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**Atina Grossmann: Jews, Germans, and Allies**

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## Entangled Histories and Close Encounters

AS WE REWRITE the history of the post-1945 years in the aftermath of the political upheavals of 1989, we are only now rediscovering what was amply obvious to contemporaries: that occupied Germany in the immediate postwar period was the unlikely, unloved, and reluctant host to hundreds of thousands of its former victims, housed both inside and outside refugee camps mainly in the American zone and in the American sector of Berlin. A significant number of the millions of people uprooted by war and persecution who remained on western Allied territory as “unrepatriable” displaced persons (DPs) were Jewish survivors of Nazi genocide and involuntary migration—precisely the people both the Allies and the Germans had least expected to have to deal with in the wake of National Socialism’s exterminatory war.

In 1933, at the beginning of the National Socialist regime, Germany counted approximately 500,000 Jews. In 1946/47, some quarter of a million Jews were gathered in Germany, most of them in the American zone. Only about 15,000 of them were German Jews, of whom almost half were in Berlin. Some had endured in hiding or disguised as “Aryans.” Others had survived forced labor as well as death and concentration camps (often elderly survivors from Theresienstadt). Most had managed a precarious aboveground existence in “privileged” mixed marriages or as *Mischlinge* (“partial” Jews). Still others were returned émigrés, many of them now in occupier uniform and serving as translators, interrogators, or civil affairs and cultural officers in all four Allied, and especially the American, armed forces. The majority, however, were Eastern European Jews, now classified by the victors as “displaced persons.” Approximately 90,000 Jews had been liberated by the Allies on German soil, but many died within weeks, leaving about 60,000 or 70,000 survivors.

As the months passed, this remnant was augmented by tens of thousands of Jewish “infiltrates” who poured into the American zone from Eastern Europe. These predominantly Polish Jews constituted three distinct but sometimes overlapping groups. First were the survivors of concentration and labor camps and death marches, who had been freed in Germany but initially returned to their hometowns hoping, generally in vain, to find lost family members or repossess property. The second group encompassed Jews who had survived among the partisans, in hiding, or

“passing” as “Aryans.” Finally, the largest, by a substantial margin—and the least studied—cohort of European survivors of the Final Solution comprised perhaps 200,000 Jews who had been repatriated to Poland from their difficult but life-saving refuge in the Soviet Union and then fled again, from postwar Polish antisemitism. All these Jewish survivors became key elements in the “historic triangle” of Germans, Jews, and Americans that defined postwar western Germany.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the victors also had overlapping and fluid identities. An essential and distinct group among the American occupiers was composed of American Jews: chaplains, officers, and GIs or employees of Jewish relief agencies, notably the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC, the Joint). And some of them, in turn, were themselves European, from Yiddish-speaking Eastern European immigrant families or, in many cases, German and Austrian Jewish refugees who had only recently emigrated and acquired U.S. citizenship through their military service.

This “historic triangle” existed everywhere in the American-occupied zone, but it had a particular meaning in Berlin, the city with which the book begins. Conquered by the Soviets in the chaotic weeks from April 24 to May 14, 1945, Berlin became in the summer of 1945, when first the Americans and British and then the French officially moved in, a multinational polyglot city of border crossers (*Grenzgänger* in popular parlance). Divided into four sectors, it served as a kind of laboratory of international understanding, as U.S. Military Government officials initially preferred to put it, in which the precarious relations among the victorious powers and the management of the incoming refugee tide commanded virtually as much, if not more, attention than the occupied Berliners themselves.<sup>2</sup>

The “greatest pile of rubble in the world” (*grösste[r] Trümmerhaufen der Welt*), as both its residents and its occupiers sarcastically dubbed it,<sup>3</sup> the vanquished Nazi capital was a city of women, refugees, and foreigners. Of a population of some 2,600,000 in May 1945, over 60 percent was female. By August, when the first postwar census counted 2,800,000 residents, Berlin was crowded with returning soldiers and prisoners of war, liberated slave laborers from across Europe, ethnic German expellees and refugees from the East, and repatriated political exiles (especially Communists returning to work with the Soviet Military Administration, SMA). There were Jews emerging from hiding, forced labor or concentration camps, or fleeing renewed persecution in Eastern Europe, and there were also Allied troops (including a highly visible group of former German Jews). Huge numbers (by some estimates as many as half a million) of displaced persons of multiple nationalities were streaming into dozens of transit camps in Berlin.<sup>4</sup> Some 15,000 refugees, mostly ethnic Germans (but also surviving Jews) from Soviet and Polish occupied territories in the East, poured into the city daily. At the same time,

