

Covenant

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE HOLOCAUST IN FRENCH-LANGUAGE JEWISH POETRY

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Abstract:

A considerable corpus of French-language Jewish poetry of the Holocaust has received little critical attention from literary scholars in Holocaust studies. This essay offers a brief, broadly chronological overview of some of the material yet to find a wider readership.

I

Poetry of the Holocaust has long been an established field of international academic research, yet it has also tended to be fairly canonical. Studies now abound on the poetry written in Polish, Hungarian, Yiddish, Hebrew, German and English by victims, survivors and Jewish and non-Jewish non-deportees contemporaneous with the war or born later.¹ Yet there is a considerable body of French-language poetry that has been almost entirely overlooked by literary scholars. One need only consult some of the most well-known Holocaust poetry anthologies (in English) to ascertain the absence of French poetry in general.² This is all the more surprising given the specific historical, cultural and intellectual context of France and its wartime past, the “Vichy syndrome” as the French historian Henry Rousso puts it, that refuses to disappear. Occupation, Collaboration, Resistance, Deportation, high-profile war-crime trials (Barbie, Touvier, Papon), ground-breaking cinematic documentaries (Resnais, Ophuls, Lanzmann), the continued celebration of Resistance poetry (Aragon, Eluard, Desnos), the privileging of Jewish and non-Jewish prose accounts of the camps (Wiesel, Rousset, Antelme, Delbo, Semprun), interminable debates about post-Holocaust poetics or injunctions against “poetry after Auschwitz,” all this—yet there has still not been one solid study of French-

language poetry of the Holocaust. The following brief survey will hardly suffice to redress this critical state of affairs but it will, I hope, give some idea of the breadth of the poetry on the Holocaust by French-language Jewish poets.³ For my present purposes, I have divided the poetry into two mainly chronological groups: the first concerns the initial poetic representations in the immediate post-war period, while the second is related to the rise in France of revisionism and negationism (Holocaust denial) in the 1970s and 80s.

II

Although a number of individual poems by Jews were published in some of the most widely circulated anthologies of the end of the war—for example, Paul Eluard’s clandestine *L’Honneur des poètes* (1943) and *Europe* (1944), or Gabriel Audisio’s *Écrivains en prison* (1945)—most expressed the general spirit of intellectual resistance to the German Occupation and Nazism and were not specifically about Jewish persecution or deportation. There were certainly exceptions, with poems notably by Jewish internees, deportees, victims and resistance fighters already associated with various trends of the pre-war literary scene, such as Max Jacob, Benjamin Fondane, Claude Sernet and Pierre Créange, but such disparate publications,

regardless of their poetic merits, were hardly enough to change the general post-liberation, post-purge climate in which France's state collaboration in the deportation of some 75,000 Jews from its territory, was being conveniently swept under the carpet in a spirit of national unity, reconciliation and reconstruction. Political, not racial deportation was given media coverage by Gaullists and communists alike. Yet it was in this climate that a number of poetry volumes *were* published, mostly but not exclusively by former internees and deportees, expressly underlining the specificity of the genocide of European Jewry. Commemorative but combative, these texts also highlight France's conduct during the war, the profound feeling of betrayal, the failure of assimilation, and the fragility of Republican values.

One of the first of such volumes was E. Sichem's *Sion et Sinai*, containing thirty poems of traditional verse, appearing in 1946. An elderly survivor of the camps and a locksmith by trade, Sichem insists on the authenticity of his testimony: "You who read this account, / It is not a dream; / But an exact document / Not a lie."⁴ Accordingly, Sichem documents anecdotes and fragments of the horrors committed by the Nazis and their fascist allies, while denouncing the illusion of Jewish assimilation into French society and promoting the need for Jewish redemption and the return to Zion.

