blazing crematory ovens. Instead, Hitler's final solution offered Jewish leaders the island of Madagascar, back then a French colony. In a meeting with Vichy French Prime Minister Pierre Laval, Laval agreed to turn Madagascar into a new Jewish homeland where, ultimately, all of Europe's 4,000,000 Jews might be settled. This new Madagascar was to be governed by a joint German-French board with representation granted to any government cooperating. What a paradise Madagascar could have become, but instead Zionists insisted on occupying the "Holy Land," where they knew strife and conflict awaited them. What was the Madagascar Plan, and why did it fail? Which world leaders supported it – and which did not? Why was the plan eventually abandoned?

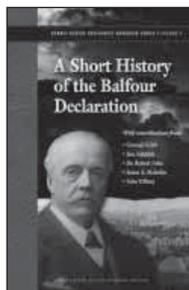
108 pp., 5.5"×8.5", pb



John Tiffany, *A Short History of the Balfour Declaration*

Few have heard of the Balfour Declaration, the history of which is known primarily to students of global affairs. What general knowledge there is surrounding its origins is usually limited to dry accounts in diplomatic histories. But here is a case where truth is stranger than fiction. The issuance of the Balfour Declaration set the stage for American entry into World War I and thereby laid the groundwork for World War II and the many consequential global convulsions that followed. And, ultimately, of course, it's the foundation of the tension in the Middle East today that points toward further war and destruction. Here is the secret history of the Balfour Declaration, laid out in no uncertain terms and devoid of euphemism and political correctness. Those who have any serious desire to understand the sources of world conflict need this precise and candid analysis – the facts – about the behind-the-scenes machinations that brought the Balfour Declaration into being – and why.

118 pp., 5.5"×8.5", pb



Germar Rudolf: *Resistance is Obligatory!*

In 2005 Rudolf, a peaceful dissident and publisher of revisionist literature, was kidnapped by the U.S. government and deported to Germany. There the local lackey regime staged a show trial against him for his historical writings. Rudolf was not permitted to defend his historical opinions, as the German penal law prohibits this. Yet he defended himself anyway: 7 days long Rudolf held a speech in the court room, during which he proved systematically that only the revisionists are scholarly in their attitude, whereas the Holocaust orthodoxy is merely pseudo-scientific. He then explained in detail why it is everyone's obligation to resist, without violence, a government which throws peaceful dissident into dungeons. When Rudolf tried to publish his public defence speech as a book from his prison cell, the public prosecutor initiated a new criminal investigation against him. After his probation time ended in 2011, he dared publish this speech anyway...

376 pp., 6"×9", pb, colour ill.

