

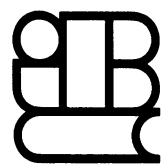
THE COLLECTIVE SILENCE

*German Identity
and the
Legacy of Shame*



BARBARA HEIMANNSSBERG
and CHRISTOPH J. SCHMIDT
Editors

Translated by Cynthia Oudejans Harris and Gordon Wheeler





*A Gestalt Institute
of Cleveland
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THIS TRANSLATION IS DEDICATED TO

Berna and Franz Schürholz,
witnesses and sufferers

Freya von Moltke,
*member of the resistance whose
husband was hanged by the Nazis*

Ursula de Boor Seemann,
*imprisoned by the Nazis in 1943,
liberated by the Americans in 1945*

AND TO

Walter Grossmann,
*who lived and embodied everything
the Nazis tried and failed to destroy*

—Cynthia Oudejans Harris
and Gordon Wheeler

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND NOTE

We, the editors and translators of this book, chose to dedicate our translation to five of our German friends, three of whom are no longer living. All were profoundly anti-Nazi during the Hitler era. Two paid very dearly for their resistance to Hitler. Nazism caused them all great suffering. After the war they bore witness to us of the richness of German life as well as of the German language.

We are grateful to each other for the experience of working together, arguing, laughing, weeping. Our deepening intimacy with the material itself has become the ground of our own more profound encounter with these stories and the times of which they tell.

We are thankful to Edwin C. Nevis and James Kepner of the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland for their support throughout. We are grateful to Gardner Spungin of Gardner Press, who first brought this book to our attention, as well as to Rebecca McGovern of Jossey-Bass, who saw it through to completion. The German editors, Barbara Heimannsberg and Christoph J. Schmidt, who conceived this book and brought it to fruition, have continued to give us generous assistance.

Most important, we thank Leo Oudejans Harris, who read, commented, supported, and cooked while we were at work.

Our deepest thanks go to the original authors of these eleven chapters and to their clients/patients. Their courage and imagination gave us this book, which we can now share with you.

And a note on gender: in German as in English only the feminine case has a set of pronouns clearly its own, while by convention the masculine does multiple duty, covering collective and impersonal as well as masculine references. Obviously this convention is inadequate, confusing, and destructive to all sides. Unfortunately, no completely satisfactory alternative has yet emerged in English or German. In general, and with apologies to all concerned, we have tended to preserve the usage favored by each individual author in the essays which follow, improving on that usage where we could do so without sacrificing the clarity of the material.

— *Cynthia Oudejans Harris and Gordon Wheeler*

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

What can we say, finally, to the Nazi Holocaust? A million children deliberately murdered, a great human culture swept from the face of the earth, and all of it in the context of a global war which took the lives of over fifty million human beings. What words can help us come to terms with numbers so unimaginable, suffering and horror on so sickening and so immense a scale? The face of absolute evil is a hideously grinning Medusa's head, which always threatens to turn our hearts and our tongues to stone. How then can we even approach the Holocaust, if the very sight is unbearable, and language itself is inadequate to hold the full weight of horror or to give form to our anguished wish that reality not be so?

Our bewilderment becomes worse, if that is possible, when we consider that the Judeocide itself was a significant military *diversion* from the overall Nazi war effort: SS "pacification" troops eventually amounted to a separate army of over half a million men, while Speer, crying out for supply trains for the front, was continually overridden by Himmler, the architect of the death camps. We want desperately to believe that evil in the world is only a kind of shortsightedness, a sort of ordinary selfishness run amok, and thus still open to rational influence, at least. But the Holocaust is plainly evil for its own sake, insane and not directed by any rational purpose, however heartlessly conceived. What words can capture the chill at the heart that comes with this realization or the paralyzing sense of a hidden flaw in human nature itself, which leave us mistrustful of our own thoughts and actions?