France's betrayal of its Jewish population is also highlighted in the four long cantos of the 1947 volume *L'Homme aux outrages* by the Warsaw-born specialist of Soviet literature, Benjamin Goriély, interned during the war in the French camp of Uzerche. Appalled by the outburst of Nazi barbarity, and disabused by how France forsook justice, morality, idealism, faith and liberty, Goriély traces his sense of moral outrage at man's descent into bestiality. Combining his own personal experience with the perspective of the proxy-witness, Goriély's verse, unlike Sichem's, is concerned not so much with the anecdotal as with the suggestive recreation of

the atmosphere of the time and of his impression of total Jewish annihilation: "The earth is saturated with our blood. / Sticky, / Burning, / Thirsty. / [...] And rain-soaked dreams disappear in the abyss of oblivion."⁵

Such despair characterizes too Arnold Mandel's 1948 series of prose poems *Chair à destin*, in which he denounces Christian Europe and in particular French guilt, while simultaneously calling upon Jews to draw the political and moral lessons of the failure of Emancipation and the illusions of assimilation by asserting their own national and spiritual identity. The extermination of European Jewry, writes Mandel, who was fortunate enough himself to be interned during the war in a refugee camp in Switzerland, is not just a Jewish tragedy but a "capital defection of humanity," one that he refuses to dismiss as simply a "monstrous case of murderous psychosis and collective sadism,"⁶ circumscribed in time and place. Although Mandel prefers broad brushstrokes in his depiction of the Holocaust to detailing specific horrors of suffering, his texts leave little doubt as to the profound traumatic effect the catastrophe has had on him: "The best of the Jews are dead, knowing themselves to have been robbed, victims of the abuse of confidence, of fictitious assurances of an insolvent civilization with trumped-up balance sheets, dupes of the polyphonic theme of the Ninth Symphony."⁷

Mandel's anti-Christian sentiment is echoed in the 1949 collection of poems *La Figue sur l'ulcère* by the Polish-born poet David Scheinert who had spent the war in hiding in occupied Belgium but had lost his parents and brother in Auschwitz. Versed in Hebrew and biblical culture, Scheinert moves deftly from the prophetic imprecations of an Isaiah or Jeremiah, to the more restrained accents of embittered yet painful understatement, such as in the poem "L'histoire est simple" which takes up the widely-publicized accusation of the Nazi fabrication of human soap:

The story is simple. / Six million Jesuses / Crushed into soap paste. / And millions of millions / Of millions / Of Pontius Pilates / Washing their hands / With Jewish soap / And pumice. / And still / There is a stain / On the paws / Of all the Pontius Pilates... / The story is simple. / Open the Bible: / And God took soap / And made a Jew...⁸

Scheinert's ironic and caustic tone, however, pales in comparison to the Romanian-born Isidore Isou's devastating lettrist poem "Cris pour 5,000000 de Juifs égorgés," in his 1947 experimental text *Introduction à une nouvelle poésie et à une nouvelle musique*. With its theoretical roots in Dada and Surrealism, Lettrism announced a purely formal type of poetry, devoid of all semantic content and privileging the sound and association of letters and other visual or spoken symbols. In his poem, printed in lower and upper case letters, Isou mixes Yiddish, Hebrew prayer—in particular the *Shema* and the formulation for blessings—and the names of concentration and extermination camps, with handwritten symbols and annotations to indicate screaming, heavy respiration, moanings, groanings and pregnant pauses. In effect, the poem is meant to be hurled in the chilling guttural tones of Nazi Deutsch:

ioudn VEININ boudn loudn KLEININ / schoudn guénin FAIERE guysn REININ / taïère leïnîn schpîsn zoudn heïnîn / IOUDN IOUDN schmîsn moundn meïnîn // [...] Auschwitz – schwitz – schwitz / Auschwitz – schwitz – schwitz / Buchenwald! / Bouhnwald! / ADONOOOI! ADONOI! / [...] WOI zennenne FANNY moîsché rachelle / OI! CHHEMA ISRAELLE! / [...] / ÉLOHÉNOU / EHAD! // chema israëlle barouh adonaï / israëlle Kiddischanou / israëlle barouh mitzwotaï / wetziwanou...wetziwanou...wetziwanou...⁹

A radical accusation of Jewish destiny, prayer, God, of any redemptive meaning that would recuperate the Holocaust to sense and signification, Isou's deliberately provocative poem pushes expression to the extreme, where

it simply breaks down, stifled, strangled, slaughtered.

