

# THE WONDER OF THEIR VOICES

THE 1946 HOLOCAUST INTERVIEWS  
OF DAVID BODER

ALAN ROSEN



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For EW,

who teaches the art of questioning and the  
preciousness of listening



## Preface

For a number of years, my concern has been with early postwar responses to the Holocaust. I was led to focus on these responses because I felt they had been overlooked in favor of later ones. The earlier responses, though not exactly ancient history, had often been treated as arcane texts and more or less forgotten. My previous study, *Sounds of Defiance*, devoted significant attention to these early postwar responses, including a chapter dedicated to David Boder's interview project. This book grows out of that one; I came to see that Boder's project merited a full-length study. I will argue that testimony from the period in which Boder conducted his interviews deserves a name of its own. Scholars customarily either enfold early postwar testimony into wartime responses, or ignore it altogether, claiming that testimony came on the scene only belatedly. Neither view gets it quite right. To do justice to the particular characteristics of early postwar testimony, I refer to it as "unbelated." In the study that follows I hope to make the case for why unbelated testimony, represented here particularly but not only by Boder's interview project, should be taken on its own terms.

My study of Boder coincides with a surge of interest in early victim responses to the Holocaust. Sam Kassow's magnificent study of Emmanuel Ringelblum and the Warsaw Oyneg Shabes Archive fills one gap in the historiography of the Holocaust during the war.<sup>1</sup> Several books on early postwar Holocaust historiography were in the making as I worked on this one;<sup>2</sup> others have turned their attention to it in the recent past.<sup>3</sup>

There is no dearth of primary material. The end of World War II brought retrospective analysis with a vengeance. Starting early on, it was known that the victims had their contribution to make. Indeed, from 1945 to 1949, interviews with victims were conducted at a stunning pace: over 7,000 in Poland, more than 2,500 in Germany, close to 3,700 in Hungary. Psychologist David Boder's 1946 interviews with displaced persons were neither the earliest nor the most extensive. Yet Boder's personal and professional circumstances allowed him a distinct perspective: inquisitive, humane, constantly—even indignantly—perplexed at what he called "the impact of catastrophe."

His achievement can be summarized as follows. In July 1946, Boder traveled to Europe to interview victims of the Holocaust who were in the displaced persons (DP) camps and what he called "shelter houses" of Europe. Born in Libau, Russia (today Latvia) in 1886, Boder had arrived in the United States (via Mexico) in 1926, and a year later joined the

faculty of the Chicago-based Lewis Institute (precursor of the Illinois Institute of Technology). During nine weeks in Europe—from July 29 to October 4—Boder carried out approximately 130 interviews in nine languages and recorded them on a state-of-the-art wire recorder.<sup>4</sup>

The interviews were among the earliest (if not the earliest) audio recorded testimony of Holocaust survivors. They are today the earliest extant recordings, valuable for the spoken word (that of the DP narrators and of Boder himself) and also for the song sessions and religious services that Boder wire recorded at various points throughout the expedition. Copies of the wire recordings were initially shipped to the National Institute of Mental Health but were shunted from there to the Motion Picture and Sound Division of the Library of Congress. This is one of the sites where tape-recorded copies can be found today; the other is the Archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The original wire recorder spools have disappeared.

For more than a decade following the European expedition, Boder was tireless in transcribing, disseminating, publicizing, analyzing, and lecturing on the material he had collected. Eighty of the interviews were eventually transcribed into English, most of which were included in a self-published manuscript of over 3,100 pages comprising sixteen volumes. The volumes all appeared under the title *Topical Autobiographies of Displaced Persons*; they formed Boder's own library of catastrophe. Boder published two other major contributions based on the interviews: one, a 1949 book titled *I Did Not Interview the Dead*; the other, a lengthy 1954 article, "The Impact of Catastrophe." Another long article analyzing a single interview remains in manuscript. By the time of his death in December 1961, almost exactly fifteen years after returning from the DP shelter houses of postwar Europe, Boder had accomplished much, if not all, of what he set out to do with the interview project.

Boder's work is not well known, even among scholars. This fact encouraged me to undertake the first full-length study of his interview project, chronicling what led up to it, how he conceived and carried it out, what happened in the aftermath, and why that is significant for our thinking about the history of Holocaust testimony.

Boder's interviewees—the DPs (and a few others who did not fit in this category)—play a central role in this chronicle, and their transcribed voices are often, and necessarily, heard. They are (some more than others) featured protagonists. But this is not a book about them—even though such a book would have its own merits. From what we know, to their great credit, they went on to establish productive lives. Some remained in Europe; others migrated to Israel, the Americas, and Australia. A few were in touch with Boder after they were settled. He in turn had hoped to contact a number of them—particularly those in Israel—to do follow-up interviews.

Such reinterviews have been conducted in recent years with some of Boder's narrators to compare the story of their wartime experiences as they told it in 1946 with the story as they tell it today. Resourceful though such reinterviews may be, they do not bear directly on my study, concerned as it is with Boder's interview project in its original context. And though I was hopeful that the reinterviews might provide information about how Boder carried out the interview—his manner, technique, and bearing, for instance—the reinterviews turn out not to be very revealing. Although the narrators remember being interviewed by Boder—no small feat after more than fifty years have passed—they cannot remember with any clarity details about the interview or about Boder himself. Nevertheless, when pertinent I have cited some fact or observation, simply to present what may have been the case.

Pathbreaking though the interviews were and are, I want to suggest the exercise of caution with regard to their overall implications. In the discussion that follows, I am not claiming that Boder's early postwar interviews have a status equal to wartime testimony. In fact, I take issue with those who try to elevate the status of the Boder interviews by pushing them closer to the end of the war than they actually were. Together with my conviction of the value of postwar Holocaust memoirs, I believe that wartime testimony sets the standard. It is enough, to my mind, to clarify the position of Boder's interviews, giving them the due that they deserve.

From a historical vantage point, Boder's interviews do not change our idea of what the Holocaust is, or was. Again, Boder was not a historian and did not go about his task with an eye to collecting rigorous historical information. Even though his 1946 interviews have been retrospectively (and understandably) grafted onto the postwar history of the newly blooming discipline of oral history, he himself did not usually conceive of the project under this rubric. He was seeking human documents that would reveal psychological truths. His interviewees provide a wide range of historical data, sometimes told in substantial detail. They can be (and have been) drawn on by historians. But as far as I can tell, they do not reveal more than other testimony distributed along similar lines of age, experience, and place. Their value lies in what they teach us about the history and nature of Holocaust testimony.



## *Acknowledgments*

People and institutions gave this project ongoing sustenance. It was optimally supported by four major fellowships. In 2004–2005, I was a Meltzer Fellow at the Center for Advanced Jewish Studies at University of Pennsylvania. In 2005, I was the first Sosland Foundation Fellow at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. In 2005–2006, I was a Research Fellow at Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Studies. From 2006 to 2009, I was a research fellow of the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah. I also received the 2004–2005 Kantor Fellowship from the Archives of the History of American Psychology.

The two main archives of Boder's papers were indispensable. I thank the Department of Special Collections, Charles Young Research Library, UCLA, with particular thanks going to its staff, including Genie Guerard and Lucinda Newsome. The Archives of the History of American Psychology, the second main archive of Boder's papers, presented me with a much appreciated Kantor Fellowship to pursue the research on Boder. Staff member Dorothy Gruich helped significantly. The director of the archive, David Baker, provided expertise in the history of psychology and has continued to be a source of encouragement, particularly in his reading and commenting on the chapters dealing with Boder's biography and his relation to the history of psychology.

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## Abbreviations

AHAP	<i>David Boder Museum, Archive of the History of American Psychology, University of Akron</i>
IIT	<i>Archives, Paul Galvin Library, Illinois Institute of Technology</i>
JPS	<i>Jewish Publication Society</i>
LOCSD	<i>David Boder File, Library of Congress, Sound Division</i>
UCLA	<i>David P. Boder Papers, Collection 1238, Special Collections, Charles R. Young Research Library, UCLA</i>
YAP	<i>Yair Aharonovitch Papers, private collection, Tel Aviv, Israel</i>
YV	<i>Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel</i>



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THEIR VOICES



## Introduction: Boder's Happy Idea

It was indeed a happy idea to go to the camps with a wire recorder and the only strange thing is that nobody else thought of doing that.

—Letter, August 7, 1947,  
from Max Weinreich to David Boder<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of a renowned nineteenth-century novella, two gentlemen out for a Sunday walk discuss the prickly nature of questions:

“And you never asked about—the place with the door?” said Mr. Utterson.

“No, sir: I had a delicacy,” was the reply. “I feel very strongly about putting questions; it partakes too much of the style of the day of judgment. You start a question, and it’s like starting a stone. You sit quietly on the top of a hill; and away the stone goes, starting others; and presently some bland old bird (the last you would have thought of) is knocked on the head in his own back garden, and the family have to change their name. No, sir, I make it a rule of mine: the more it looks like Queer Street, the less I ask.”

“A very good rule, too,” said the lawyer.<sup>2</sup>

Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the source of the above exchange, presents a hauntingly modern parable of evil. The respectable Dr. Jekyll is one and the same with the distasteful Mr. Hyde. In the latter guise, the doctor is freed from inhibitions and carries out singularly horrible crimes against innocent victims, until he even commits murder. Although Jekyll was once in command of which self rules the other, he eventually loses control and Hyde gains the upper hand. The message is clear. Respectable citizens are shown to possess (and be possessed by) an alter ego who, when freed from the constraints of civilized society, acts out the most savage fantasies.

Seen in this light, the novella, written in the late 1800s, addresses issues stunningly germane to the evil of the Holocaust. Ordinary, even upper-crust, people bear within them the capacity to murder. This point has indeed been elaborated in regard to the Holocaust in the past several decades.<sup>3</sup> But the conversation cited above concerning a “place with a door” carries a more pointed relevance to my study. Having refrained out of “delicacy” from asking after the occupant of “the place,” one of the gentlemen explains that “putting questions” is much too serious an enterprise to undertake in a casual manner. Once set in motion, a question, like a stone, picks up its own momentum and careens out of control.

Beyond the reach of the one who originally asks, a misdirected question (and in this formulation, what question is not misdirected?) can damage innocent lives and ruin reputations. Given such an outcome, no wonder that the lawyer, Mr. Utterson, the second gentleman, states unequivocally that never “putting questions” is a “very good rule, too.”

The power of questions has perhaps never been summarized more eloquently—if fancifully and eccentrically. Questions have social, ethical, and theological consequences, auguring the “day of judgment.” Furthermore, questions (even, at times, rhetorical ones) do solicit responses that may well go elsewhere than the questioner intended. Questions imply risks. For interviewers like psychologist David Boder, however, the asking of questions was the means by which to elicit from post-World War II refugees the stories of their wartime experiences. In July 1946, Boder traveled from his home base in Chicago to Europe’s displaced person (DP) camps and what he called “shelter houses” to interview the DPs, many of whom were victims of the Holocaust. Had there been no questions, had “delicacy” prevailed, thousands of early postwar accounts of the Holocaust (including Boder’s 130 interviews)<sup>4</sup> would never have come forth.

Among the postwar interviewers—and, as we will see, there were scores of them—Boder stood in a special relationship to the asking of questions, for he was one of the very few to include in the interview transcripts the questions that he insistently put. The questions, moreover, reveal that he was frequently perplexed by what he heard.

On his second day of interviews, for instance, Boder spoke with nineteen-year-old Marko Moskovitz, a native of Solotvino, Czechoslovakia. Moskovitz patiently describes the grotesque methods of murder in the Birkenau concentration camp:

MOSKOVITZ: There was a... a forest, and in that forest there was a huge pit.

BODER: Yes?

MOSKOVITZ: And in that pit black pitch was always poured.

BODER: What?