Allied officials struggled to repatriate prisoners of war, concentration camp inmates, and freed foreign laborers—some of the 7.5 million who had been mobilized and coerced into the Nazi war economy before May 1945.<sup>5</sup> By the summer of 1945, the Allies also counted 6,000 to 7,000 Jews (or “partial” Jews) as residents of Berlin. Only a fraction of the 160,000 (out of a total of about 200,000) who had been registered as members of Germany’s largest and most vibrant Jewish community in 1932, they were a significant proportion of the 15,000 German Jews who survived within the entire Reich. Their ranks were soon swelled by the “illegal infiltration” of Polish Jewish refugees for whom Berlin served as a transit station, with stays ranging from a few hours to several years, on their lengthy journey toward new homes outside Europe, principally in the United States and Palestine/Israel.<sup>6</sup>

During this liminal interregnum of four-power occupation and military government from 1945 to 1949,<sup>7</sup> and particularly in the turbulent first two years, defeated Germans, together with hundreds of thousands of their former enemies and victims, became literal border-crossers on the surreal stage of a broken country. This was especially evident in carved-up and bombed-out Berlin. Anti-Nazi journalist Ruth Andreas-Friedrich titled her diary of war’s end *Schauplatz Berlin* (stage set), and Curt Riess, a Berlin Jew who had returned as an American correspondent, depicted his former hometown, with all its cinematic and operatic qualities and still carrying traces of its pre-Nazi Weimar cachet, as “hardly like a city anymore, more like a stage on which the backdrops are just standing around.”<sup>8</sup> Hans Habe, another Jewish refugee in American uniform, wrote—surely reflecting also on his own bizarre position—“Life in general has a strange, unreal, make-believe quality.”<sup>9</sup>

Throughout this period, in Berlin and in the western, particularly American, zones, defeated Germans and surviving Jews lived, as is often remarked, in different worlds on the same terrain, divided by memory and experience. But, regulated and observed by their occupiers, Jews and Germans also continually interacted. They negotiated daily life, and they contested issues of relative victimization, guilt, responsibility, commemoration, and reparations.<sup>10</sup> They debated a possible future for Jews in post-Nazi Germany as well as in Palestine and the rest of the world. Jews perceived their encounters and confrontations with Germans and occupiers, including those related to sex, pregnancy, and childbirth, as a means of resignifying their lives after the catastrophe of the Holocaust, indeed as a certain kind of revenge as well as “life reborn.” By 1946/47, Jewish survivors residing among Germans were marrying and producing babies in record numbers. This difficult, tormented, but highly visible reconstruction of Jewish gendered identities and sexed bodies occurred in continual interaction, not only with the mostly American Allies who

were their protectors and wardens, but also with the Germans who were their neighbors.

In this book I examine these complicated and yet commonplace “close encounters” in everyday life and political discourse in the years immediately after the war and Holocaust. I focus particularly on gendered experiences of the body, of sexuality and reproduction. Precisely because so many of these encounters have been shelved and forgotten, deemed insignificant and discomfiting, by both Jews and Germans, the stories told here are partial and fragmented. They signal how much rich material remains to be mined. Much more research remains to be done, by careful reading of the contemporary press, diaries, and memoirs and by digging in a wide variety of archives, on the local German and DP camp level as well as that of the Military Government and the nongovernmental international aid organizations.<sup>11</sup>

The existence of displaced persons and the “DP problem” in postwar Europe are not new topics for historians. Yet it has been particularly difficult for historians to chronicle or understand adequately the Eastern European and German Jewish experience in occupied Germany during the “DP years” from 1945 to 1949. For both scholars and survivors, these transitional years have generally been bracketed and overshadowed by the preceding tragic drama of war and Holocaust and the subsequent establishment of new communities and the state of Israel. Moreover, the history of the Jewish survivors, like that of any community that has suffered overwhelming losses and lived in transit, is not only their own, itself quite varied and hardly monolithic, but includes that of many other interested and more or less powerful parties. It involves Allied occupation policy and its trajectory from unconditional surrender and denazification to Cold War anticommunism and cooperative reconstruction in western Germany. It includes also British policy toward its mandate in Palestine, U.S. policy on immigration, American Jewish efforts to influence both American and British policies, and Zionist demands and actions for open entry of European survivors to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state. The politics of the Soviet Union and the newly Communist Eastern European nations from which many of the survivors came, and the emerging mandates of the United Nations and international relief organizations, played a role as well.