Quite different are the poems in Pierre Morhange's 1951 volume *Le Blessé* in which the former resistance fighter attempts to transform the scream of his people *into* prayer, or at least, as the initial poem indicates, a kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead. Faced with the "mystery of naked and total distress,"¹⁰ Morhange adopts different voices as he pays homage to the murdered. In "Juif," for instance, the poet is the persecuted: "I saw my face / The star of a broken mirror / I clutched my chest / In my solitary arms / I clutched in my detested heart / The diamond of justice,"¹¹ while in the ironically entitled "Berceuse à Auschwitz," he personifies the persecutor: "I am the Nazi wind / And the sober gallows / I am the fist to strike you / And your flowing blood / I am your scream with immense eyes / And the warmth of your stomach / Disappearing in the wind of the firs."¹²

Francophone Jewish poets from outside the European theater who had not suffered personally from internment or deportation also published volumes of verse during this initial wave of poetic production whose primary impulse was to bear witness, to denounce and to commemorate. The Tunisian Ryvel, for example, the pseudonym of Raphaël Lévy, published twenty-one elegies in 1946 under the title *Le Nebel du Galouth*, [The Lyre of Exile], tracing various aspects of deportation but going beyond mere imprecation in order to reflect on evil incarnate, the night demon Lilith of Jewish lore, and cultivating in particular the musical metaphor of the *danse macabre*. "Symphonie allemande," for instance, recalls the Jewish orchestras forced to play in the extermination camps:

Germans, what deft musicians you are! // Under the whistling schlague of drunken brutes' hands, / under the tongues of fire, the claws of the cold / and the slow asphyxiation of the liberating gas, / you made the bodies—

living keyboards—sing / bodies promised to torture before death.¹³

For his part, the Turkish poet Marcel Chalom published his *Poèmes juifs* in Istanbul in 1949. Like Mandel, Chalom diagnoses a “wretched retreat of humanity” and, like Sichem, uses his poetry not just to remember and lament the dead but also to express redemption and resurrection. Hence, in “Camp de concentration,” Chalom imagines the arrival of a small family in a camp: “Sorrow penetrated their hearts like a cry. / Their eyes burned / With the never-ending salt of the tears. / On the barbed wire / They hung the bloody shreds of their pain,”¹⁴ while in “Arbre généalogique...” he sees in the surviving child a glorious future, rising like a phoenix from the ashes: “Your mother died in a crematory oven, / Your father lies in Poland / In a mass grave, / Your brother was stillborn... / But you, the last bastion, / You are / their / RESURRECTION!”¹⁵

III

In 1949, Chalom’s “resurrection” clearly had political not just personal overtones. Yet neither the Holocaust nor the State of Israel’s fledgling years gave rise to a significant body of French-language poetic work in the 50s and 60s. It was really the 70s and 80s—what the historian Annette Wieviorka calls the beginning of the “era of testimony,”¹⁶—that would see a sudden upsurge in poetic production. For some poets, mostly deportees and child-survivors, it was simply a matter of realizing that they were part of a gradually disappearing generation that had to bear witness before it was too late but, for most, poetry was also an essential reply to the rise in France of pernicious revisionist and negationist discourses. Although Maurice Bardèche and Paul Rassinier had published their first revisionist texts back in 1948 and 1950 respectively, it was not until the 70s that such discourses attained a wide public, with Robert Faurisson’s 1974 circular “Do Hitler’s gas chambers seem to you a myth or a reality?” or Louis Darquier de Pellepoix’s

1978 interview in *L’Express*: “Only lice were gassed at Auschwitz,” while the 1980s would see revisionist publications, activities and speeches by Serge Thion, Henri Roques, Pierre Guillaume, and of course Jean-Marie Le Pen’s 1987 dismissal of the gas chambers as a mere “detail” of the Second World War.¹⁷ While a number of prominent French left-wing intellectuals such as Alain Finkielkraut, Pierre Vidal-Naquet or Henry Rousso, were quick to reply to such theses, many French or Francophone Jews were stung into poetic activity.