For the Holocaust also collapses the *projective theory of evil*, which Jung (himself shamefully late to see the true face of Nazism) identified as the central problem of our time. This was the comforting belief—itsself based on denial of countless other atrocities—that evil was something that happened only in distant places, among faraway peoples unlike ourselves, without the enlightenment and benefits of Western Civilization (a term which, since the Holocaust, is impossible to use without irony). But the Judeocide happened right here, in our own neighborhood so to speak, among our own extended family of nations. When you add to this the fact that the liberation of the camps corresponded, generally by a matter of weeks,

with the use of atomic weapons on the civilian population of Japan, then our prospects seem bleak indeed. If our capacity for evil is boundless and unrestrained, either by "civilization" or by some inherent human limit, and if our means of destruction are now limitless as well, then the grounds for hope seem vanishingly narrow. Our responsibility now, in the words of the biologist George Wald, is to life itself—life on the planet, and very possibly the only intelligent life in the universe. Unfortunately that responsibility does not seem to be in very reassuring hands. Small wonder then if we return over and over again to the silent sphynx of the mass graves of the Holocaust, still hoping for an answer to its riddle, or else oscillate wildly between obsession and agnosia, or again clutch at the straws of facile generalizations like national character, economic determinism, even fantasies of outright denial. The twin specters of Auschwitz and Hiroshima haunt the portals of the postwar world—our world—with Dante's warning, "Abandon hope all ye who enter here," written in flames over the gate.

Is there hope? How do we even approach the Holocaust, enter into some kind of new relationship to evil, as Jung said we must (since without any relationship, surely no change is possible), when that very approach threatens to turn the staunchest seeker to stone? Is there a way, or must we remain forever frozen with one arm upraised (whether to strike a blow or ward off the sight), like those statues which littered the ground around the Medusa's lair in the old tale?

I believe there is hope, and I believe it lies in another one of our most basic and defining human qualities, as deeply part of us as good and evil, hope and fear themselves. This is our uniquely human capacity and irrepressible human need to *tell our stories*, which shape and give meaning to our lives. The human being after all is the storytelling animal. We know ourselves and each other by the stories we hear and tell, orienting and connecting us, one to another, self to self, past to future, and future to past. Our stories are the link across the gulfs of time and individuality. Indeed, human trauma may be defined as the *blow which interrupts the story*, whether personal or collective, breaking the continuity of time and human relations, and thus blocking the ongoing formation of a meaningful whole. If a given injury can be encompassed within the frame of a meaningful story line, then we speak of stress or challenge or even tragedy, but not of breakdown or trauma. The person (or community) can nevertheless go on, and the resolution of the loss enters into the structure of identity, the ongoing creation of a personal or collective

myth, in the best sense. This after all is the difference between character and pathology.

By this reckoning, the patient enters psychotherapy because of a loss or injury for which she has no words, which leaves her with a story that makes no sense, is unbearable to look at, has no role for her in it, or perhaps is repeated endlessly up to a certain point and then always breaks off. In psychotherapy she may learn to tell her life story in a different way—or perhaps to tell it for the first time, since she may not have had a listener before, and without a listener there is no meaningful speech. This is why psychotherapy always takes place interpersonally, as a dialogue between people, no matter what the stated program of the particular school of therapy may be. When the patient can tell the story in a way that makes sense to herself *and* to another person, then she is ready to leave therapy and get on with creating the story by living it, again or for the first time.

On the collective level, certainly the Nazi Holocaust is the example *par excellence* of such a break, and we return to it again and again as to an oracle, waiting for some answer, however Delphic, that will enable us to pick up the thread and go on. Our means of return are the stories that are given to us, and which we alternately treasure or hide away shamefully, embrace or shrink from, all depending on whether or not we feel an empathic echo, a community of other listeners (and tellers) who can help us bear the stories as they come. In the old myth, the goddess gives the hero, Perseus, a polished shield, which he can use as a mirror so as to approach the Medusa by indirection, and thus come close enough to grapple with the monster without being withered by its direct hypnotic stare. For us, each individual story, informed with its particular detail and feelings, is a mirror we can hold up to unspeakable horror, and yet find words. Seeing, after all, is private (and thus unbearable); telling is collective by definition, and somewhere in that shared participation lies the key to our survival.