The problem then is certainly not one of meager sources. As with any “administered group” subject to large bureaucracies such as armies and relief organizations, DP life was methodically and voluminously documented. In a rich essay, Daniel Cohen notes that the DP experience, both Jewish and non-Jewish, crucially shaped the future of international refugee work as well as the development of a novel discourse about human rights. Indeed, many of the men and women directly involved in postwar

relief and rehabilitation efforts published accounts documenting the crisis of the stateless and the displaced in a world of nation-states. But then, as the postwar moment faded, DP history was sidelined. Cohen speaks of the “absence of and the eviction of displaced persons from the ‘frames of remembrance’”—to use Maurice Halbwachs’ famous concept—“that have structured collective memories of World War Two and its aftermath” and their “appropriation” by national narratives, with their own political and emotional as well as intellectual agendas.<sup>12</sup> Since the mid-1990s there has finally been a proliferation of publications, conferences, films, and exhibitions on Jewish DPs, pushed in large part by the efforts of the baby boom “second generation” born in DP camps or communities.<sup>13</sup>

Yet, despite the truly overwhelming amount of historical, sociological, visual, and literary source material, as well as a substantial and ever growing secondary literature, we are just beginning to think about the social, rather than the political, history of Jewish DPs.<sup>14</sup> Historians are faced with a dizzying array of actors and agencies—sponsored by four Allied military occupations and a plethora of nongovernmental humanitarian aid groups—all dealing with a highly mobile, transient, stateless, and traumatized population, and operating on a territory that lacked central or universally legitimate authorities and record keepers. Statistical evidence is notoriously inaccurate, at times wildly so. And given the status of DPs as a stateless “client” population, their official record has been mostly constructed out of reports by those who managed them, rather than the substantial documentation that was created by the DPs themselves.

There has been very little reflection on the interactions, encounters, and confrontations among the different groups of surviving Jews and defeated Germans. If Jewish DPs, German Jews, and non-Jewish DPs all came with their own disparate wartime experiences inside and outside Nazi occupied Europe, the defeated German population was also diverse. It included returning soldiers, prisoners of war, and civilian refugees and expellees arriving from the East who were not considered DPs by the Allies. Furthermore, historians are only beginning to locate the experience of Jewish DPs in relation not only to Germans but also to the—at least initially—much more numerous other DP groups, notably Poles, Balts, and Ukrainians.<sup>15</sup> All these groups had their own gender, age, religious, political, regional, class, and war experience.

Most remarkably, researchers have barely addressed the momentous fact, discussed in chapter 4—and its significance for Jewish DP perceptions of their German surroundings and German perceptions of the Jewish DPs—that the majority of Jewish survivors in Germany actually spent a good part of the war years as refugees in the Soviet Union and not under Nazi occupation. Political and ideological factors, especially the pressures of the Cold War and the dominance of a Zionist-inspired narrative that

subsumed all Jewish DPs under the rubric of the *She'erit Hapletah*, the surviving remnant of European Jewry, have shaped and distorted history and memory. An overarching and often undifferentiated story of “the” Holocaust, its victims and survivors, has effaced the role of the Soviet Union as the site where—with substantial financial support from American Jewish aid organizations—the great majority of Jewish DPs in fact survived the war. The subject of this book then is a fast-moving and bewildering target. Despite the increasing number of relevant publications, many of us researching DP history feel as though we are just beginning, virtually inventing and experimenting with a historiography that will surely be substantially expanded and revised in the next years.<sup>16</sup>