A number of such poetic reactions can be inscribed within the Jewish messianic tradition of suffering and redemption. For the child-survivor Ida Akerman, for example, as for many other Jews of her generation, the only real, legitimate response to the Holocaust was the return to Zion and the creation of the State of Israel. Her 1984 and 1988 volumes of verse contain poignant reflections on her experience in hiding as a child during the Occupation, on the deportation and death of her parents, or on the Holocaust in general, and ardent defenses of Israel against its detractors.¹⁸ “Les Carmélites,” for instance, inspired by the Polish Catholic Church’s decision in 1984 to install a Carmelite convent inside Auschwitz, is a virulent attack on what Akerman sees as a revisionist attempt to “Christianize” the site, substituting a Catholic drama for the Jewish genocide: “To install there / Their mortifying / ‘prayers’!!! / — In this tomb of humanity / For all eternity — / Yet one more / Of those historical substitutions / Of the usurpation of identity / Of which the Church holds the sinister secret.”¹⁹

A similar perspective to Akerman’s is adopted by the Sephardi poet Jacques Taraboulos, born in Cairo before the war, in his 1973 poem “L’Holocauste” which traces the long history of Jewish persecution in the Christian West, culminating in the Holocaust and the redemption in the State of Israel. The poem opens with a group of Israeli children, the symbol of Jewish rebirth, visiting the sites of Auschwitz and Treblinka, and telescopes

back to those who perished and the “Just” among the Nations who courageously helped Jews to survive. Like Akerman, however, Taraboulos draws parallels in the persecution of the Jews between the Crusaders, the Spanish Inquisition and the Holocaust, and stresses the culpability of the majority of the Christian faithful in aiding and abetting the demagogues of their time:

O Cross of Shame, covered with burned flesh, / have you not borne on your bosom / the Swastika of the Brute? / O Torquemada, of cursed memory, / O Isabella, bitch of misfortune, / O Great Cursed, miserable and worthless Nazis, / may your bones be consumed / in fire and shame.²⁰

The imprecatory tone here is reminiscent of much of the work of the Polish-born poet Bruno Durocher, who survived six years in Sachsenhausen and Mauthausen concentration camps, but lost his entire family. “I leave this testimony of my youth pierced through by anguish and finally executed in the torture chamber of history,”²¹ announces Durocher in 1975 in the first volume of a septology entitled *À l’image de l’homme*, combining prayer, incantation, invocation, lamentation and meditation in the spirit of the Jewish prophetic mode of revelation. A metaphysical visionary in a civilization he considers morally and spiritually bankrupt, Durocher develops a poetics of loss and suffering as a long and painful exorcism of the demons that haunt his wounded and bloody memory. “This poem,” he writes, “is not a work of art / but a testimony of the age of crime / covering the earth with blood and standards / of corpses and chasms.”²²

Other poets of the period share Durocher’s refusal of any overarching redemptive or messianic vision of the Holocaust and focus solely on the individual or general suffering of its victims and survivors. The former resistance fighter and Neuengamme deportee André Migdal, for instance, in his 1975 volume *Poésies d’un autre monde*, attempts to resurrect the atmosphere of the

concentrationary universe through suggestion and emotional resonance,²³ but the main thrust of the collection is an exploration of the psycho-physiological conditions of survival, the impossibility of forgetting, whether it be the daily deprivations and torments of the camp,²⁴ his mental and physical state on his return from deportation,²⁵ or the discovery of the deportation and death of his parents and two brothers. “These ruins,” writes Migdal, “are at my feet / I have rebuilt nothing / because even time / is no cement / solid enough / to remake this love / Even time ticking by / cannot diminish / this pain / this hatred.”²⁶

Génia Finkelsztajn, a child-survivor of the Warsaw ghetto, embraces a similar ethos in her 1988 collection *Quarante-cinq ans après. Le Cri du ghetto*, constructing her poems like a commemorative *Yizkor* intoned in memory of her entire family and of all the Jews who died in the ghetto: “Today I cry / I will not be silent / I have forgotten nothing / My memory returns / I will continue to my dying days / The Germans-Nazis-Hitler-The war / I will repeat it all to the bitter end, to my dying / breath.”²⁷ Like Migdal, the attempt to exorcise the past—here, the engraved images of life and death in the ghetto—is accompanied by the appeal to younger generations to remain vigilant against the return of the “iron boot.”²⁸ Not so much an *impossibility* to forget as a *refusal* to forget, giving her poetry a pedagogical function shared by writers such as the Warsaw-born poet Charles Dobzynski who spent his adolescent years in hiding in France during the Occupation,²⁹ or the Moroccan-born proxy-witness poet Jacques Eladan. Both have written numerous poems on the subject of the Holocaust with the express purpose of educating their readers. In his 1985 collection *Cantiques du retour*, for example, Eladan infuses his poetry with a moral import by accumulating documentary detail and archival material, regardless of whether or not the historical veracity of such material has been conclusively proven, as in the case of gloves, lampshades and soap made from human skin and fat:

Columns of striped shadows! Broken bones! / Women sterilized as guinea pigs! / Children ceaselessly groaning, crushed / Cries of the elderly under the axe, bent double! / Gloves and lampshades made with the skin of the dead / Bars of soap of flesh! Mount of golden teeth! // Do not forget the saga of horror / Repeat the litany of fury.³⁰

That this “litany of fury” should in fact be contested by negationists is thus often seen not only as an affront to the memory of the dead but as an attempt to erase the very traces of their disappearance. This is certainly the impetus of a number of 1983 poems by Henriette Asseo, a descendant of Salonikan Jews who emigrated to France and whose father’s family and practically all of her mother’s perished in the camps. Unlike poets such as Akerman who admits to not being a professional writer but to “blackening paper” as a source of comfort,³¹ or Finkelsztajn who confides her tears and thoughts to paper as a “refuge,”³² Asseo is acutely aware of what she terms “moral terror,” the “limitation of words” in restoring collective memory.³³ Nevertheless, she is equally conscious that to say or write nothing would be to hand a posthumous victory to Hitler and to assent to the negationists, as she painfully yet ironically puts it in her poem “Mais qui sait?”: “The horror of the camps / should not be told. / Besides, it is of no concern / to anyone / since no one / died; / it was only done purposely / to annoy.”³⁴ It is because “The dead not honored haunt the sleep of the living”³⁵ that Asseo can also write of the sanitized image of the extermination camps, where green grass has grown over long-disappeared corpses. Anaphora and incremental repetition drive home the point:

On my people / on the corpses of my people / on the pieces of the corpses of my people / on the chunks of the corpses of my people / on the piles of the chunks of the corpses of my people / on the piles of the pieces of the corpses of my people / on the heaps of the corpses of my people / in

Maidenek and Auschwitz / in Birkenau and Treblinka / only green / grass.³⁶

Still, the inevitable negation of history wrought by nature and the passage of time, is hardly comparable to the negation willed by human hand and mind. The philosopher Sarah Kofman, whose father died in Auschwitz, has given possibly the most explicit poetic denunciation of negationism, in particular of Robert Faurisson who she cites by name, in “Shoah (ou la Dis-Grâce),” published in *Les Nouveaux Cahiers* in 1988,³⁷ six years before her suicide. The poem carries as an epigraph an excerpt from Hegel’s *Principles of the Philosophy of Right* in which he writes of the sovereign monarch’s right to pardon criminals, thus undoing what has happened (“das Geschehene ungeschehen zu machen”) and effacing or cancelling the crime in pardon and forgetting (“im Vergeben und Vergessen des Verbrechen zu vernichten”). Kofman’s free-standing poem breaks down into four stages: first, the Holocaust happened, Auschwitz “ist geschehen”; second, in the Final Solution, the “Vernichtung,” the Nazis tried to eliminate the traces of their elimination, to undo the happening of the happened, to efface time itself in a jet of gas; third, faced with this “Dis-grace,” Kofman refuses to pardon, refuses to cancel the event in pardon and forgetting; fourth, Faurisson would repeat and accomplish the Nazi gesture by negating and destroying the event, cancelling the crime, pardoning Hitler by affirming that what happened did not happen: “Das Geschehene ungeschehen ist.” Hence Kofman’s final exhortation *not* to forget, to prevent the memory of the dead from being assassinated. Kofman’s poem certainly has a sense of urgency about it, yet as with many poets mentioned here, she presupposes a discourse of intelligibility, or what Paul Ricoeur terms “narrative emplotment,” which for some writers the Holocaust simply defies. Of course such emplotment does not exclude the dimension of figurative description—metaphor, trope, etc—but few are the French-language poets whose work on the Holocaust entirely foregoes poetic narrative, especially if