First came the stories of the victims—Anne Frank, Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel, Bruno Bettelheim, Victor Frankl, and many others—breaking the silence, bearing the shame that is the inevitable legacy of victimhood, giving voice where no voice had spoken before, often in a language that had to be invented for the purpose. Then came other voices—warriors and allies, resisters and subverters on all sides, even perpetrators themselves (the seductive memoirs of Albert Speer come to mind, with their Nietzschean undertone: “‘I did this,’ says memory; ‘I cannot have done this,’ says pride . . . Memory yields.”); ultimately even the diaries of Hitler himself—which quickly turned

out to be a hoax, but what accounted for the immense momentary furor and excitement, if not the obsessive fantasy that somewhere in the bizarre private musings and ultimately banal ravings of the madman we would find the key to how he managed to touch so many other hearts in some desperate and perverted place? As if Hitler himself knew! As if the dream knew itself, and could explain itself to the dreamer, after the terrors of that one particular night were over. Or as if we did not have Hitlers enough around us, among us, within us, and thus had to look backward in time, again (always!) at some great and reassuring distance from ourselves.

And now we have the children. There are the children of the victims, as in Helen Epstein's moving chronicle, *Children of the Holocaust*, with all their struggle to find a place for themselves in a world shadowed by the enormity of their parents' suffering and the incomprehensible accident of survival. And now, in *The Collective Silence*, there are the children of perpetrators—including "accomplices . . . onlookers, bystanders," in the words of Sammy Speier, in his essay in the pages that follow. What both sides tell us is what we already know but somehow keep needing to forget, ultimately I believe for all the reasons outlined above: namely and simply that no man, no woman is an island unto him or herself. A break in the story—our common story, who we are, where we came from, where we belong in some larger whole of meaning—remains as a rupture in each individual psyche and is handed down unhealed (which is to say, not made whole) until such time as the rupture itself is faced and felt, and the whole cost is counted, and recounted, and grieved. Real change, as always, has to be grounded in a deeper encounter with what *is*, before we can move on to what could be, or should be, or is wished for. And the beginning of that encounter, at least, is in the stories—which means a willing storyteller in the presence of a willing audience, and enough support for all sides to risk talking and listening with an open heart. (That there are risks, and that support is required, are themselves issues which are sensitively discussed in Barbara Heimannsberg and Christoph J. Schmidt's introduction to the chapters which follow.) All this is the passionate human desire to know, which is at the Greek root of the words *story* and *history* (from *histor*, learned or wise), and the Latin *narrative* and *ignore*, also ultimately from the Greek *gnosis*, knowledge. What happens happens to each of us alone, but we come to know it only in the telling, which is to say together.

Against this passion, this knowing, stands the silence. The word in English, meaning "absence of sound," does not carry the full

active feel of the original Latin *silere*, to keep quiet—or of the noun *Schweigen*, which is the same as the verb in German (the command “Schweig!” is not far from the English “shut up!”) This is the silence which actively prohibits speaking and telling—the speech which, if given voice, would no doubt bring statues to life and make the stones weep. A *collective* silence—making us see that silence itself is never a purely private act, any more than speech is, but always a kind of agreement between people, born perhaps of guilt or fear but then sealed with some mutual bond of shame (guilt wants eventually to cry out; shame looks for ever new ways to hide).