MOSKOVITZ: Such a black tar which... which is poured on streets.

BODER: Yes, which...

MOSKOVITZ: This was poured in.

BODER: Yes?

MOSKOVITZ: This was ignited, and this was burning day and night.

And the people were being continuously thrown in.

BODER: Oh. Thus the dead were...

MOSKOVITZ: Yes.

BODER:...burned.

MOSKOVITZ: Yes, yes.

BODER: But not alive.

MOSKOVITZ: Dead. Often alive, who still had years, /who/ could still live.

BODER: Oh. Not in an oven?

MOSKOVITZ: Ach...the transports which...these were thrown in the oven who were at work. /Those who/ were already Mussulmen /people emaciated to the bone/, could not work any more, these were brought to Auschwitz, and these were thrown in the gas chamber and into the oven.

BODER: Aha.

MOSKOVITZ: But the first transports could not go...so many...so many.... There would arrive a transport of sixty thousand people. It was impossible in the oven, a small oven. It was...

BODER: So they could not...

MOSKOVITZ: They were always thrown into the pit.

BODER: A pit?

MOSKOVITZ: Yes.

BODER: And what was being burned in the pit? [Footnote: The interviewer has apparently become confused if not perplexed by the story which was recorded the second day after his arrival. It is one of the early reports, his first face to face contact with eyewitnesses from Auschwitz.]

MOSKOVITZ: People were...

BODER: Yes, but...

MOSKOVITZ: Wood...wood was put in and tar.

BODER: Wood and tar.

MOSKOVITZ: Yes.<sup>5</sup>

Confused if not perplexed by Moskovitz's description ("And what was being burned in the pit?"), Boder's note, added at a later stage of processing the interview, attributes his confusion to the fact that he had just begun to interview the "eyewitnesses" ("It is one of the early reports, his first face to face contact with eyewitnesses from Auschwitz"). He has trouble following the account because Moskovitz's description of people "often alive" being burned in pits goes against the grain of what is usual, even in times of war.

Such perplexity surfaced the next day as well, this time in trying to make sense of an act of kindness. Seventeen-year-old Jurek Kestenberg, who hailed from Warsaw, recounts his harrowing escape from a train bound to the death camp Treblinka:

KESTENBERG: And here it is better to jump, because if one jumps on a level stretch, one can fall under the train. But if one jumps on a hill, one falls, rolls down the hill, right down there. And so, I thought it over well and jumped. I don't remember any more, but I felt that legs hurt very badly. And I heard a shot. After that I came to. After perhaps two, three hours I came to, and I saw nearby two children are playing with a...with such a...such a large hoop, playing, running, jumping. I started yelling, and the children ran away and brought with them, must be, their father, an old Gentile.

BODER: Hm.

KESTENBERG: Brought him along. The father took me into the house. By chance I was lucky, because he was a very decent Gentile. He took me into the house.

BODER: A Gentile?

KESTENBERG: Yes.

BODER: Yes.

KESTENBERG: And he makes me a...a... How does one say it? A bandage on the leg, because it appeared that I had a bullet in my leg as far as the bone.

BODER: A what?

KESTENBERG: A bullet from a rifle shot.

BODER: Oh! You still have...

KESTENBERG: Here. Yes. I can show it to you.

BODER: /In English/ He is now showing me a bullet wound on the leg which he got when he jumped off the train trying to escape from a transport that was sent to...Treblinka?

KESTENBERG: Yes.

BODER: Yes. All right.

KESTENBERG: And so the woman bandaged me. The Poles, the peasants had there various medicines. They brought it, and put /it/ on, and I was with them four days. After four days they gave me to eat well. They gave me to eat and to drink. They had everything. I still had on me a few...a few Zlotys. I had money. I wanted to pay. They wouldn't take it. After four days...this was eighteen kilometers from Warsaw...this was...I went and said that I want to go back home. And so the Gentile took such...such a cart with...with two horses. He drove me about ten kilometers. After ten kilometers I already went on foot, walked to Warsaw. I still had money.

BODER: Did you pay him anything?

KESTENBERG: No, nothing. He didn't want to take anything.<sup>6</sup>

Even after having been told that the Polish peasants who cared for Kestenberg so diligently wouldn't take the zlotys he offered, Boder, at a loss, asks, rather indelicately, "Did you pay him anything?" Such a refusal of money in a time of scarcity does not add up; paying something would at least allow for the usual way of understanding devotion of this kind to kick in.

In relation to the camps, to deportation, and also to ghettos, Boder's perplexity—to borrow the word that he himself used—asserted itself. At the end of the first week of interviews, eighteen-year-old Israel Unikowski related in German how he survived a roundup of children in the Lodz ghetto by hiding in the cemetery. For Boder, aware that death was an all-too-common feature of ghetto life, taking refuge in a place where the dead would need to be laid to rest does not make any sense:

BODER: Were there no funerals during the few days on the Beth-Olom [cemetery]?

UNIKOWSKI: No. There were enough dead. But one wasn't permitted to walk in the street.

BODER: Hm.

UNIKOWSKI: So there weren't any.<sup>7</sup>

As Boder had figured, there were "enough dead" in the ghetto. What he was not able to factor in was the decree that made the cemetery off

limits and hence made it impossible to carry out final rites. In contrast, Unikowski survived partly because he turned such evil decrees to his advantage.

Perplexity shadowed Boder's efforts to piece together events in the different arenas of wartime suffering: concentration camps, trains, and ghettos. But he was also tripped up in making sense of terms. At thirty-six, Edith Serras, originally from Bessarabia, was already entering middle age as the war began. She tells in Yiddish of her arrival at the Birkenau concentration camp:

SERRAS: And so, we arrived at the station.

BODER: Yes.

SERRAS: So there was a "selection."

BODER: Yes... What is a "selection?"

SERRAS: A "selection" means that they selected the people who were to go into the lager, to work, and the people who were to go, to make "experiences" on them...

BODER: Experiments?

SERRAS: Experiments. And which people were to go into the gas.

[Footnote 2: The Yiddish word 'gass' means 'street, outdoors, 'German 'gasse'. The expression gehn in gass, means 'to go out, to go for a walk, etc. But in the lagers it coincided with 'going to the gas chambers, assignment to gas-killing. Since the word gas for volatiles is homophonic with gass for street, the interviewer was prone to confuse the two, more so that he could not help often fail to perceive correctly the meaning of the expression 'ghen in gas', as 'gas-killing'].

BODER: Into what?

SERRAS:...into the gas...That means—into the gas chambers.

BODER: Oh... They went to the gas chambers?<sup>8</sup>

Boder's homophonic confusion (between words in Yiddish and German, explicated in English) pairs a going out with a going in, a gesture of welcome recreation ("to go for a walk") with a gesture of perverse finality ("going to the gas chambers"). His being "prone to confuse the two" actually layers the ordinary on top of the extraordinary, intensifying the horribleness of the latter by means of comparison with something as casual as a walk outside. Hence perplexity, a failing "to perceive correctly the meaning," further illuminates even as it draws attention to error. Boder's gloss allows the interview to operate in two realms, conveying the account as given while dramatizing the interpretive ear trying, but often failing, to follow its diabolical episodes and expressions.

A half-century later, the notion of perplexity in relation to the Holocaust comes under direct attack. "I have," states Inga Clendinnen, "written neither for specialists nor for those for whom the Holocaust was a lived actuality, but for perplexed outsiders like myself, who believe with me that such perplexity is dangerous. In the face of a catastrophe on this scale so deliberately inflicted, perplexity is an indulgence we cannot afford."<sup>9</sup> For Boder, in contrast, it is not a question of whether

or not one can afford to be perplexed; he simply wishes to chronicle what happened in the intimate attempt to follow unbearable stories. The questions that he asks and records, with all their attendant risks (of, for example, naiveté, indelicacy, and ignorance) dramatize the experience of perplexity.<sup>10</sup>

#### "THE DISPLACED PEOPLE OF EUROPE"

Boder undertook the 1946 trip because he felt that it was imperative to interview the DPs while the memories were fresh and, in addition, to let them tell their stories "not only in their own language but in their own voices."<sup>11</sup> In the postwar world, however, the DPs were most often viewed not as a source of fresh memories about a time of carnage but rather as a humanitarian and political problem. The end of the war had left 8–10 million displaced persons in Europe, refugees who had fled their home because of danger or who had been taken prisoner and deported. The greatest number ended up in Germany, but many others found shelter in countries throughout the continent. Most headed home as soon as hostilities ceased; some of these were compelled against their will to return to their countries of origin. By the close of summer 1945, the number of DPs had been reduced to something over a million.<sup>12</sup>

Return was not always easy or desirable. The war's devastation made travel uncertain from place to place and country to country. Soviet citizens feared being treated as traitors upon their return, since prolonged contact with the nations of the West had rendered them suspect. Some DPs had indeed used the Nazi invasion as a means to escape Soviet oppression. Punishment doled out by the Soviets to those marked as opportunists was often severe.<sup>13</sup> Still others preferred not to return to Eastern European homelands that were ruled by the communists in the aftermath of the war. For Jews, return was complicated by several factors. First of all, destruction of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe was so extensive that there was sometimes no home to return to, in terms of either family or household. Second, the thought of returning to the scenes of atrocity was frequently unbearable. The landscape itself gave rise to anguish. Third, anti-Semitism was often rabid and lethal. To return to one's home could endanger one's life.<sup>14</sup> These circumstances propelled the movement called *Bricha*, the attempt by Jewish survivors to take flight from the perils of Europe and reach the haven of British-controlled Palestine.<sup>15</sup>

Many agencies and groups tackled the material challenges facing the DPs, preeminently the Allied forces and UNRRA (United Nations Refugee and Rehabilitation Agency), which had been established in 1943 for the express purpose of ministering to the war's refugees.<sup>16</sup> The DP camps and centers came into existence at the end of the war to service the displaced persons at large, and particularly those DPs for

whom returning home was not an option.<sup>17</sup> In Germany, the site of the greatest number of displaced persons, DP camps were fashioned out of military barracks, schools, and hospitals, as well as forced labor and concentration camps. They were administered jointly by the allied military authority, UNRRA, and the DPs themselves.<sup>18</sup> The large scale of these camps—some of which were compelled to tightly accommodate over 6,000 DPs—made for uncomfortable continuities with the privations and surveillance of wartime imprisonment. German police, moreover, sometimes acted with pointed aggression against Jewish DPs, intensifying the overall feeling of inhospitable circumstances. Adding to the overall discomfort was the friction between groups of people, particularly Jews and non-Jews, who saw one another as anything but associates. This led Jewish DPs to advocate for and eventually receive (in August 1945) permission to reside in separate camps.

For most of his time in Europe, Boder visited much more modest DP "shelter houses," run on a smaller scale (ranging in size from 60 to 400 residents), in countries that were not, as with Germany, associated with the enemy. Only in the later stages of his itinerary did he interview in large-scale camps located in what had been enemy territory. The setting for his interviews was thus not representative of the situation of the DPs at large, a fact that Boder was well aware of.

Other organizations tried to improve conditions by addressing the DPs' cultural and religious needs. Jewish DPs in particular, who referred to themselves as She'erith Hapletah (the Surviving Remnant), were aided by the AJDC (American Joint Distribution Committee), ORT (Organization for Rehabilitation and Training), and the Va'ad Hatzala, the rescue committee sponsored by Orthodox Jewry's Agudat Israel.<sup>19</sup> Most of these agencies were understandably geared toward alleviating the privations of the present and assisting rehabilitation in the future.