Many of the studies that do exist have come from the fields of Jewish history and Holocaust studies, and until recently some of the most significant have been available only in Hebrew or German. General postwar German history has mostly ignored the presence of living Jews; their story has been told as one of absence, tragic loss, and memorialization. Histories of Jewish survivors in Germany, on the other hand—and there are more and more, especially local studies—have generally treated them as an almost entirely self-enclosed collective, coexisting temporarily and quite separately from Germans, in a kind of extraterritorial enclave.<sup>17</sup> An extensive Israeli historiography has presented DPs and Jewish survivors as part of the contested history of Zionism and the role of Holocaust survivors in the founding of the state.<sup>18</sup>

Studies of American policies toward DPs have tended to focus on their many negative aspects. These were laid out early on in former Immigration Commissioner Earl G. Harrison’s fiercely critical August 1945 report to President Truman on Military Government policy toward survivors, which denounced their continued detention behind barbed wire and famously (and hyperbolically) concluded that “we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them except that we do not exterminate them.” Harrison’s account was preceded and reinforced by the horrified and furious reports American Jewish GIs sent home to their families and congregations. Often instigated by the passionate holiday sermons of army chaplains, their letters described the bedraggled survivors and their neglect by the U.S. military and (at least initially) American-Jewish aid organizations.<sup>19</sup> Understandably, historians have drawn attention both to American antisemitism and to U.S. Military Government tolerance for German hostility toward DPs, especially its apparent increase in the later years of the occupation.<sup>20</sup> These are all important approaches, but contemporary accounts and records, as well as memoirs and oral histories read “against the grain,” can also present a rather different picture of close connections, and regular interactions, not only between Jews and Germans, but also between surviving Jews and their American keepers and protectors.

I come to this topic as a historian of modern Germany. My interest in Jewish survivors derived, at least at the outset, from my work on rape, abortion, and motherhood in Berlin at war's end and my efforts to understand how and why Germans were so convinced after the war that they were the primary victims.<sup>21</sup> The structure of the book, with its beginning focus on the German experience and how it was perceived by Allies and Jews, reflects that trajectory. Thus, this is neither an "inside history" of DP life nor is it the book on Germans as "victims" that I originally thought I might write.<sup>22</sup> Like many historians of modern Germany, I was perversely fascinated by what Jewish observers quickly identified as the postwar "enigma of irresponsibility."<sup>23</sup>

In "The Aftermath of Nazi Rule," a bitter 1950 report for the American Jewish journal *Commentary*, the political theorist Hannah Arendt identified this "escape from responsibility" with Germans' "escape" from the "reality" of defeat and ruins. Struck by the apparent "absence of mourning for the dead, or . . . the apathy with which they react, or rather fail to react, to the fate of refugees in their midst," she diagnosed "a deep-rooted, stubborn, and at times vicious refusal to face and come to terms with what really happened." Now a visitor from the United States, the land of the victors, Arendt decried the pervasive self-pity that allowed no reaction to her insistent revelation that she was a German Jewish refugee. Instead, they continually invoked the image of *armes Deutschland* (poor Germany), as the miserable and sacrificial victim—*Opfer* in its double sense—of history.<sup>24</sup> As Arendt pointed out, most Germans after 1945 understood themselves as victims and not as victimizers, even as they were unable to fully mourn their own considerable losses. To do so, Arendt surmised, would have forced them to confront more fully, beyond "apparent heartlessness" and "cheap sentimentality," their own responsibility for those losses.

In the early occupation period from 1945 to 1946, often described as the "zero hour" and the "hour of the women," processions past naked, emaciated corpses in liberated camps, denazification procedures, press reports and film images of "death mills," and the Nuremberg and other war crimes trials were intended by the Allies to assure that the immediate past of Nazi atrocities remained highly present. There was, in the immediate postwar period, a remarkable amount of discussion about precisely the issues of memory, commemoration, guilt, and complicity that continue to agitate historical and public debate in (and about) Germany. Yet, as so many reporters noted, despite the initial broad and graphic exposure and documentation in the occupier-licensed German press, the persecution of European Jews and the Final Solution seem absent or at best obscured in immediate postwar public and private discourse.<sup>25</sup> This putative "amnesia" became a truism for the "silent fifties" in West Germany, the

years of nation building and economic miracle, supposedly broken only by the sea change of the 1960s.