That silence is the subject of this book. Informing the silence, challenging it, ultimately melting it are the stories. Stories we have not heard before—perhaps in part because we were not willing to hear them. Stories of the children and grandchildren of the Holocaust—and of their parents and grandparents as well, perpetrators, fellow travelers, in some cases resisters and victims themselves. Stories of families, then and now, where the lives of the sons and daughters—again in Nietzsche’s words—“are the fathers’ [and mothers’] secret revealed.” This again is the essence of psychotherapy, and indeed all the authors here (and the German editors and the American translators) are themselves psychotherapists. But the subject of the book is far broader than psychotherapy itself—just as the Holocaust is broader than German history alone, and abuse (and the silence that follows abuse) belongs, sadly, to families everywhere. Moreover, by definition, all the authors are children of the Holocaust themselves, in one way or another (from various “sides,” as Irene Wielpütz says, herself a “returnee,” which is to say a child of a Jewish family who escaped, then returned to Germany after the war)—and with the greatest imaginable diversity of heritage, from the daughter of a high Nazi official to the children of Jewish emigres, and including both those who were born during or after the war and those who were themselves raised in the Hitler Youth movement and can give us an unparalleled glimpse into that world, so strange in some ways, so unexpectedly familiar in others. It is this fact, this doubling of perspective on the stories of the patients through the lens of the authors’ own experiences, which lends an additional dimension of astonishing and moving richness to these essays, growing out of the creative interplay between the two, as the therapist/authors themselves struggle to respond to the material offered by their own patients, to deal with everything that is stirred within themselves by the stories they hear, and ultimately to wrest some creative meaning from their common heritage.

This struggle is at the heart of this powerful and unique book. At times the struggle is palpable on the page, as language itself almost seems to resist the attempt to render into words thoughts and feelings which are reaching for expression for the first time, without the support of a preexistent vocabulary and syntax (and where this is the case in the original, we have tried to preserve this quality in the translation). At all times we are gripped by that struggle and that interplay—subtle, powerful, sometimes astonishing—of the patients' stories, recounted here in gripping detail, with the therapists' own memories and feelings (horror, empathy, even denial and defensiveness) as the authors reach out for a new vision, a new diction that will encompass without numbing, empathize without relativizing, and move beyond a customary language whose limits are set by silence and shame.

For this is also a book about shame. The shame of the perpetrators, the shame of the victims—and the shame of the children, whose shame is a part, in the pregnant term of the analyst Christopher Bollas, of the "unthought known," all that which is felt, and known, and which colors the world, but which cannot be spoken. And the shame of the authors, which belongs in the realm of what analysts like to call the "countertransference"—everything that is stirred by the patient in the therapist. That limiting Freudian term, however, cannot begin to do justice to the complex and fertile interweaving here of patients' and therapists' stories, often in open dialogue, each inspiring and allowing and informing the other, until something new emerges, which is the promise, at least, of a new story, a "greater and less cautious truth" as Sammy Speier says, quoting the eminent analyst Alexander Mitscherlich. A truth which patient and therapist alike can take and use and build on, to go on with their own stories and lives. This is the therapeutic dialogue indeed, and of a kind that destructures the theoretical framework itself in which terms like "transference" and "countertransference" once held sway and were considered to be the complete account of everything that can happen in the "space between" therapist and patient. On the contrary, the view that emerges so vividly from these pages is of a real encounter from which—if it is a real encounter—neither patient nor therapist can come out unchanged.

For those who are interested, then, this theme of an ongoing challenge to established psychoanalytic orthodoxy forms another powerful subtext which runs all through this book. This challenge moves beyond the issue of "countertransference" (central though that issue is to the Freudian model) to questions of the nature of psy-