In contrast, Boder's terrain was the past. He saw himself offering a service that others working on behalf of the DPs could not. His authority on the matter came from the top: "It seems to me," Boder wrote in June 1945,

to be the express desire of the Commander of the Army, General Eisenhower, that the proper organizations should be as completely informed through personal contact and their own specific methods of the human factors involved in the European tragedy and especially the tragedy of displaced persons. A group of motion picture producers have been flown to Europe only a few days ago. I think at least one psychologist should be entitled to facilities and cooperation for a survey with psychological methods and corresponding tools.<sup>20</sup>

Trying to persuade his contact that he has something important to offer, Boder overstates the case. There were other psychologists in direct touch with DPs.<sup>21</sup> Be that as it may, his identity as a psychologist is clearly in the forefront, vying in competition with more popular forms (especially

motion pictures) of documenting "the European tragedy." Written more than a year before Boder actually came to view the aftermath of the tragedy firsthand, the letter is nonetheless symptomatic: the identification with psychology motors Boder's approach at every stage of the process. To be sure, the identification at times wavers. Once Boder began work in the DP centers, psychology's "corresponding tools" did not always perform as he had expected.<sup>22</sup> But by the time of the European expedition, psychology had been his discipline for some forty years. Among other things, it eventually led him to think of the DPs' suffering under the rubric of "trauma," thereby making him one of the earliest researchers to do so. Yet even under this rubric the past remained firm; trauma for him did not imply a problem with memory—as it does for most commentators today—but with measuring the kinds and degrees of inflicted suffering.<sup>23</sup>

#### HISTORICAL COMMISSIONS

Others viewed past experience as important to record. In fact, the DPs themselves set up interview projects, referred to as "historical commissions," that were active at the same time as Boder. They too were custodians of the past. Indeed, a handful of institutionally based projects of this kind collected an enormous number of interviews.<sup>24</sup> In terms of quantity, the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland achieved the greatest success. Established in 1944 in Lublin, the institute soon shifted its headquarters to Lodz and eventually to Warsaw. The work of the main office was complemented by that of twenty-five regional branches. Some 2,000 testimonies were taken in the first year; by 1949, the number had risen to some 7,200. The first interview took place as early as August 20, 1944, in which the interviewee, whose name is recorded only as Gertner, described the destruction of the Sandomierz and Staszów ghettos.<sup>25</sup> Occasionally, two or three narrators were interviewed together, but in most cases the interviews took place one on one. The testimonies were given in a half-dozen languages, the main being Polish, and were written down (sometimes by the interviewer, sometimes by the narrator) in the form of a continuous narrative rather than a question-answer format. There is no evidence of recordings having been made.

Between December 1944 and 1948, the Hungarian National Relief Committee for Deportees (DEGOB) conducted over 3,600 interviews with Jewish survivors in Hungarian and German. The interviewees were mostly Hungarian Jews returning to their homes in Budapest or elsewhere in Hungary.<sup>26</sup> Twenty-nine interviewers, themselves survivors, used a detailed guide of several hundred questions from which they would pick and choose. The responses were first taken down in shorthand, then typed up in narratives that averaged from three to six pages (the interviewers' questions were not included). Sometimes a group of

survivors would be interviewed at a single go; one survivor would do the talking and the others would confirm that the story matched their own. In summer 1945, when most of the survivors had returned, the interviews went in a different direction. In this case, key witnesses, particularly among the Jewish leadership, were sought out with the idea of fleshing out the history of Hungary during Nazi occupation.

In Germany, the Central Historical Commission, presided over by Israel Kaplan and Moshe Feigenbaum, amassed some 2,500 DP interviews. Established in November 1945, the commission began interviewing early in 1946.<sup>27</sup> Based in Munich, Kaplan and Feigenbaum produced guidelines that were distributed to "subcommittees" at other American Zone DP camps. Although Kaplan and Feigenbaum supervised the effort, more than a hundred colleagues carried out the work, which, together with taking testimony, included persuading reluctant DPs to come forward. The collected testimonies were sent to Munich, where they were archived.

A sampling of testimonies was published in the Central Historical Commission's own journal, *Fun Letstn Hurbn*, which appeared in ten issues from August 1946 to December 1948. The hope was that the published sample of testimony would encourage diffident DPs to share their stories. The journal's audience was thus largely in-house. "In their more intimate moments," notes one commentator, "the testimonies [in *FLH*] appear to be part of an internal conversation in She'erith Hapeleithah [the Jewish DPs] rather than an attempt to address a larger audience."<sup>28</sup> This may have had something to do with the liberties the editors took with stylistically emending the testimonies to suit their purposes.<sup>29</sup> They were seeking to achieve an immediate effect rather than to preserve the material for posterity.

In two particular ways did Israel Kaplan's interests shape the Historical Commission's collection of testimony. First, Kaplan, a native of Kovno, was focused on Eastern Europe and thus had little concern for the testimony of DPs from other areas. And second, he saw folklore as key. Among other things, the folklore emphasis moved the commission to make phonograph recordings of DPs' songs.<sup>30</sup> But they apparently never sought to record the DPs' spoken accounts. For their purposes, the written word was enough.

Working with staffs of interviewers and administrative personnel, these three organizations were able to interview thousands of survivors, document their responses, and catalog the material. Individuals clearly had fewer resources and could reach fewer survivors. But some in addition to Boder had remarkable success. Leyb Koniuchowski, a survivor of Lithuania, set out to chronicle the fate of Lithuanian Jewry.<sup>31</sup> From 1944–1946, he interviewed close to 150 Jews in DP camps and in Lithuania itself. He saw the group interview as the most effective way to consolidate a story. He would interview a number of Jews from a region of Lithuania, write up the story in Yiddish, append a list of

perpetrators of crimes and their victims, and have the interviewees sign an affidavit affirming that the facts presented in his narrative were true. The interview stories total nearly 1,700 pages. Koniuchowski was not afraid to draw on the conventions of literature in writing up the stories (historian Philip Friedman, who greatly appreciated Koniuchowski's work, described the interview narratives as novels).<sup>32</sup> Even so, only a small amount of the material was published.

Boder knew of the work of the historical commissions.<sup>33</sup> And his interview project more generally overlapped with these other early efforts than has been previously acknowledged. But he primarily worked independently, and his collection of interviews differs from the others in many respects, including the diversity of narrators, the greater length of the interview, the audience for whom they were elicited, and, perhaps most emphatically, the voices that he recorded.

#### TESTIMONY AND TERMS: AN EVOLVING HISTORY

Boder did not use the term *testimony*, but rather referred to the DP interviews as narratives, reports, personal histories and documents, stories, and even "tales." Called by many names, Holocaust testimony has had an evolving history. But this history has been largely eclipsed by the success of recent testimony projects, particularly those of Steven Spielberg's Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation and Yale's Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies. Different in many respects from one another, the two share the fact of having recorded on videotape in the last twenty-five years thousands of interviews with Holocaust survivors. The surge of testimony that such Johnny-come-lately projects have encouraged has made it seem as if nothing came before. Taking the Shoah Foundation and Yale Fortunoff projects as the measure, historian Dominick LaCapra, for example, asserts that "testimonial witnessing typically takes place in a belated manner, often after the passage of many years, and it provides insight into lived experience and its transmission in language and gesture."<sup>34</sup> As we have seen, however, not all testimony, even of the postwar variety, was belated nor did it wait for the passage of years. Written memoirs, audio-recorded accounts, and, of course, personal oral communication antedate video and constitute a major source of Holocaust testimony. The thousands of DP interviews collected by the historical commissions of Germany, Hungary, Poland, and elsewhere are moreover simply overlooked.

The fact that Holocaust testimony was not always as it is today has been difficult to assimilate, even among its most sensitive critics and practitioners. For example, historian Christopher Browning's elegant study, *Collected Memories*, reviews the scholarly approaches to such testimony, dividing these approaches into "individual" and "society-at-large" and then parsing them into smaller units: a focus on narrative, on identity, on

therapy, on pathology, and, in the case of literary critic Lawrence Langer, on establishing the “meaninglessness” of the Holocaust. Browning concludes by arguing against certain historians’ uncritical endorsement of victim testimony and then elaborates the usefulness of this kind of evidence in reconstructing the history of a labor camp.<sup>35</sup> What is striking about his survey of victim testimony, however, is that the historical sequence and context in which different forms of testimony come into being play no role in his organization, which is structural, thematic, or synchronic as opposed to historical, contextual, or diachronic.

Others do attend to the evolution of testimony. One of the best critical surveys of Holocaust testimony is that of French historian Annette Wieviorka.<sup>36</sup> Her study addresses crucial facets of the evolution of Holocaust testimony: wartime writing and postwar interviews, the important role of languages (particularly Yiddish), oral and written genres, media (particularly the complex significance of video testimony), and especially periodization—all of which is, to my mind, admirable. No one could walk away from her book with the mistaken idea that testimony began only in the late 1970s. Yet Wieviorka’s survey is weak on several accounts. First, postwar testimony until the Eichmann trial is framed as of a piece with that from the time of the war—both are subsumed under the rubric of testimony as “voices from beyond the grave.” And second, the only genres of postwar testimony that Wieviorka deems significant are Yiddish poetry and the *yizkhorbuch* (memorial book). Whatever the number of early postwar interviews and the noteworthiness of the commissions that by and large conducted them, she gives the interviews themselves only a minimal significance in testimony’s evolution. There is in essence no place in Wieviorka’s scheme for early postwar testimony—certainly not of the kind Boder collected—to be taken on its own terms.

That the DPs constituted an extraordinary if temporary community in their own right—in relation to nationality, language, and wartime experience—plays no role in Wieviorka’s chronicle. Indeed, this may account for her repeated characterization of the DPs as “rotting” in the DP camps and centers—a characterization that brackets the resurgence of cultural and family life in these centers. These very features of DP life were paramount for Boder.

A second account of the evolution of testimony avoids an initial complication. Tony Kushner starts from postwar survivor testimony and therefore is in no danger of subsuming what came after by what came before. In contrast to Wieviorka, Kushner keeps the boundaries clear. But even so, the “early uses of testimony” were, to his mind, marginal, serving solely to corroborate Nazi crimes.<sup>37</sup> Testimony’s marginal status was allegedly reinforced by historians’ prejudice against it. In support of this claim, Kushner cites the pathbreaking 1950s books of Leon Poliakov and Gerald Reitlinger.<sup>38</sup> But these books, particularly that of Reitlinger, do not bear out Kushner’s claims. Reitlinger clearly valued

what he called survivor narratives, explicitly lists such narratives as a major source, used a broad range of them, and even highlighted for his reader those he thought essential.<sup>39</sup>

For Kushner, like so many, the turning points in testimony's evolution come later; "early uses" cannot help but take a back seat. Strikingly, Kushner singles out Boder's project as "the only major independent academic study of survivors that was more concerned about gathering information on the impact on the individual than about acting as qualitative proof of the evils of Nazi-Fascism."<sup>40</sup> But Kushner's Boder, lifted out of his milieu rather than interpreted within it, at best foreshadows later trends. He is a fish out of water in his own era, a period in which, in Kushner's estimation, testimony was devalued by intellectual, legal, and social trends and prejudices.<sup>41</sup>

On rare occasions, these earlier interviews have been given their due. Henry Greenspan has perhaps been most resourceful in suggesting the terms "middle ground" and "fragile moment" (one linked to place, the other to time) to describe testimony from the period, in his words, "immediately after the destruction." "The *first* survivor witnesses," he writes, "occupied a precarious, often contradictory, middle ground."<sup>42</sup> What was the contradictory nature of this slippery middle ground? The end of the war inspired a hope in care, solidarity, and Jewish survival—in values that the world, as it turned out, would not and could not guarantee. The short period in the immediate aftermath was the "fragile moment," a more or less prolonged moment in which survivors could indulge such an absurd redeeming hope.<sup>43</sup>

The interview work of Boder and the historical commissions conforms to some degree with Greenspan's terms. The notion of a "middle ground," of a place betwixt and between, is certainly apropos for the DPs, most of whom were in a state of transition that was far from a real home. And there was a sense that this in-between position gave an opportunity for DPs to tell their wartime story. Once life returned to normal—to home, work, family—the DPs would be occupied with other demands. In the words of Moshe Feigenbaum, cofounder of Germany's historical commission, they would in their new home "have to completely throw themselves into the struggle for existence."<sup>44</sup> At that point, Feigenbaum declared, one would not be able to "get any testimonies out of them." The opportunity that the DP centers afforded would be missed. So the notion of a middle ground giving birth to a fragile moment rings true in these cases too, with the proviso that it referred not to a time of great (if frustrated) expectations on the part of the survivors but rather to an oasis of opportunity granted to the DPs *qua* DPs.