Historians have increasingly and forcefully challenged this notion of postwar “silence.” They have pointed to the selective nature of that silence and the vigor (if not depth) with which Germans bemoaned their losses. Robert Moeller, in his work on the “war stories” of German expellees (*Heimatvertriebene*) and prisoners of war, was one of the first to alert us that, by the 1950s, West Germans had constructed highly talkative “communities of memory” by “focusing on their own experiences, not on the trauma and suffering they had caused for others.”<sup>26</sup> But even in the years from 1945 to 1949, “before the curtain” of the Cold War fell and Germany was officially divided, and even in the face of vivid images and documentation of Nazi crimes, for most Germans, the more powerful impressions—the stuff of which memories were made—derived from their own more direct experiences of war and defeat. The Berlin journalist Ursula von Kardorff, who had fled to Bavaria at the end of the war, reported in her diary that when German villagers were confronted in June 1945 with “horror photos of piles of corpses” taken just shortly before in nearby Dachau, they absolutely insisted that these were photos of bombing victims from Dresden.<sup>27</sup>

Such rapidly constructed and tenaciously remembered narratives of victimization worked, not only to block confrontation with recent Nazi crimes, but also to manage the chaos of the immediate postwar years, and eventually to authorize reconstruction of German nationhood and national identity. As Ernest Renan, in his famous 1882 disquisition “What Is a Nation” had already noted, “the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things”<sup>28</sup> A postwar situation in which female bodies—raped, aborting, pregnant, mothering, fraternizing—were both public and private, and where neither public nor private was clearly defined or bordered, highlights, moreover, the (increasingly acknowledged) prominence of women’s voices and memories in defining the early postwar period. Given the lack of a sovereign German state, and the lack of clarity about what it might mean to identify as German, it seems necessary to analyze such stories of victimization from a vantage point that is not exclusively “German.” Germans confronted a ruined physical and political landscape. Suddenly, they had no legitimate national past, no clear national boundaries, or, for that matter, legitimated rulers, markets, or memories. For them, female experiences, such as rape, abortion, childbirth, caring for malnourished and sick children, and grief over dead children, as well as relations with occupiers, displaced persons, and returning German soldiers and prisoners of war, became especially powerful markers of victimization and defeat. They also signaled the need for healthy reconstruction.

The displaced remnant of European Jewry emerged from war and genocide demographically and socially decimated, with no viable claims to citizenship or homeland. For them, issues of sheer survival and reinvention of national and ethnic communities had such high political and cultural priority that they foregrounded reproduction—of children, families, and identity—both in public representation and in personal accounts. In this context, German and Jewish stories, taking place, after all, on the same territory, if not really in the same (nonexistent) nation, need to be juxtaposed and told together. Both Germans and Jews, I argue, turned, in different ways, to narratives and metaphors of fertility and maternity (in terms of both loss and possibility) to comprehend victimization and survival and to conceptualize and imagine future identities as nation or *Volk*. These stories in turn were given different public meanings by Germans, Allies, and Jews.

Particularly during the early years of military occupation from 1945 to 1949, when a legitimate “national” identity, history, or authority was not publicly available, German stories competed with, and were contested by, those of other protagonists who shared territory with defeated Germans: the Soviet, American, and British victors and the Jewish survivors.<sup>29</sup> The more I worked on these questions about the experience and memory of “poor Germany,” the more I was convinced that they could not be adequately addressed in an exclusively German context or even as a story of occupiers and occupied. So much of postwar politics, as well as everyday life in defeated occupied Germany, was conceptualized and negotiated in terms of the contest over memories, definitions, and calibrations of victimization, over entitlement to victim status, and the material as well as moral consequences of that designation. Crucially, these debates and encounters occurred in the face not only of guilty memories—whether from the home or battlefield—but of provocatively present Jews, both DP and German, both part of the occupation and not. My tripartite focus on Germans, Jews, and occupiers forces me to wrestle with both the perils and what I see as the necessity of intertwining German and Jewish history and memory of World War II and the Holocaust. This project places into sharp relief the ongoing challenges of trying to tell in one book the stories of victimization and survival as perceived and expressed by all three groups. I discuss the ways in which Jews, Germans, and (especially American) occupiers variously claimed, contested, and negotiated their identities as victims, victors, or survivors, and understood—in quite different ways—their encounters with one another. At the same time, I aim to avoid the waiting traps of relativization or facile comparison of the incommensurate. Indeed, as the book developed, it became clear that despite my insistent focus on interaction, I am telling an asymmetrical story: although defeated Germans and Allied victors are essential actors, their actions

and perceptions are often presented through Jewish eyes, that is, precisely through the eyes of those whose presence was—for all three groups—least expected.