the dominant mode is commemorative, demonstrative or combative. One exception, and my final poet, is the Moroccan-born Evelyne Kadouche in her 1980 poem “Mon sang.” Though language has not broken down, synthetic rhythm, surreal images, twisted syntax, absence of punctuation, fragmentation, and an overall jarring sense of dislocation constitute Kadouche’s response to the destruction of her “blood”:

my blood bleachers / sulphur sunflower /
self-initiated / with yellowed stars / fainting —
chilled — electrified / and gushing / my blood
ever confessing / in refuge and in flight /
fleeing down armor-clad / porous and
animalistic / scattered / splattered / like a
beetle crushed flat / sprinkled with cumin and
curry.³⁸

IV

While no overview of any literary corpus can by definition be exhaustive, I do hope to have shown that the corpus of French-language poetry of the Holocaust is by no means and the Holocaust.

Notes:

¹ See the wealth of books and articles on, for instance: Miklós Radnóti, Itzhak Katzenelson, David Vogel, Paul Celan, Primo Levi, Dan Pagis, Abba Kovner, Abraham Sutzkever, János Pilinski, Nelly Sachs, Charles Reznikoff, Sylvia Plath, Tony Harrison, Ted Hughes, Geoffrey Hill, William Heyen...

² For instance: Stewart J. Florsheim, ed., *Ghosts of the Holocaust. An Anthology of Poetry by the Second Generation* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989); Hilda Schiff, ed., *Holocaust Poetry* (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1995); Aaron Kramer, ed., *The Last Lullaby. Poetry from the Holocaust* (Syracuse University Press, 1998); Marguerite M. Striar, ed., *Beyond Lament. Poets of the World Bearing Witness to the Holocaust* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1998).

means negligible, neither in quantity nor in quality. With its idiosyncrasies related not only to the diverse experiences and geographical locations of individual authors but also to the modalities of a specific French national context, and whether rooted in historical referent or imaginative figuration, whether imprecatory and despairing or consolatory and redemptive, this richly varied body of poetry fully deserves to occupy a more prominent place in French memorializations of the Holocaust and in literary discussions of the poetic representations of the Jewish genocide.

An expanded and more analytical version of this essay is currently under preparation as part of a book-length project on the subject.

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³ A more detailed study would evidently need to take into account Holocaust poetry in French by non-Jews. For an in-depth analysis of the related corpus of French deportation poetry written in Nazi prisons and concentration camps, see my *Beyond the Limit-Experience: French Poetry of the Deportation, 1940-1945* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

⁴ E. Sichem, “Le deuil en Israël,” in Jacques Eladan, dir. *N’oublie pas* (Paris: Alliance Israélite Universelle, 1993), 6-7, first published in *Sion et Sinai* (Paris, 1946). In the interests of assisting bibliographical research, I have retained the titles of volumes and individual poems in French, but all verse quotations have been translated (by myself unless otherwise indicated).

⁵ Benjamin Goriély, *L’Homme aux outrages* (Paris: Éditions des Portes de France, 1947), 41.

⁶ Arnold Mandel, *Chair à destin* (Saint-Julien-du-Sault: Coopéd, 1948), 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ David Scheinert, "L'histoire est simple," in Jacques Eladan, dir., *Poètes juifs de langue française. Anthologie* (Paris: Noël Blandin, 1992), 232, first published in *La Figue sur l'ulcère* (Éditions Marginales, 1949).

⁹ Isidore Isou, "Cris pour 5,000000 de Juifs égorgés," in Pierre Haïat, dir., *Anthologie de la poésie juive du monde entier depuis les temps bibliques jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Mazarine, 1985), 185, first published in *Introduction à une nouvelle poésie et à une nouvelle musique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947).

¹⁰ Pierre Morhange, "Bible," in *Le Sentiment lui-même* (Honfleur: Pierre Jean Oswald, 1966), 46.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹² *Ibid.*, 55

¹³ Ryvel, "Symphonie allemande," in Haïat, *Anthologie*, 228, first published in *Le Nebel du Galouth* (Tunis: La Cité des Livres, 1946).