The fragile moment was also fragile for a different reason, here having to do with the dynamics of memory in the aftermath of such a devastating event. First of all, memories were sure to fade fast, or were apt to be revised with the changes in the DP's circumstances. The fragile moment was the period in which memories could be counted on to be vivid and

reliable. On top of this, forgetting (not remembering) was the order of the day; to forget what the DPs had gone through and witnessed was presumed to be the road back to normal life. To invoke Moshe Feigenbaum once again, speaking in Germany circa 1946: it is a “time when every surviving Jew is trying to forget the gruesome past.”<sup>45</sup> To be sure, some survivors were moved to tell or write about their experiences. But even among those who believed that DPs had a duty to recount what had happened, it was understood that the DPs’ foremost inclination was to put the past behind them.

The notion of the fragile moment moves one closer to the circumstances of early postwar testimony. But it goes astray by narrowing the period of testimony to one short burst that came immediately after the war. Greenspan is not alone in invoking the “immediate”; references to it abound.<sup>46</sup> And some testimony surely came in the “immediate aftermath.” But the early postwar years cannot all be subsumed under its banner. Boder, for his part, was convinced that he had arrived late on the scene.<sup>47</sup> To his mind, the summer of 1946, when he finally docked in Europe, already stood in different relation to the war than had the spring of 1945. The DPs’ responses were no longer what might be called, with any sense of rigor, immediate.

Critics working with wartime (as opposed to postwar) testimony have advised a similar caution when dealing in hindsight with periodic shifts in the victims’ circumstances, which tend to be seen as uniform. During the war, notes David Roskies, chroniclers sought to mark “the changes that occurred over two, three and fours years of Nazi occupation and to measure the pace of change.” In contrast, “few, if any, were the postwar writers who could conjure up these differences after the fact.”<sup>48</sup> Just as the hindsight of postwar writers elided wartime differences, so the hindsight that came decades later did the same to the period from 1945 to 1948. The various stages at which testimony came forth—month by month, year by year—have all been consigned to the “immediate.” That said, Boder’s conviction that his interviews were not conducted “immediately after” did not make him think any less of them. But it did arm him with an awareness of the evolving nature of the DPs’ response.

The use of “immediate” by Greenspan and others carried with it a polemical sting, for which I have a good deal of sympathy. They wanted to show that, contrary to general assumptions, survivor testimony was not by definition belated, did not first appear on the scene only in the wake of the Eichmann trial in 1961, or emerge later still from a backdrop of silence. Testimony came forth early. To proclaim that it was immediately on the scene was a way to dramatize this fact and set the record straight. But, in truth, much of early postwar testimony was not immediate, and that, too, makes a difference.<sup>49</sup> In this light, the “fragile moment” evokes a time period too compressed to do justice to this evolving scene. Not everything happened in a moment; certainly in Boder’s

case, as we shall see, days, weeks, and months altered what he asked and heard—and from whom.

Not entirely adequate to the task of characterizing the period of post-war testimony, Greenspan's terms nevertheless point to this period as a boundary, as both end and beginning, and for that reason hard to define. Indeed, different perspectives construe the same period in radically different ways. From a historical vantage point, the end of the war marked a terminus, with a winner and a loser. After that date, the victims were free of their oppressors. Yet that date is somewhat slippery in terms of accounting for postwar testimony. Many surviving victims were (gratefully) liberated earlier (in 1944) rather than at the war's official end (in 1945). Liberated Holocaust survivors thus gave testimony while elsewhere the war still raged. From a cultural vantage point, the end of the war marked the end of a self-enclosed era, where the testimony that issued from the time of the war became a "closed canon" and thus was essentially different than that which came after.<sup>50</sup> Lest one think this judgment too draconian, it has its exact parallel in the custodians of the responses of another order of victims: American slaves. In this case, too, the cutoff line for slave testimony is emancipation. What was written or told after this point, however eloquent or moving, responds to an essentially different order of experience than that of those who penned their testimony in the time of slavery itself.<sup>51</sup> Finally, from a psychological vantage point, the boundary is nearly porous, since survivors in the aftermath of the war have not yet subjectively experienced a true "after."<sup>52</sup> Hence, testimony after the war mirrored testimony during it.

With respect to early postwar testimony, one needs to keep in mind simultaneously these divergent meanings of the war's end. Boder himself did so, sometimes explicitly reflecting on (and asking questions about) its import, at other times implicitly directed by it.

### THE QUESTION OF AMERICA

The blurred boundaries of time carry over to the discussion of place as well. Interviewing European refugees on European soil, Boder (himself a European émigré) nonetheless understood that his project was distinctly American. Almost all other interview projects were indigenous, carried out by those who had themselves gone through the events. Boder is thus exceptional in that his departure point was America; the institutions that sponsored the trip were American; and it was Americans who, he felt, stood to benefit most from hearing the DPs' stories. America, moreover, was in the throes of a pitched political battle over admission of DPs to its shores. Conservatives alarmed a nation anxious about communist infiltration by labeling DPs (and especially Eastern European Jews) as prime suspects. Boder hoped that the DPs' tales of what they had gone through, coupled with vignettes of the oppressive conditions they faced

in the German DP camps, in postwar Poland, or in communist Russia, would convince Americans to lobby in favor of a liberal immigration policy.

Boder's nuanced approach can be appreciably contrasted with another postwar American response to the Holocaust. "Study of Culture at a Distance" served as the backbone for the postwar anthropological study of Eastern European Jewry that was published under the title *Life Is with People*.<sup>53</sup> Setting forth Eastern European shtetl life as it was imagined to have been lived before the war—the researchers and writers had for the most part no direct experience of such communities—the book, according to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, also "can be read as an early example of Holocaust memory," as "a document of how American Jewry dealt with its sense of loss in the aftermath of World War II."<sup>54</sup> The study and its "culture at a distance" premises were an outgrowth of Ruth Benedict's Columbia University Research in Contemporary Cultures, which flourished between 1947 and 1953. Its *raison d'être* was what was termed "inaccessibility": the participating scholars were dedicated to "analyzing the cultural regularities in the characters of individuals who are members of societies which are inaccessible to direct observation."<sup>55</sup> Various obstacles could deny access to a given region or community: war, political barriers, or the destruction of the societies in question. Eastern European small towns are cited as the first example of a society that "may no longer exist." There may be, in other words, nothing to go to. Hence, the study of culture at a distance offered a strategy to overcome major handicaps.

This postwar response of an important current of American anthropology was the inverse of Boder's in several respects, most importantly in that what was deemed inaccessible to them was not to him. What could be obtained in America by means of the study of culture at a distance could to his mind only be obtained by traveling overseas. To be sure, Boder himself did not go the full distance, having decided that a visit to the DPs in Eastern Europe was beyond the pale of possibility. In this respect, he too studied culture (or, in the term that he believed best suited the brutal stories that he heard, deculturation) at a certain distance. But his going halfway gave him access to a pool of unsentimental informants whose stories from the killing fields offered a different, indeed intimately experienced portrait of European Jewry under siege.

So much feverish energy around the Holocaust at a time, the second half of the 1940s, when America supposedly wanted little to do with it.<sup>56</sup> Only later—with the publication of Anne Frank's diary in 1952; with the telecast of the Eichmann trial in 1961; with airing of the docudrama *The Holocaust* in 1978—did America allegedly express interest in what happened to Europe's Jews. Once America showed interest, moreover, it was only in watered-down, sentimental stories that inevitably came with a happy ending.

Viewed through this discouraging lens, Boder has to be seen as exceptional, a renegade, even a prophet, whose vision of an archive of Holocaust testimony was years ahead of its time. Yet we have already seen that Boder was hardly a loner, that others in Europe were also eager to get the stories that he was after. And if America did not boast other Boders, its postwar response to the Holocaust was not so cut-and-dried as some have made it out to be.<sup>57</sup> Several commentators have demonstrated that America's response to the Holocaust in the 1940s and 1950s was ongoing, in the form of books, commemorations, educational endeavors, and testimony. "Even a cursory reading of the primary sources," writes cultural historian Hasia Diner, "makes it clear that, contrary to the conventional wisdom, American Jews did in the years after World War II in fact think, speak, and write about the horrible events that had just transpired in Europe."<sup>58</sup>

From this vantage point, Boder's project was of a piece with its time, not diverging from but reflecting America's postwar response to the Holocaust. Indeed, few who came to know of his work were disinterested. And his work had major supporters among the period's most important scholars. Yet, as I will demonstrate in what follows, Boder's way of presenting his materials often frustrated his efforts to circulate them widely. The project, moreover, took on certain proportions, in size and in character, that made it difficult to publicize. In the long run, Boder's dedication to the integrity of the interview project also kept it outside conventional norms.

Boder's straddling of disparate cultures—pre-World War I Eastern European Jewish, on the one hand, and post-World War II American, on the other—embodies a tension often at the core of Holocaust study, whereby Jewish claims compete with universal ones. Knowledge of languages; views of the history of the Holocaust as continuous with previous history or severed from it; a focus on perpetrator or victim—each chosen angle tilts scholarly vision to one side or another.<sup>59</sup> To take the example of languages: historians who give short shrift to resistance "rely," according to Israel Knox, "chiefly upon non-Jewish sources and have apparently little knowledge, if any, of Yiddish and Hebrew."<sup>60</sup> Lack of access to the languages of the Jewish victims, in Knox's assessment, resulted in a lack of basic knowledge of the victims' behavior, not to mention, as he remarks elsewhere, the view they themselves took of their circumstances. Knox pronounced this judgment in the late 1960s, in response to a particularly inflamed controversy regarding scholarship on the victims. More information is clearly now available to a broader audience, partially due to publications such as Knox's. Nevertheless, the linguistic community to which a scholar belongs still determines the kind of research he or she undertakes.<sup>61</sup>

Boder's life and work provide an opportunity to look with double vision, to entertain Jewish and universal claims simultaneously, in no small measure because he himself aspired to this. Yet, for all that, his

1946 expedition has not previously been linked to a Jewish context. Instead, Boder has generally been viewed as a prescient figure whose idea to undertake such an expedition came more or less *sui generis*. Historian Donald Niewyk, a pioneer in bringing Boder's interviews to scholarly attention, sees his embarking on the project as Boder "reinventing" himself, an experimental psychologist whose European refugee background equipped him to set off in a new professional direction.<sup>62</sup> In contrast, journalist Carl Marziali, who has done most on a popular level to publicize Boder's project, views it as Boder's guilt-ridden quest to return, if belatedly, to those whom he had left behind when he fled Russia some twenty-five years before.<sup>63</sup> Neither professional self-fashioning nor survivor guilt takes account of Boder's pre-American, Eastern European Jewish education and nurture. It is this Eastern European Jewish setting that points to Boder's attentiveness to song, to language, to preservation, to getting a record of a dispersed community still reeling from and in the midst of crisis.