Furthermore, Jewish survivors must be situated not only within defeated occupied Germany but also as part of the larger universe of postwar migration and displacement. Postwar historians have to balance these two perspectives. DPs must be analyzed as part of the broader context of the birth of a “refugee nation,” a collective forged out of the resettlements and exterminations of the Second World War. Selected, categorized, administered, and observed by international organizations, DPs were grounded in the daily reality of standardized refugee camps. At the same time, however, they emerged out of this common institutionalized and extraterritorial universe as what they also were and primarily became: particular fragmented groups that were divided along ethnic and national lines—as had been the experiences that produced their displacement. While DP experience did produce a common institutional “refugee nation,” especially in the eyes of international aid organizations (notably UNRRA, the new United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), it also heightened awareness of national and ethnic differences and encompassed interaction with the “local” German population. Jewish (as well as other) DPs themselves, as we shall see, rejected the transnational category that the Military Government and UNRRA initially tried to impose on them, and which the motley group of young aid workers sometimes claimed for themselves; the trauma of statelessness produced the drive for national and particular recognition and identity.<sup>30</sup>

The Jewish survivors, many of them the last remaining members of their large prewar families, were indeed a diverse and traumatized group. They spoke different languages, came from various nations, subscribed to different political beliefs and levels of religious observance, and had endured quite varied experiences during the war. In continual negotiation with Germans, occupiers, and relief organizations, Jewish DPs in occupied Germany, centered around the large camps near Munich and Frankfurt and in Berlin, generated between 1945 and 1949 a unique transitory society. DP life was simultaneously a final efflorescence of a destroyed East European Jewish culture, a preparation for an imagined future in *Eretz Israel* (land of Israel), and a “waiting room” in which new lives were indeed—against all odds—begun. From a ragged and exhausted group of displaced persons with very different backgrounds and wartime experiences there emerged over several years a new and self-conscious Jewish collectivity. They publicly identified as survivors of Nazi extermination plans, even if, as was the case for many of them, they had escaped because they had landed, either by choice or by force, in the Soviet Union. They appeared fiercely committed to Zionism and Jewish identity, even if, in

many ways, this collective was only invented in the transitional protected and highly ideologized life of the DP camps. They named themselves the *She'erit Hapletah* (or in the Yiddish vernacular as the *sheyres hapleyte*), invoking biblical references to the saved (and left-over) remnant that has escaped destruction and “carries the promise of a future.”<sup>31</sup> That this remnant of Jews gathered and constituted itself surrounded by, among, and in exchange with the Germans who had tried to exterminate them is the counterintuitive historical fact that this book only begins to address.

#### A NOTE ON METHOD AND ORGANIZATION

German-Jewish history, heavily influenced by refugee historians, has not only been declared to have ended in 1943, at the latest, but has also been framed in terms of what has come to be called an “émigré synthesis,” focusing on questions of degrees of assimilation, Jewish contributions to German culture, and this history’s horrific end. Younger historians, seeking to move beyond this perspective and recognizing the complex interweaving of Germans and Jews, have increasingly begun to speak instead of “entangled histories.” In this analysis, the history of Jews in Germany cannot be grasped in terms of either symbiosis during its flowering or negative symbiosis during its destruction. I hope in this book to move that perspective of “entangled” stories into the immediate postwar period.<sup>32</sup>

In order to capture some of those “entanglements,” I interweave historical analysis, personal narratives (both from my own family and others), oral histories and written reports, published and unpublished texts such as letters, and citations from memoir, diary, and press accounts as well as novels and films, produced at the time or shortly thereafter. I have relied a good deal on contemporary accounts and testimonies, including correspondence and German restitution (*Wiedergutmachungs/Entschädigungsamt*) and expropriation (*Oberfinanzpräsidium*) files from my own family to which I have had privileged access. The use of such contemporary testimony, in addition to the archival sources to which historians always turn, seems to me particularly appropriate for this postwar period, when so many of the most committed and talented journalists and writers of the twentieth century were covering and studying the drama of Germany’s defeat and the aftermath of the “Final Solution.” Indeed, an astonishing number of those who were there, not only reporters, but relief workers, academics, members of the Military Government, GIs and chaplains, and the victims and survivors themselves—both Germans in bombed-out cities and Jews in Berlin and the DP camps—were acutely aware of their role in a critical historical moment and therefore kept diaries or quickly recorded their recollections.