chotherapy, of relationship, and of interpersonal contact themselves—and in the process brings us to another question, which is why this book is being brought out in English under the auspices of a Gestalt press. To be sure, many or most of the therapist/authors in the chapters ahead have trained in Gestalt psychotherapy and make use of it in their work, often as a principal theoretical orientation. But the book is in no way specifically or directly about Gestalt therapy per se. Rather, it belongs to that rich and influential stream of work challenging and revising the theoretical and methodological assumptions of the once-dominant Freudian model. Central to those assumptions and that methodology is the question of the role of the therapist, whose ideal stance of “abstinence” (from any direct, personal responsiveness) is often referred to and called into question in the chapters that follow. That is, in the course of the meetings and conversations between therapist and patient, in which (because of the payment of a fee) the patient’s needs are the subject of focus, is there a “real encounter” between two (or more) people taking place—or is the encounter only imagined, in a sense, by the patient (as transference theory would have it, properly understood and taken to its logical conclusion)? To be sure, as in any encounter between people, the felt realities of the past are entering into, and significantly coloring, the felt reality of the present, often in ways unknown or only imperfectly known to one or both parties. And certainly in psychotherapy (unlike most encounters between people), this fact itself, with all its unfolding implications, is explicitly taken up for discussion, examination, even experimentation. Indeed, that discussion and those experiments (whether or not they are formally labeled in that way, as in Gestalt work) are the essence of any psychotherapy—beginning with the unlikely interpersonal experiment of coming to therapy in the first place. But is this confusion, if you will, of felt realities, this “transference” of the past onto the present encounter, all that is taking place—or is there also a significant and significantly felt *new* encounter between two sentient human beings also going on in the room, within the structure and the subject matter of the psychotherapeutic discourse? Is everything transference (and not just within the therapy hour)? Or is not every encounter structured in some way by a *tension* between the felt and perceived realities of the past—on both sides—and the perceived and possible realities of the present moment?

This question is at the heart of the critique which has been aimed at the classical Freudian model almost from its beginnings by a whole series of more relational and “present-centered” perspectives

—including prominently, for the past four decades or so, the accumulating literature of the Gestalt model. Put in these terms, the question seems almost to answer itself; but note that the answer given, one way or another, will have enormous implications for the conduct of psychotherapy, the kinds of questions the patient can put to the therapist, the kinds of answers the therapist can and will give—and ultimately, then, the kinds of stories the patient can and will create and tell (since knowing your listener, as we have suggested above, is crucial to the kind of non-self-censorship and supportive conditions required for facing difficult and abusive [and thus shameful] material in a way that allows a new resolution, a new gestalt, to form).

To be concrete, as Sammy Speier is in his brilliant essay, “The Psychoanalyst Without a Face: Psychoanalysis Without a History” (in German, *gesichtslose*, faceless, and *geschichtslose*, historyless; a beautiful play on words which points up the essential unity between the identity of the individual and the contextuality of the group): suppose that you are a patient in therapy, or better yet, an analytic candidate in a training analysis in postwar Germany. And suppose you fall to wondering, what was your training analyst doing, do you suppose, back during the Nazi years? This person is a senior professional in the field, your mentor and your guide, and simultaneously your doctor, your healer as well. He (or she) must have been doing something! And suppose you screw up your courage and ask. What if the response is (and remember, you are being graded, in a sense, as well as presumably healed): “You aren’t curious about me the analyst at all (since I am not really here, as myself, but only transferentially, as your father, mother, etc.)—but actually about your own parents. *And*—you are not actually curious about their politics either, but about their sex life! This encounter, after all, is not truly real, but only a screen for other encounters, other relationships, which were themselves only the elaborations of your drives, your ‘instincts and their vicissitudes.’”

You accept this answer (what choice do you have—your future livelihood depends on it, as well as your continued acceptance in a relationship you have come to depend on). And thus you are doubly interpreted and doubly abused—and doubly removed from the immediacy of the present relationship in a way that curiously recapitulates the projective or distancing relationship to abuse which we encountered above, with reference to Nazism itself. Thus shame sets the seal (again) on the door of silence, and abuse within the walls of the therapy office goes unchallenged, since the doctor—by virtue of

not really being there as a person at all, fallible and available for confrontation and dialogue—is always right. And note the implications here for the whole sordid spectacle of doctor-patient abuse, including the sexual, the revelation of which is one of the sorriest and at the same time one of the most salutary aspects of the current therapeutic scene. If people—patients—have a voice, then they are well placed to defend themselves against abuse. But without a “real” audience, no real voice, no real discourse can develop and be sustained. These are the dynamics of the silence-abuse-silence model, so eloquently articulated in the pages that follow, by which silence itself is understood in a new way as the precondition as well as the consequence of abuse. And these are the ways in which the classical therapeutic model lends itself, in tragic irony, to the perpetuation of that silence and that abuse.