#### THE MATTER OF TECHNOLOGY

"It was indeed a happy idea to go to the camps with a wire recorder and the only strange thing is that nobody else thought of doing that." Yiddish philologist Max Weinreich's assessment, written eight months after Boder's return, celebrates his correspondent's ingenuity while implying that, in 1946–1947, the wire recorder was familiar enough that somebody else could (or perhaps should) have thought of it in relation to DPs. What was strange was not the "primitive" machine that came from another era, but rather that the wire recorder's potential as an aid to documenting exceptional experience was divined only by Boder. In fact, Boder's idea was inspired by his recognition of another technology's inadequacy: the film newsreels of emaciated survivors and mounds of corpses shot as the Allies liberated the concentration camps.

The inadequacy of film newsreels to do justice to the victims affected others similarly. Renowned Buchenwald survivor Jorge Semprun's account of watching, in December 1945, newsreels of the liberation of concentration camps reads as if it came directly from Boder's notebook:

Even though [the newsreel images] showed the naked obscenity, the physical deterioration, the grim destruction of death, the images, in fact, were silent. Not merely because they were filmed without live sound recording, which was standard practice at the time. They were silent above all because they said nothing precise about the reality they showed, because they delivered only confused scraps of meaning.... What was really needed was commentary on the images, to decipher them, to situate them not only in a historical context but within a continuity of emotions. And in order to remain as close as possible to the actual experience, this commentary would have had to be spoken by the survivors themselves: the

ghosts who had returned from that long absence, the Lazaruses of that long death.<sup>64</sup>

Spurred by the silent newsreel images, Semprun's epiphany leads to a strategy for dealing with his Buchenwald experience: "One would," Semprun surmises, "have had to treat the documentary material, in short, like the material of fiction," a strategy he has carried out in his memoirs.<sup>65</sup> Boder was similarly impressed by the newsreels' lack of "commentary," the lack of a meaningful story told by survivors. But the strategy he chose was to assemble a collection of commentary "spoken by the survivors themselves."

For both Semprun and Boder, the visual implied silence; it produced images lacking narrative and in need of deciphering. The images showing the grim destruction of death had to be situated, in Semprun's arresting phrase, in a "continuity of emotions." For both, it fell to the survivor to narrate and decipher. Strikingly, they impute to the postwar images the silence frequently attributed to survivors themselves. In contrast to the usual formulation, the survivors come to release the meaning that lies inert in (or behind) the silent images. Years later, a similar motivation reversed the equation, celebrating video's capacity to bring life to "disembodied" audio recordings of survivors.

The visual, the spoken, the written: the history of Holocaust testimony has been bound up with technology, with technological advance and obsolescence as a means to document or record testimony. Boder's ingenuity—his happy idea—focuses the question on this association. His choice of the wire recorder added something unique to the task of collecting testimony, but this same choice also, because of the wire recorder's brief technological life span, eventually marginalized his work. So much a product of his historical period, Boder's archive of audio testimony enables us to pose questions concerning technology's role in the history of Holocaust testimony that otherwise would not be asked.

State-of-the-art technology enabled the wide range of multilingual interviews with survivors in "their own language"—a crucial dimension of Boder's approach. Assuredly, language has played an important role in critical interpretations of testimony; both Lawrence Langer and Henry Greenspan, for example, carefully attend to particular turns of phrase used by survivors to relate their experience.<sup>66</sup> But Boder was convinced that the choice of language itself had an important bearing on the story told. Boder's conception of testimony thus anticipates James Young's brief remarks regarding the significance of language choice in relation to survivor testimony.<sup>67</sup> Yet whereas Young suggests that adopting English as the language of testimony offered survivors an enabling neutrality, Boder's insistence on "their own language" constituted a different vision of Holocaust response—a vision of survivors still at home in their native language and milieu.<sup>68</sup>

Boder's project brings into focus a number of general issues associated with Holocaust testimony. But as a first book on the topic, Boder's

interview project itself requires elucidation. What, first of all, did Boder do? What led him to undertake his expedition to Europe to interview DPs? What then did he do with the material he gathered? And what happened to it in the aftermath of his death in 1961? These questions become refined as we survey the materials that are readily available: recordings of most (but not all) of the interviews and song sessions; transcriptions of a good number of interviews; Boder's 1949 book, containing English-language versions of eight interviews; and a small number of articles that Boder wrote about the interview project. But not everything has turned up. What do we know about materials (recordings, transcriptions, the original carbon wire spools) that have now seemingly disappeared? What can we surmise about the significance of that which is missing? What, finally, has been Boder's influence thus far? And in what ways is it likely to expand?

I hope to address these questions in the chapters that follow, clarifying murky facts, addressing issues set forth above, interpreting some known evidence, and presenting some that is new. The sequence of chapters moves from a portrait of Boder's life to a chronicle of the interview project, to a discussion of the contexts in which the project emerged and through which it found expression. Chapter 1, "I Could Not Help Wondering: On Boder's Biography and the Idea of Testimony," roots the interview project in Boder's European life and training as well as his transplanted North American surroundings. Little has been done previously to provide a life context for this extraordinary project; what has been done often stands in need of correction. Boder was himself keenly interested in biography (hence the title of his opus, *Topical Autobiographies*); his own life story shows some remarkable consistencies, even as it tells of living through events of great personal and collective upheaval.

Chapters 2 and 3, "Summer, 1946," parts 1 and 2, chronicle what happened during Boder's period of interviewing in Europe. To this end, I examine Boder's trip as it unfolded over two months, with its changing protocols, the influence of different interview sites in different countries, the interweaving of academic, secular, and Jewish calendars, the controversies regarding Jewish life in Europe after the war, and the encounter with remarkable DP personalities—one of whom, the very last interviewed, Boder had known for over thirty years. As time went on, Boder came to understand exactly what was lost. As a result, his desire intensified to collect not only the stories but the songs of the displaced people. I endeavor to show how the interweaving of the two formed an essential dimension of the expedition.

Boder was unique in taking a wire recorder to the DP camps. But most of his efforts in the aftermath were devoted to getting the interviews into print. Chapter 4, "From Listening to Reading: Publishing the Interviews," chronicles this process in its evolving stages, arguing that Boder worked fastidiously to keep recording in the foreground even while

rendering the recorded interviews into print. His indefatigable efforts to find the proper vehicle for the interviews also illuminate the context of publishing books on the Holocaust in the late 1940s and 1950s, showing that interest was there, though publishers did not always share Boder's idiosyncratic expectations.

Chapter 5, "The Wonder of Their Voices: Testimony, Technology, and Wire Recorded Narratives," reviews the intricate history of Boder's wire recordings, the basic facts of which are still being pieced together. The significance of the recordings is great in its own right—Boder's are the earliest audio recordings of Holocaust survivor testimony. I detail the history of recording in the social sciences as a way to appreciate Boder's coming to his idea. Yet the afterlife of the recordings, especially their eventual deposit at the Library of Congress and the obscurity surrounding them, tells a story of compartmentalization and confusion. Boder's aural recordings also invite a consideration of the larger context of Holocaust testimony and the manner in which, with the onset of video, audio recording of testimony has been all but phased out. This phasing out has had its effects, moreover, on the use of audio testimony archives. Even the critical terms used to discuss Holocaust testimony celebrate video at the expense of audio. These trends in responding to Holocaust testimony dovetail with the undervalued place of what has come to be called "sound culture."

Boder's vocation as a psychologist moved him to conceive the interviews, shaped the way he carried them out, and guided his analysis of them. Chapter 6, "'Making a Study of These Things': Boder's Interviews in the Context of Psychology," highlights several psychological concepts and techniques current in the 1940s that were integral to the project. These include: (1) the notion of the "personal document"—the report of an individual on his or her own experience—without which Boder might never have launched his expedition; (2) the projective test known as the Thematic Apperception Test, Boder's brief use of which elicited remarkable lyrical testimony from a number of DPs and also sheds light on Boder's evolving view of psychology in relation to the interviews; and (3) an inventory of trauma, which in time became the means to codify the DPs' stories of physical and mental brutality. The steady support of the National Institute of Mental Health demonstrates the affirmation of Boder's work in the eyes of mainstream psychology and through the channels of a major American research institution.

Psychology was one of Boder's paths to language. Yet the issue of language was so sizable that it overflowed the boundaries of psychology, slid toward linguistics, and came to rest in literature and anthropology. Thus in Chapter 7, "In Divergent Tongues and Dialects: Multilingual Interviews and Literary Experiments," I first consider the interview project's multilingual dimension, emphasizing the significance of the interview languages as well as the shifts of languages within the interviews

as "evidence of trauma." Yet this quest for evidence came up against the centrality of audience, moving Boder to devise a deliberately "awkward" English translation as one mode of compromise. A second mode was the process of translation itself, whereby Boder brought aboard at a crucial juncture survivor Bernard Wolf, whose experience of ghettos and camps gave an insider's view.

A psychologist by training, Boder nonetheless turned to literature as the rubric under which the interviews should be presented. I thus examine Boder's embrace of the categories and models of literary critics to analyze the interviews, a form of what he called, following Robert Penn Warren, "experimental reading." Boder's literary analysis of one interview, that of Anna Kovitzka, reveals how he carried out this "reading." This in turn guides inquiry into the way in which Boder thought of the interviews as literature, and what it meant for DP interviews to be the source of "a new genre of world literature."

The "epilogue" reflects on the contribution of Boder's project for rethinking the history of Holocaust testimony, on the distinctive legacy of interview recordings, and on his idiosyncratic approach to the issue of closure.

At times wrongly spelled "Buder" and other times "Broder," David Boder's name (or, as we will see, names) deserves not only wider recognition but also consistent and accurate representation.<sup>69</sup> (Indeed, Googling "David Boder" elicits the indelicate question, "Did you mean: David Broder?"). His name, however, is not the only facet of his life and work that has been subject to misrepresentation. The chapters that follow aim to clarify some (but probably not all) of these misconceptions. Eight points in particular stand in need of correction:

1. Boder did not interview immediately after the war or liberation. Time had passed; changes took place; the DPs (and the DP population itself) were not the same as they had been.
2. Boder's was not the single project of its kind. Many others interviewed more DPs earlier over a longer stretch of time.
3. Boder did not work alone. Colleagues, students, aid agencies, and his wife, Dora, assisted him at virtually every juncture.
4. Boder was not obscure or unknown. Major scholars championed his efforts; hundreds of others knew of and supported them.
5. Boder's requests for funding were not cavalierly turned down. Rather, he did receive ongoing financial support in the work of processing the interviews.
6. Boder's major works were not hidden away in some cellar, as if, like the secret documents preserved by Europe's perishing Jews, they too were buried to avoid the enemy's' grasp. Rather were Boder's interview transcriptions disseminated worldwide, and they have been available for more than half a century in the collections of many premier universities and research centers.

7. The interview project did not emerge out of the blue or *sui generis*. It was rather propelled by current and past intellectual trends, particularly those fashioned in response to persecution.
8. That Boder was an Eastern European Jew was a key element.

There will likely emerge a different Boder and a different project from the portrait, both personal and professional, that has been hitherto circulated. His biography, zigzagging across continents and cultures, is the place to begin to follow his path to the happy idea, to the DPs, and to the vision and reality of an archive of recorded DP narratives.

# Chapter 1

## I Could Not Help Wondering

ON BODER'S BIOGRAPHY AND THE IDEA OF TESTIMONY

A biography of David Boder, so far as the record allows us to stitch it together, is both imperative and problematic. It is problematic in that any effort to deal with the events of his life runs into the classic difficulties of constructing a narrative from a series of episodic fragments. It is imperative because the capsule biographies currently available (the longest of which totals but a few pages) present only the most basic facts. Furthermore, some of what has been written is simply inaccurate, presenting a stumbling block to serious analysis of his work. As Boder's interviews, after years of neglect (or near neglect), begin to circulate more widely, it is essential to have a fuller, more accurate story of his life by which to understand, evaluate, and interpret their importance. While it is true that the brief biographies put forth thus far have been used to this end, the interpretations they engender emphasize certain facets of his life at the expense of others. As we shall see, what has been generally overlooked—formative and influential aspects of Boder's early European life—are vital to a broader and richer understanding of his later work.