The book focuses on two sites where the unexpected entanglement of German and Jewish history after the Second World War and the Holocaust as well as the triangular relationship among Jews, Germans, and occupiers are most evident: four-power occupied Berlin, and the large DP camps in Bavaria, in the heart of the American zone. I am aware that this triangular focus on “victors” as well as victims and survivors should really dictate attention to all four zones of occupied Germany and all four sectors of Berlin. Despite the clear relevance of British policy on Palestine to the fate of Jewish survivors, despite the fact that many camp survivors found on west German territory were liberated by the British, and despite the existence of one important (but relatively well studied) DP camp, Belsen-Hohne, in the British zone, I limit my discussion to the American zone of western Germany and the four sectors of Berlin, with particular attention to the dueling Soviets and Americans. I do this partly for practical reasons, because I have to contain an already massive topic. Mostly, however, I do it because, with the exception of the early occupation of Berlin in 1945, it was the American zone that received the overwhelming majority of Jewish DPs, and it was the Americans who served as their chief protectors and interlocutors in relation to Germans.

Chapter 1, on defeated Germans and the experience and perceptions of German victimization, pays particular (but not exclusive) attention to Berlin, hardly typical but exemplary for many of the issues addressed here. The defeated capital, a city of “border crossers,” divided by the occupiers into four sectors with adjacent and competing denazification, democratization, and reconstruction projects, was a stage on which various actors contested in a cacophony of voices the questions central to the book: definitions of German identity, nation, or citizenship; and assessments of guilt, victimization, retribution, and survival. In this chapter, I present “poor Germany” and Germans’ perceptions of themselves as victims through the eyes, in particular, of the victors—especially their American occupiers—and, to some degree, their Jewish victims. Chapter 2, on gendered defeat and the experience of both sexual violence and fraternization, considers the multiple ways in which defeat and occupation were quite directly inscribed on women’s bodies. Chapter 3, the core of the book, bridges the treatment of German “victims” and Jewish “survivors” by focusing on Jews in Berlin. The defeated capital, with its significant numbers of both German and Eastern European survivors, offers an exemplary site for tracing intra-Jewish debates about identity, revenge, reconciliation, and possible futures for Jews in post-Nazi Germany as well as confrontations with Germans who perceived themselves as primary victims. In chapter 4, I shift attention further away from Germans and the center of defeat in Berlin to the constitution of the *She’erit Hapletah* in the DP communities and camps of the American zone, especially in

Bavaria. I stress both the heterogeneity of the Jewish DPs and the ways in which relief organizations, American Military Government, and the Zionist movement perceived the Jewish survivors and influenced the shaping of this new collective identity. In chapter 5, I directly engage the “entangled histories” of Germans and Jews in this toxic period of “fresh wounds” by returning to the analysis of gender, sexuality, and reproduction begun in chapter 2.<sup>33</sup> I consider fraught questions of co-existence, revenge, and everyday interactions in light of the Jewish DP “baby boom.” In the concluding chapter 6, I move the discussion beyond the official end point of the occupation and DP period in 1948/49, when the establishment of the state of Israel and the two postwar German states, and the easing of American immigration policies, fundamentally reworked the triangular relationship among Germans, Americans, and Jews. This moment from 1948 to the early 1950s in turn set patterns that would persist at least through the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany in 1989/90. My hope is that this “entangled” approach can usefully complicate our understanding of gender as a historical category, “de-Germanize” a German history in which multiculturalism or heterogeneity is too often seen as an invention of the very recent past, and cut through the persistent division between German history and the history of Jews in Germany that still characterizes much of our work on modern and contemporary Germany.