¹⁴ Marcel Chalom, "Camp de concentration," in Isaac Jack Lévy, ed., *And the World Stood Silent. Sephardic Poetry of the Holocaust* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 77, first published in *Poèmes juifs* (Istanbul: Becid Basidmevi, 1949).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁶ See Annette Wiewiorka, *L'Ère du témoin* (Paris: Plon, 1998).

¹⁷ For an excellent overview of the history of revisionism and negationism in France, see Valérie Igounet, *Histoire du négationnisme en France* (Paris: Seuil, 2000).

¹⁸ See Ida Akerman, *Poèmes roux* (Paris, 1984), and *Poèmes roux. Suite* (Paris: Caractères, 1988).

¹⁹ In *Poèmes roux. Suite*, 120.

²⁰ Jacques Taraboulos, "L'Holocauste," in Lévy, *And the World Stood Silent*, 199, first published in *Poèmes tristes* (n.p.: n.d.).

²¹ Bruno Durocher, *À l'image de l'homme. Tome I: Premières formes de l'étonnement* (Paris: Caractères, 1975), 101.

²² Durocher, *À l'image de l'homme. Tome IV: Poèmes épiques* (Paris: Caractères, 1976), 9. For extensive analyses of different aspects of Durocher's work in relation to the Holocaust, see my articles: "Ecce homo: le clown, le

prophète et le Juif dans *Le Livre de l'homme* de Bruno Durocher," *Perspectives. Revue de l'Université Hébraïque de Jérusalem* vol. 12 (2005), 237-54; "Apocalypse et rédemption dans les œuvres narratives de Bruno Durocher," *Symposium. A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literatures* vol. 54 no. 4 (Winter 2001), 230-43; "Onirisme et spiritualité dans le théâtre de Bruno Durocher," *French Forum* vol. 25 no. 3 (September 2000), 365-81; and "Les Images irréelles de Bruno Durocher," *Dalhousie French Studies* vol. 51 (Summer 2000), 132-43.

²³ See, for example, the deadly dialogue Migdal constructs between soup and death: "I am the Soup that kills, / That licks your entrails / With its dysenteric venom. // And I am Death / Who welcomes / And delivers you," in André Migdal, "La Soupe et la Mort," in Haïat, *Anthologie*, 183, first published in *Poésies d'un autre monde* (Paris: Seghers, 1975).

²⁴ See "Tourments," in Henri Pouzol, dir., *Ces Voix toujours présentes. Anthologie de la poésie européenne concentrationnaire* (Reims / Paris: Presses Universitaires de Reims / FNDIRP, 1995), 387.

²⁵ Migdal, "Lorsque tu es rentré," *ibid.*, 398-401, first published in *Poésies d'un autre monde*.

²⁶ Migdal, "Sur mes ruines," in Eladan, *N'oublie pas*, 8-9, first published in *Poésies d'un autre monde*.

²⁷ Génia Finkelsztajn, *Quarante-cinq ans après. Le Cri du ghetto* (Paris: Arcam, 1988), 28.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁹ Dobzynski sees himself as a spiritual descendant of eye-witness poets such as Agrippa d'Aubigné, or visionary prophetic poets such as Chénier, Hugo and Rimbaud, and devotes much of his poetry to dressing a litany of suffering not only of the Jewish people but of all the disinherited of the world. See in particular his 1975 volume *Capital terrestre* (Paris: Éditeurs français réunis, 1975).

³⁰ Eladan, *N'oublie pas*, 18, first published in *Cantiques du retour* (Paris: Caractères, 1985).

³¹ Akerman, *Poèmes roux*, 17.

³² Finkelsztajn, *Quarante-cinq ans après*, 7.

³³ See Henriette Asseo, “Terreur morale,” in Lévy, *And the World Stood Silent*, 55, first published in *Vidas Largas 2* (April 1983).

³⁴ Asseo, “Mais qui sait?,” *ibid.*, 59, first published in *Vidas Largas 2* (April 1983).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Asseo, “Attila écologique,” *ibid.*, 57, first published in *Vidas Largas 2* (April 1983).

³⁷ Sarah Kofman, “Shoah (ou la Dis-Grâce),” *Les Nouveaux Cahiers* 95 (hiver 1988-89), 67.

³⁸ Evelyne Kadouche, “Mon sang,” in Lévy, *And the World Stood Silent*, 101, first published in *Tribune juive* (1985).