To the degree, moreover, that Boder's early life has been addressed, it has been subject to distortion in a way that has skewed the perception of Boder's motivations. Behind the project, suggests this version of his life and work, lies a personal and family scandal that, once uncovered, explains everything. Hence, this distortion needs to be redressed. Overall, I believe Boder's life and scholarly preoccupations had a great deal of continuity and that the motivations that guided his work, if multiple and complex, are transparent. This conviction guides my narrative.

Boder was himself interested in life stories. Indeed, the title of his great opus, *Topical Autobiographies*, underscores the value of the story that a person tells of his or her own life. And this autobiographical quest was set in motion by a general scholarly interest in the personal story that had come into its own during Boder's years in America. He was one of many who saw the personal document as a key source for understanding the nature of personality as well as of society. But he did not turn his professional lens on himself. As far as we know, he did not narrate his own life story, either in the form of an interview (the medium of the

topical autobiographies that he solicited) or a written text. And in fact the genre of topical autobiographies does not help much in offering a model for a life history. The stories that Boder gathered, meant to illuminate the contours of a topical historical event, that is, the Holocaust, focused on a narrow aperture of life experience. He did not seek out the motivating forces in the circumstances of a comprehensive life. What I propose to do with Boder is thus different than what he did with his interviewees—about whom, it seems, he knew comparatively little.

In addition, then, to my goal of offering a more detailed, accurate picture of Boder's life than has hitherto been available, I am guided by several questions: What personal and professional experience led Boder to undertake his expedition and kept him devoted to it? What influences had him give it the shape that it assumed? What influences from his own past equipped him to carry out such a project? Not every detail leads to an answer; but even a tentative answer is in need of a cumulative portrait.

#### CONNOTATIONS OF WORDS: THE INFLUENCE OF EARLY LIFE

Boder was born to Berl and Betya Michelson (née Frank) in 1886, one of the younger in a sizable family of seven children. His given name was Aron Mendel (the name "David Boder" was taken considerably later).<sup>1</sup> The Michelson family resided in Libau, a significant port on the Baltic Sea and home to a substantial Jewish community in an area of Latvia known as the Courland. In Boder's era, Libau and the Courland had been under Russian rule for nearly a century.<sup>2</sup> A conduit to foreign trade, Libau was one of two Baltic ports open year round, and was also noteworthy because part of the Russian naval fleet was stationed there. During Boder's early life, Libau grew substantially, its population in 1881 being almost 30,000, while in 1897 it reached a figure of nearly 65,000, making it the second largest city in Latvia. The Jewish population was also considerable, in spite of the fact that the Courland was outside of the Russian Pale of Settlement, the only area in Imperial Russia where Jews could legally reside. Thus only Jews born in the Courland could officially reside there. But Courland Jewry cultivated ties with the traditional Jewish life of Lithuania as well as the more Westernized culture of Germany, a dual heritage that led these Jews to speak German as well as Yiddish.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Libau featured the largest Jewish community in the Courland, boasting a population of between 9,500 and 11,000, more than double the size of the next community in line, the provincial capital, Mittau. The number of Jews in Libau had also grown, if modestly, during Boder's childhood.<sup>3</sup> Hence he lived in a burgeoning Jewish community and fraternized with friends among whom he would have likely spoke in Yiddish or German, reserving Russian for school study. In 1897, when Boder was eleven years old, Libau had two

Jewish schools, one under government auspices, the other not. A sizable number of Jewish students were by this time also enrolled in non-Jewish schools. Given the nature of Boder's subsequent studies in Vilna, it is likely that in his earlier years he attended the Jewish governmental school, a mixture of traditional and secular study. Yet he himself was familiar with, and admired, the more traditional *heder* education, where boys from age six to thirteen would focus exclusively on the study of Torah. The *heder* student, wrote Boder,

is put through the process of rereading and reanalyzing the same material in annual cycles from the age of six to the age of at least thirteen, each year discovering newer and deeper meaning and wisdom, as the text crystallizes itself and gains in familiarity, and the connotation of words and impact of events grow in content and significance with his own maturity—such a youngster (educated in a *Kheder*) will more readily be able to block the baffling avalanche of insult and suffering—if for no other reason than *having a word for it*, a remote mental picture of similar tragedies [in the Torah] embedded in his world of symbolic experience.<sup>4</sup> (Boder's emphasis)

Though Boder likely did not attend such a *heder*, his appreciation for the psychological resources that it provided was clearly great, including its capacity to nurture a vocabulary of catastrophe. Boder's later work would attempt to mobilize such a vocabulary for those who were lacking in the special kind of education he refers to here.

Having no yeshivot of its own, the traditional Courland Jewish community sent its boys for advanced education to nearby Lithuania, home to some of the most acclaimed yeshivot of its time. Those families that, like the Michelsons, were less traditional but still strongly embraced Jewish life and learning packed their boys off to Lithuania as well, but in this case to the government Jewish school in Vilna, the Teacher's Institute. It was here that Boder studied from ages thirteen to eighteen.

The Jewish Teacher's Institute was the successor to the Vilna Rabbinical Seminary, which had opened in 1847 as a key institution in the maskilic program of harmonizing Jewish life and learning with non-Jewish culture.<sup>5</sup> The seminary became the Teacher's Institute in 1871, one of two government schools in Russia designed to train teachers for Jewish elementary schools. Matriculation was highly competitive: about 200 sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds applied, a process that included taking entry examinations. Twenty or fewer applicants were admitted. The institute graduated twelve or thirteen students every year. Four subordinate elementary schools were affiliated with the institute, apparently serving as prep schools for those who, like Boder, planned to enter the parent institution some years down the road. A municipal tax on kosher meat provided the upkeep of the school.

These rudimentary details sketch the situation of the institute in the 1890s. Boder arrived there in 1899 at the age of thirteen. His circumstances mirror those of Hirsch Abramowicz, a prominent Yiddish writer

and educator in prewar Vilna, who was sent to study at the institute at age fourteen, and whose memoir fleshes out a picture of its daily life. The school was run in a strict disciplinary fashion, and its students were housed in a dormitory. As with the government school in Libau, studies at the institute covered both secular and religious topics, with an emphasis on Russian as well as Hebrew grammar, Jewish history, and the Bible. All study (even Hebrew grammar) was conducted in Russian. The director of the school was a non-Jew with the rank of "civilian general."<sup>6</sup> The atmosphere of a government institution filtered down into the classrooms, where instructors wore official blue frock coats bearing gilded buttons decorated with eagles.

### FINDING PSYCHOLOGY

On completion of their studies, students at the Teacher's Institute were generally required to teach in elementary schools for a certain number of years to repay the government for the expense of educating them. Yet Boder, at age nineteen, took a different path, leaving Russia and heading west to Germany, where he spent six months in Leipzig, studying with psychologist Wilhelm Wundt.<sup>7</sup> Famous in the academic world for his role as a founder of experimental psychology, Wundt had by 1905 been based in Leipzig for thirty years and directed one of the most prestigious laboratories for psychological research.<sup>8</sup> How exactly Boder found his way to Leipzig is not clear. Perhaps the recommendation came at the urging of Vladimir Bekhterev, noted Russian neuropsychologist, with whom Boder would soon develop close ties. Bekhterev had himself studied with Wundt in Leipzig some twenty years before and was one of his most outstanding Russian students. Boder would not have gone to Leipzig had he not already had an interest in academic psychology; it may have been that Bekhterev gave the push that sent him on his way.

When Boder arrived in Leipzig, Wundt was seventy-four years old. By this time, he had published numbers of books essential to the formation of psychology as a discipline, founded a journal in experimental psychology, and directed scores of students, including those pursuing doctorates. He was a commanding figure in the field. Despite his age, he continued to publish prolifically. Indeed, it was in this period that he was working on his massive study, *Elements of Folk Psychology*, in which he dealt with the psychological origins of language, mythology, custom, and religion. The 3,000-page treatise has been touted by some as Wundt's greatest but condemned by others for its protoracist sentiments—a judgment that Boder seems never to have voiced.<sup>9</sup> During these years, Wundt also continued to lecture in an inspiring manner, teaching his bread-and-butter courses but also probing psychological issues by way of other disciplines. Over forty years later, Boder recalled the wonder he felt when confronted by

### Wundt's unconventional synthesis:

I always remember that while taking with Wundt the course in physiological psychology, I could not help wondering at the title of his course, announced for the following semester: German philosophical thought as revealed in German poetry of the 19th century.<sup>10</sup>

Wundt's wondrous interdisciplinarity may have inspired Boder's own. From Wundt he could draw from the wellsprings of "physiological psychology," but he could also justify his recruitment of literary texts and anthropological methods. Clearly, the encounter with Wundt in particular and German academia in general would make a great impression upon the nineteen-year-old Boder, its echo heard years later when Boder himself would cultivate the aura of a European academic among his American students and colleagues. In any case, his time with Wundt likely introduced him to laboratory experimentation and the notion of scientific research, and inspired him to make psychology his vocation.<sup>11</sup>

This was also probably Boder's first journey west. His Libau home had been receptive to Enlightenment influences and his schooling in Vilna had provided him with a formidable dose of its ideas and methods. Yet Leipzig, which had a Jewish community of similar size to Libau's, showed him the workings of the Enlightenment movement at its origins.<sup>12</sup>

The stay in Germany has at least one more twist. Already some distance from home, Boder took advantage of his westward momentum to travel for the first time to the United States, spending four weeks in New York, likely in the summer of 1906.<sup>13</sup> Who he stayed with and what he did on the trip is not recorded. But during his time with Wundt in Leipzig he may have become familiar with American psychology students who, like Boder, had come to Leipzig to study with one of the European masters. Indeed, American students had been making the pilgrimage to Leipzig since the 1880s, and several notable students were in Leipzig in 1906, at the same time as Boder.<sup>14</sup> Boder's characterization of the visit to New York as undertaken "while a student in Germany" suggests that the visit was connected with his time in Leipzig and the purposes that drew him there.<sup>15</sup> In any case, the month in America exposed him to a life and language he would come to know well twenty years hence.

The encounter with New York in 1906 also undoubtedly exposed him to a vast immigrant population unlike any he had encountered before. Indeed, Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe reached a peak in that very year, with 153,748 immigrants arriving in America in 1906.<sup>16</sup> New York was an entry point for some, a new home for many, a hub of activity for all. Immigration to America would loom large on Boder's horizon in the years to come, both in terms of his personal life and also in terms of the needs of the Jewish community in general. Later on, in the aftermath of World War II, Boder advocated passionately on behalf of Jewish immigration to America, fueled by the belief that America could absorb and would benefit by such immigration. His advocacy was undoubtedly inspired by what he

had witnessed in the DP centers and heard in his interviews. But his conviction may have been helped along by what he as a young man encountered during this brief yet timely sojourn to a New York already experienced in accommodating scores of Jewish immigrants from Europe.

Boder returned to Vilna but was soon en route to a yet larger metropolis, St. Petersburg, the Russian capital, which was at the time a city of over a million residents, including some 20,000 Jews.<sup>17</sup> The move to St. Petersburg was spurred by the opportunity to become a student at Vladimir Bekhterev's Psychoneurological Institute. It was during his five years at the institute that Boder acquired the skills to become a psychologist, while at the same time broadening his knowledge in the humanities in general. The institute under Bekhterev's guidance was a place where one could do both. Bekhterev was a prominent intellectual presence in the Russian capital, renowned for his promotion of psychological research as well as for being a spokesman on behalf of progressive causes.<sup>18</sup> Born in the 1850s, he had studied with some of Europe's most outstanding figures in the early stages of academic psychology, including Meynert, Westphal, Charcot, and Wundt. By the early 1900s, he had made a name for himself both as a physician and as a scholar.