Speier's is perhaps the most theoretical of the chapters that follow—though not by that token impersonal or merely abstract. At the other extreme is Irene Anhalt's courageous and wrenching memoir, “Farewell to My Father,” which deals only with her personal memories and her personal struggle as a human being to bridge the unbridgeable and forge a whole self out of a heritage made up of irreconcilable pieces. To read this chapter is to be gripped with a sorrow beyond words and then to marvel in gratitude to the author for the gift of those words, simple and elegiac, which give you that shared experience. It is humbling to translate such a piece; if, as Frost observed, poetry is what is lost in translation, then you can only imagine the full beauty of the original.

Lying between these two treatments of all these themes are eleven other chapters, most of them weaving back and forth between past and present, personal material and that of the authors' patients, students, trainees, family members, colleagues, adversaries, and friends. The range is vast, the material unfailingly gripping. Each reader will have her or his own favorites, particular authors he or she wants to know personally, so fully and unreservedly do they offer themselves and step off the page. One of mine is Richard Picker, a wise and somehow distinctively Viennese voice, who opens up for us—among many other riches—the story of his own youth in the elite training school for Nazi youth. Who will listen to this story, he wonders aloud; who can bear to hear it? The existence of this book is the answer.

To continue with the remaining chapters, more or less in their order, we have another story of childhood training as a Nazi youth leader—and another personal favorite of many early readers—Heidi

Salm's "I Too Took Part." In one of her stunning case histories, she works with three generations of women of one family, identifying and supporting each in turn: a grandmother of Salm's own age and background, a mother estranged from her own mother, and a young daughter who, without Salm's wise and personally courageous intervention, was well on her way to becoming yet another victim to the Nazi past—and to that silence which is so deep a part of its legacy. In confronting and supporting the grandmother, Salm must confront her own past in a new way, and the quiet heroism with which she faces the task is almost unnoticeable under the simplicity of her approach.

Margarete Hecker and Almuth Massing both take us deep into the *belief systems* of Nazi families—beliefs and assumptions which persist in families today, explicitly and implicitly, and thus continue to take a toll, sometimes a deadly one, on the lives of family members. Both emphasize the crucial importance of *finding out what actually happened*, through interviews, family records, public and private documents, as an essential part of undoing the silence and addressing the break. In this they parallel much new writing in this country on the subject of helping victims of sexual and other abuse (see for example the work of James Kepner [1992], which focuses on the need for support in *bearing the unbearable reality* as a crucial first task in moving through healing to growth).

Wolfgang Bornebusch takes us into a world of stories out of a different setting, an educational encounter group with the explicit intent of exploring and coming to terms with the shared German legacies of Judaism, Nazism, and the Holocaust. His provocative title, "How Can I Develop on a Mountain of Corpses?," illustrates the depth and moving frankness with which the group approached its task. Here as all through the book the pervasiveness and dynamics of the Nazi legacy (guilt, shame, phobias, and self-restrictions of every kind) are brought to living reality in the stories of the participants—in many parts of which we will recognize ourselves.

Waltraud Silke Behrendt takes up the question of the therapist's own personal blocks—in this case, her own—and their role in supporting or blocking the patient's emerging story. In the process she directly confronts the question which captures the first reaction of many people to the whole topic of this book: namely, why attempt to understand the mind and world of the perpetrator at all—especially if that understanding might seem to threaten our own clear faculties of judgment and condemnation? Her answers to these ques-

tions are both provocative in their personal exposure and persuasive in their urgency.

Helm Stierlin approaches the same issues from the perspective of family roles and intergenerational silence and dialogue—a dialogue which, as he shows, is as essential to the older generation as to the younger. Again we have the *stories*—and not merely the abstraction of theory—to show us in living terms how the break in history (which is to say, the collective story) is recapitulated and carried forward as a rupture in personal identity, and how the latter cannot be healed without addressing the former. And again we have before us the dynamics of a whole dimension of life—the interpenetration of the personal and the collective—which is not adequately addressed by the classical Freudian perspective and may even be perpetuated and frozen as a problem by therapeutic work under that model.