During the first decade of the new century, he published the three volumes titled *Objective Psychology*, the term that he gave to a psychology based on motor conditioning.<sup>19</sup> He founded the Psychoneurological Institute in 1907 (the year that Boder came to St. Petersburg), a private institution that, in addition to research in psychology, offered a broad range of liberal studies, including history and sociology. The institute was also special because, contrary to a draconian policy of the Russian universities that allowed only 3 percent Jewish enrollment, there were at Bekhterev's institution no admission restrictions.<sup>20</sup> Hence, Boder's choice to pursue further academic study at Bekhterev's Institute meant, among other things, that he would not have to buck the quota system. Indeed, in an article published some years later, Bekhterev argued that the quota had pathological effects both on the individual Jews who were compelled to perform superhuman feats to make themselves candidates for university admission, and also for the Russian nation that, by excluding the vast percentage of Jews who were eligible for university admission, squandered the opportunity to nurture vital intellectual resources.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the open admissions policy, Bekhterev's advocacy on behalf of the Jewish cause took another form toward the end of Boder's time at the institute. In 1911, a Russian Jew, Mendel Beilis, had been accused of murdering a Christian child, presumably to use his blood in secret rituals. Bekhterev's expert testimony given for the defense at the blood libel trial played an appreciable role in countering the testimony of another prominent psychiatrist, I. A. Sikorski, who had supported the prosecution's contention that Beilis had murdered the child.<sup>22</sup> The blood libel charge shocked world Jewry and Boder surely reacted in kind. But the fallout of the trial, decided in Beilis's favor, nevertheless hit closer

to home. Because of Bekhterev's key role at the trial in undermining the accusations against Beilis, the Russian government, frustrated in its efforts to use the trial to libel Russian Jewry, removed Bekhterev from his position as the titular director of the Psychoneurological Institute. The punishment doled out by the government seemed to have fazed Bekhterev little, as he continued to play a leading role in intellectual life in the years leading up to and following the Russian Revolution. But the events around the trial, Bekhterev's prominent role therein, and his subsequent demotion at the institute he had founded and directed must have made a strong impression on Boder. By the time of the trial in 1913, Boder was a man of twenty-six, had been at the institute for five years, and was himself a teacher. Bekhterev's intervention on behalf of Beilis dramatically demonstrated the power of psychology in society and in relation to the fate of the Jews.

It was also in St. Petersburg during this period that the cultural assets of Russian Jewry were being attended to by a myriad of new ethnographic institutions. A central figure in this endeavor was S. Anski, who had returned to St. Petersburg in 1905 (not long before Boder first came to the city) after having been forced into exile. Anski, the great collector of Jewish folklore and man of letters, launched from St. Petersburg in 1911 his ethnographic expedition to the Pale of Settlement and subsequent rescue expedition in World War I and its aftermath. This expedition and the chronicle that emerged from it were crucial in ushering in a new era in the Jewish response to catastrophe; Boder's conception of his interview project in similar ethnographic terms will thus be the subject of its own chapter.<sup>23</sup> But it is useful to note in this present context that Boder likely circulated among the same St. Petersburg cultural circles as did Anski. And while there is no record marking direct influence, Boder, who was based in St. Petersburg up until 1915, would have to have been aware of the coming of age of Jewish ethnography. For, Anski's efforts aside, the movement to document Jewish life through interview and artifact was supported by a host of St. Petersburg institutions: the Jewish Literary Society; *Evreiskii Mir*, the Russian-Jewish monthly; the Society for Jewish Folk Music; and, preeminently, the Jewish Historical and Ethnographical Society itself. A decade in the Russian capital likely introduced Boder to the tools of preservation that he would use in the aftermath of a later conflagration.<sup>24</sup>

#### MARRIAGE AND ITS MEANING

Along with nurturing his professional and intellectual development, dramatizing the Jew's vulnerable position in Russian society, and exposing him to new trends in Jewish cultural life, St. Petersburg was for Boder a time of domestic changes and turbulence. Surprisingly, it is these domestic events that in terms of Boder's earlier, Russian life have had the greatest influence on the interpretation of his interview project. Boder was

married in 1907 at age twenty-one to Pauline Ivianski, and a daughter was born to the couple later that year. Problems must have developed, however, for they were divorced in 1909 for what Boder later stated as "personal reasons."<sup>25</sup> The daughter, Elena, who came with him to North America at the age of ten, was apparently under Boder's care from the time of the divorce.<sup>26</sup>

What exactly precipitated the breakdown of the marriage and why such a young girl was in the custody of her father rather than her mother, a circumstance especially uncommon in Europe in the first decade of the twentieth century, is not clear. One member of Pauline Ivianski's family attributes the breakup to Boder's academic ambitions. According to a 1987 memoir, *My Glorious Sisters in Affliction* (Achiot Givurot Ha'anot), Ze'ev Ivianski claims that Boder dreamed of an academic career, a dream that in Czarist Russia could only be realized if one left Judaism behind. Boder's alleged conversion created a scandal in his wife's family (the Ivianskis), who pressured Pauline to separate from him. The daughter of the broken marriage ended up (at least eventually) with Boder.<sup>27</sup>

Published some seventy-five years after this incident, Ivianski's account is for a number of reasons unpersuasive. First, even at this relatively early period in his life, Boder may well have dreamed of an academic career. He did take some steps in this direction, particularly during the semester that he spent in Leipzig studying with Wundt. And academic or professional ambition did lead some Jews to choose conversion as a means to circumvent the quotas on Jewish enrollment at gymnasia and universities in Imperial Russia. But the specific professional route that Boder took at this time of his life (circa 1909) does not point to the need for conversion. He was a student at the Psychoneurological Institute in St. Petersburg, which, as already noted, did not have a quota restriction for Jewish students. The director of the institute was also known for his hospitable treatment of Jewish students. Indeed, Boder may have chosen the institute because he was unwilling to endure what was required to guarantee a successful university career.

Historically questionable, Ivianski's account is also puzzling in terms of its narrative. Boder's given name was Aron Michelson; he only took the name David Boder when he was on his way out of Russia circa 1919. Yet Ivianski, writing of a period ten years earlier, does not mention the name Michelson (which presumably became that of Pauline Ivianski, the first wife) but only the assumed name "Boder." He also uses the epithet "Dr."—a professional title Boder did not earn until 1934, almost twenty-five years later. These are small but curious details. More difficult to understand is the conflicted psychological logic that informs Ivianski's account. A "brilliant and promising student," Boder "dreamed of an academic career." This ambition is what led to his alleged defection to Christianity. Yet he also chose to take custody of an infant daughter, a choice that, for a man single-mindedly bent on an academic career, would seem to be self-defeating. Another version of the child

custody drama has it that the daughter did not go to Boder straight away but remained with the mother's parents for several years. This version seemingly accords better with the picture of Boder as an ambitious academic who would take whatever steps were necessary to get ahead.<sup>28</sup> Yet this rendering ends up in the same place as the first, with the daughter eventually going to Boder. This scenario is improbable for an additional reason, picturing as it does a five-year-old Jewish girl handed over to the apostate father who had been only a few years before *persona non grata*.<sup>29</sup>

This unconvincing account of domestic turmoil also has been used to explain the motivation behind Boder's interview project. Ivianski claims that the bad conscience stemming from the disgraceful apostasy continued to plague Boder years later and prompted him to undertake the 1946 journey to the DP centers in Europe. Having returned to Judaism years before, Boder's effort on behalf of displaced Jews was an attempt to make up for his earlier rejection of that community.<sup>30</sup> The ostensible link between Boder's alleged apostasy and the trip to Europe has been taken up by journalist Carl Marziali, who extends the "guilty conscience" explanation to account for Boder's interview expedition as a search for relatives that he left behind when he fled Europe for America twenty-seven years before.<sup>31</sup> This explanation has its own ironies, transforming the motivating force of Boder's project from the synthetic vision of a psychologist concerned with testimony and trauma to the personal psychology of a Jewish refugee whose postwar work was catalyzed by the attempt to make amends for a long-ago dishonorable episode.

It is hard to credit this explanation. First, there is no documentation that points in this direction. And, as we have seen, the circumstantial evidence suggests that Boder may well have taken care to preserve his Jewish affiliations. Once in America, moreover, he did not cut off contacts with the Old World, as if he had something to run away from. He rather corresponded regularly with family members and returned to Europe on several occasions to visit them. He furthermore remained in contact with people outside of his family who knew him during his European life, including such notables as Max Weinreich, the eminent Yiddishist. There seems no indication on Boder's part of covering up unseemly events.

My study goes in another direction. I believe Boder's expedition and the work that grew out of it can be best accounted for by the many factors in his career and milieu that conspired to make the journey a reasonable, if arduous and exceptional, task to undertake.

#### FINDING A NAME

Whatever his academic ambitions, Boder was being trained to teach. In 1912, finishing up his studies at the Psychoneurological Institute, Boder held a position at a gymnasium in the center of St. Petersburg and was

caring for a young child.<sup>32</sup> He had his hands full with taking care of daily business. Yet the travails of Europe soon brought a series of changes. Twenty-seven years old when the Great War broke out in August 1914, he was by the next year working with an engineering battalion, his age and education landing him a kind of supervisory role with a “semicivilian” officer rank thrown in for good measure.<sup>33</sup> At some point this meant that he was stationed on the German front. But in 1917, as the war continued and the turmoil of Russian society reached a fever pitch, Boder went east to Siberia, spending at least some time in the city of Omsk, where he apparently served as the director of adult education for the Trans-Siberian Railway.<sup>34</sup>

Omsk has become known as the Siberian city where Dostoyevsky was imprisoned and wrote. But in the fraught days of 1917 its role was that of a stronghold of the Whites, the troops loyal to the deposed Czar. Indeed, in the years following, the tsarist forces led by Admiral Kolchak took over the city, proclaiming Omsk the capital of Russia and locating there the country’s gold reserves.<sup>35</sup> Boder, with his ten-year-old daughter in tow, may have drifted toward this conservative bastion, already aware that the unrest in St. Petersburg, the center of the maelstrom, posed a considerable risk.

Perhaps most important, the period in Omsk also ushered in a change in Boder’s domestic life, when he married for the second time.<sup>36</sup> His marriage to Nadejda Chernik, coming almost exactly ten years after his first marriage, would turn out to be just as short lived, but for altogether different reasons. And in this case, his wife was a committed partner, accompanying Boder and his daughter Elena as they together headed further east, taking the steps necessary to leave behind the convulsions of civil war in Russia altogether.

The threesome accomplished this in early 1919, the year in which the revolutionary forces would nearly achieve their goals. Boder had the (good) sense that the time had come to leave: “I have left [sic] Russia at the beginning of 1919,” he wrote twenty-five years later, “to avoid the participation in a civil war.”<sup>37</sup> One wonders if the use of the present perfect tense to describe in compressed fashion his flight from Russia—“I have left” rather than “I left”—was entirely a grammatical lapse, or whether it unwittingly reflected, especially in light of the tortuous history of Soviet Russia from 1919 to 1946, the ongoing consequences of that decision.

A later anecdote regarding the acquisition of the name “David Boder” is also bound up with this flight from Russia. Boder, né Michelson, was aware that times were such that his life could be in danger. At one point in making his way out of Russia, the idea of an alias as a means to circumvent the authorities occurred to him, and he thus lifted the name “David Boder” from some poster; it stuck.<sup>38</sup> The story, even if apocryphal, locates the name that became his in the New World as a shield against the dangers of the Old. It should not then come as a surprise that, in annotating the DP interviews, Boder several times notes (accurately)

that the name given by the interviewee is probably an alias, used out of a (justified) fear that the Soviets might resort to extradition.<sup>39</sup> Boder had more or less an insider's view of this fear, even if his was acquired in an earlier era of Soviet ruthlessness. Eventually, Boder was able to refer to this period with a sense of personal detachment. Writing to a colleague in the mid-1950s, Boder speaks of being a witness to this historic moment: "my personal experience with the events in Russia from the beginning of World War I to the spring of 1919...may contribute to the appraisal of the mood of the [Russian] people at the 'grass roots' level."<sup>40</sup> From a distance of time and place, fear no longer dominated. What remained was the recognition of having "observed" history in the making—a history made perhaps even more fateful when evoked in the thick of the cold war of the 1950s.