Barbara Heimannsberg, to whom we are indebted (along with Christoph J. Schmidt) for the original collecting and editing of this book, makes a further contribution here with her chapter on the “work of remembering,” and the neglected question of the relationship of history to identity. Since the orthodox psychoanalytic approach has come in for such extensive and incisive criticism through many of these chapters (and in therapeutic discourse in general in recent years), it is well to be reminded by Heimannsberg’s work that remembering itself is not just an act or an event, but a process of work in its own right—and that it is the psychodynamic perspective that first explained this fact to us and embedded it in a dynamic context.

With Irene Wielpütz, as noted above, we add the voice of a “returnee”—those few German Jews who emigrated, survived, and then returned to a land that was after all their heritage and their home for centuries past. In the course of “not writing” her assigned article, she sheds the most eloquent light on all these issues from a unique point of view. Again, her willingness to expose the struggle for articulation itself on the page, across a full year of deep personal anguish, is a pure gift of trust to the reader—and one that is in no way lessened by the grace and balance of the finished product.

In a postscript to her beautiful “work of remembering,” added in 1992, Wielpütz takes us forward into a post-reunification world, the “new Germany,” which has been so widely welcomed and so widely feared, and which now occupies such a dominant and problematic place in the order or disorder of today’s world. More than anything

else, it is the emergence of this powerful new state which lends such urgency to the issues and questions of this book, moving them from a discourse of moral and therapeutic concern to one of immediate practical and political necessity.

Next comes Dan Bar-On, like Wielpütz the child of Jewish refugees from Hitler, but unlike her a lifelong citizen of the state of Israel. With his courageous and provocative book *Legacy of Silence* (1989), Bar-On took his place as an eloquent new voice in the emerging field of second- and third-generation post-Holocaust studies—a field which is changing our understanding not just of the horrors of Nazism and their aftermath, but of trauma, recovery, human development, identity, and that most urgent question of all the pressing issues of the world today: namely, the overarching ecological question of the relation of the part to the whole, the individual to society, the self to history.

Finally, we have Gunnar von Schlippe, pastor, father, psychotherapist, and deeply thoughtful theologian, who emerged from Russian detention at the age of eighteen, already a veteran of war and Party, to encounter a nation, a way of life, and a personal identity in shambles. Psychotherapy has long taught us about relieving neurotic guilt, Schlippe writes; it has done nothing to help us deal with guilt that is real. In extended letters to his son, he makes us witness to a deeply erudite exercise in theological creativity, as well as to a deeply personal history of combat and resistance, courage and self-deception, humiliation, shame, and the dawning horror and disbelief of a sensitive young German adolescent struggling to maintain some sense of self in the face of the opening of the camps. Among the other riches of this piece, he gives me the first tangible, fully believable experience I have had of what it meant, as an ordinary young German of that era, *not to know*, and what attitudes and defenses permitted him to live under the Nazis, whom he abhorred without ever openly opposing.

And last of all the afterword, by my cotranslator, Cynthia Oudejans Harris, who combines, as I do, a deep sense of the urgency of our common need to *face* the Holocaust, with a lifelong appreciation of that great German humanist culture which Hitler took it as his mission to destroy. But where the animating passion of my work has always been the question of *relationship*, for Cynthia it has long been the question of *language*. These two passions—and this urgency and appreciation—are all expressed together in the stories in this book.

Today we have a new Germany, and possibly a new world. And

yet the injustice and suffering of the world have not changed, while the destructive powers of victim and perpetrator alike only increase from year to year. And everywhere we hear the siren song of the projective theory of evil, which is the very heart of Nazism, deluding and enticing us away from the real tasks, sacrifices, and hard choices to be made if the world is ever to be different from what it has been and survive. In the end, we have only our stories to guide us. If it is the curse of our human imagination to be moved by hatred and fear of each other, our redemption lies in the fact that we cannot *listen* to one another, really listen, without being softened, connected, and changed. Here are the stories, the voices. We have only to listen to find the way.

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
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Gordon Wheeler

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