#### EMIGRATION: HOPES AND PERILS

The path out of Russia led Boder and his family (his wife, Nadejda and his daughter, Elena) to Japan and a three-month layover before the opportunity came to travel overseas. The point of disembarkation in the New World turned out to be Mexico, where Boder would live and work for the next six years.<sup>41</sup> In this sense, Mexico was indeed a place of refuge from the dangers of the civil war. Furthermore, the slowly evolving state of psychology in Mexico allowed Boder to capitalize on his training and rapidly assume positions in his field, an achievement for any immigrant. Another positive note was that his daughter made ample progress in her new school and surroundings. But immigration was not completely the refuge from the world's misery that the Michelson/Boder family had hoped. In November 1919, during the final months of a flu epidemic that through the year had claimed at least 25 million victims worldwide, Nadejda Michelson Boder succumbed to it as well. Her death came no more than six months after their arrival and only two years into their marriage. Boder's life events were seemingly orchestrated in decades. Nadejda's death was a tragedy that came almost precisely ten years after his divorce from his first wife. This time, however, his personal setback was tied to that of the world at large, one loss in the midst of countless others.<sup>42</sup> Hence escape from danger, if successful, was only partial.

Having previously patched up a broken family, Boder at age thirty-three was obliged to do it again, being both a father and mother to a twelve-year-old girl. Bereft of a companion, he had been through this before. And strangely, though he clearly felt the loss deeply (he dedicated his first lengthy article in Mexico to the memory of Nadejda),<sup>43</sup> he also went forward, actively transporting to the New World the expertise that he had gained in the Old. How much Spanish Boder knew before arriving in Mexico is not clear, but he quickly made his way, publishing by the early 1920s articles and translations, including one of the first

translations of Freud in Mexico. Smoothing the immigration process, this nimble acquisition of fluency in Spanish had an unforeseen long-term benefit, providing Boder with the means in 1946 to interview Greek DPs who spoke Ladino, the Judeo-Spanish tongue that frequently served as a lingua franca for Mediterranean Jews.<sup>44</sup>

At first, he registered for university courses and worked in a lab. But experience, training, and linguistic skill soon enough took Boder farther. He went from student to lecturer at the National University, directing psychological research for the Mexican prison system, and in 1924–1925, supervising testing services for several government colleges. He also founded a short-lived psychology journal. He was professionally busy, made something of a mark, and had his finger in many pies, probably because none on its own could provide a livelihood.

Whatever the pecuniary rewards, Boder's work with prison populations had larger implications. The work may truly have been an interest (he lists "criminology" as one of his professional interests in the 1927 American Psychological Association Directory). He took it seriously enough to travel to the United States three times during these years to attend the American Prison Congress (1922 in Detroit, 1923 in Boston, and 1925 in Jackson, Mississippi)—trips that, incidentally, considerably extended his familiarity with the United States, direct knowledge of which had been limited to his brief 1906 New York sojourn.<sup>45</sup> And it is hard not to read with ironic hindsight his 1946 expedition to the DP centers as again working in prisonlike conditions with a population who, if viewed by many biased observers as some sort of criminal element, were actually anything but.<sup>46</sup>

1925 was a year of dynamic changes. Having lost his second wife almost as soon as he came to Mexico, he concluded his stay there by marrying for the third time. Dora Neveloff had been born in Russia but had come to America at an early age and was a naturalized U.S. citizen. She was a year older than Boder and was herself a professional, a dentist. Unlike the previous two marriages, this one would last. Though she maintained an independent career, Dora would nonetheless lend her skills and talents, especially her knowledge of languages, to furthering her husband's work. The one sour note in the new family arrangement was the acrimonious relationship between Dora and Elena, which, if worked around over the years, could never be worked through.

Mexico thus turned out to be a temporary haven. Boder may well have decided to leave the country, as one commentator on his Mexican years has suggested, because he was blocked in his attempts to advance professionally and because of the financial bankruptcy of the institutions at which he had been employed.<sup>47</sup> But while in Mexico he had also been cultivating professional relationships in the United States. He likely had his eye on America from early on. Once married to Dora, who had a large extended family north of the border, it made professional and familial sense to emigrate.<sup>48</sup>

## TEACHING AMERICA

The data tracking Boder's life and career become much greater after his arrival in the United States in 1926. He was thirty-nine years old, his daughter eighteen. Professional obligations helped smooth the way in. Boder traveled to the 1925 American Prison Congress, held in Jackson, Mississippi, apparently with the foreknowledge that he would not return to Mexico. For visa purposes he went north from Jackson to Canada and then came back into the United States via Detroit.<sup>49</sup> Chicago, academically rich and hospitable to immigrants, was close by.

Once settled in the great Midwestern metropolis, Boder soon enrolled in the graduate psychology program at the University of Chicago. On the surface, it seems strange that Boder, whose training included years at the Psychoneurological Institute and who had served in various professional capacities as a psychologist in Mexico, would at the age of forty have to pursue a graduate degree from the ground up. But he evidently was counseled to move in this direction.

His path toward gaining proper accreditation did not deter him from drawing on his previous experience. He served as a staff psychologist at Michael Reese Hospital, a position he held for some six years. He also was part of the staff at the renowned Institute for Juvenile Research. These commitments in turn did not impede his academic progress: he completed his master's thesis in 1927 and received his degree in that year as well. The thesis was titled, "The Adjective/Verb Quotient: A Contribution to the Psychology of Language." Strikingly, Boder analyzes language mainly by means of literary texts. The vehicle for tapping psychological truths, literature, is Boder's source of crucial data, marking an interdisciplinarity that is a regular feature of his work. Boder only published a slightly revised version of the thesis thirteen years later, in 1940.<sup>50</sup> The span of time that it took for publication, whatever the reasons, shows that the issues of language dealt with in the thesis were more than a passing fancy. Indeed, a similar approach to language was one of the ways that, in the aftermath of the DP interviews, he came to measure the impact of catastrophe. In the case of the thesis, the material was literary and legal documents; in the case of the DPs, the units of analysis were the transcripts of spoken interviews.

Language was a key element in a broader approach toward how individuals interpret their own behavior. Boder attended the University of Chicago precisely at the time when sociological ethnography was in the making. This movement, under the guidance of such figures as W. I. Thomas, Robert Parks, and Ernest Burstein, applied the tools of anthropology to domestic communities and highlighted case histories and personal documents (including autobiographies and interviews).<sup>51</sup> Boder was clearly under the sway of this movement, which influenced psychology and anthropology as well as sociology.

Densely packed as it was, 1927 was crucial for another reason. Already in that year Boder became an instructor in psychology at the Lewis Institute in Chicago. The Lewis Institute was conceived in 1877 by Allen Cleveland Lewis as a college for the arts and sciences; it was formally opened in 1896. It was thus just over thirty years old when Boder joined its ranks. Boder's first academic position in America, the appointment may have marked the beginning of psychology at Lewis; Boder's versatility, experience, and training among great figures in Europe would have made him an attractive pioneering figure.

By 1931, Boder, still at the Lewis Institute, had attained the rank of professor. What had begun as a foot in the door had developed into a real position. His professional data from this period indicate two notable changes. Under "interests" in the field of psychology is listed "abnormal," and under "research" is listed "animal."<sup>52</sup> The first change is particularly suggestive, made the more so by the fact that Boder's file contains an undated reading list or syllabus for a course in abnormal psychology. Abnormal psychology in this period was concerned with various forms of mental illness. It is not such a far cry from these concerns with hysteria, insanity, and especially "shell shock" (one of the items on the course list) to a concern with what Boder called "trauma" or "deculturation"—terms in other words that link abnormal psychology's focus on mental unrest to catastrophic historical events and the ongoing effects on its victims.<sup>53</sup>

A college professor, Boder simultaneously pursued his academic studies as a PhD student, continuing at the University of Chicago until 1931 or 1932. He then switched over to Northwestern University, a change in terms of the geography of the city from the south side to the northern suburbs. What after so many years at the great university led him to make the change is not clear. One possibility is that he was able at Northwestern to fuse his pre-American training in physiological psychology with his newer interests in abnormal psychology.

This fusion was embodied by his Northwestern dissertation director, Franklin Fearing.<sup>54</sup> Fearing was both Boder's opposite and counterpart.<sup>55</sup> Six years Boder's junior, Fearing was born in Colorado in 1892 and educated at Stanford. He joined the faculty of Northwestern in 1927 and it was there that he completed his major study in the history (or prehistory) of physiological psychology.<sup>56</sup> This study was in certain respects a continuation of the work of the Russian psychologists with whom Boder had studied or been familiar. American through and through, Fearing was nonetheless conversant with the issues that defined the European scene from which Boder had come. The subdiscipline of physiological psychology was no doubt attractive to Boder. His two years at Northwestern were dominated by coursework in physiological psychology, and his dissertation focused on a particular manifestation of it.

In addition to the neat fit between Boder's interests and Fearing's expertise, there were other affinities. There was, for instance, anthropology and language, the interplay between which attracted both men.

And more broadly speaking, Fearing, who left Northwestern in 1936 to join the psychology department at UCLA, where he spent the remainder of his career, soon became known for his work in social psychology and in the psychology of the media—interests that were provocatively unconventional and that were taking shape as he guided Boder's project to fruition.<sup>57</sup> Like Boder, Fearing was a man of his times, responsive to current trends in the field and to the transformative properties of state-of-the-art technology. The relationship between the two men would continue in meaningful ways, becoming again day-to-day when Boder himself joined the UCLA psychology department in the 1950s. But even at a distance, Fearing remained a loyal mentor, authoring in 1950 the most substantial scholarly review of Boder's 1949 book, *I Did Not Interview the Dead*.<sup>58</sup>

Along with the transfer to Northwestern University, a second weighty change marked 1932: Boder became a U.S. citizen. This change in status from immigrant to full-fledged member of the country in which he resided took place exactly ten years after he had received a Mexican passport, a document beneficial in its own right but important also because it had enabled him to make almost yearly professional trips to the United States. These trips paved the way for his immigration to America in 1926. Once having arrived in the United States, Boder, again an immigrant, seems not to have journeyed beyond the borders of his new home. Obtaining U.S. citizenship opened the door to travel abroad, including a 1932 trip to Europe and to his home city of Libau, where his elderly mother continued to reside.

Pushing fifty, Boder reached an academic milestone when he received his doctorate in 1934 and published it a year later in *Comparative Psychology Monographs*, a series issued by Johns Hopkins University Press.<sup>59</sup> The subject and focus of the doctorate, dealing with a technical problem in physiological psychology, brought to fruition a longtime interest. It did not set out a course for future work. But a few aspects of the dissertation deserve mention as being representative of Boder's work in general. First, Boder places the problem of his study as emerging in the early period of the history of psychology—a period with which his own career nearly coincided. And second, he views the problem as an intersection of two disciplines, physiology and psychology, and attempts to take further what neither discipline had been able to achieve on its own. This appreciation for interdisciplinary study, perhaps even a view of its necessity (at least for psychology), is also an aspect of Boder's work in the years to come.

Boder visited Libau again in 1936. This may have been his last trip to Eastern Europe before the war and the last visit to his mother, who passed away in 1938.<sup>60</sup> In hindsight, Boder saw that a natural death coming before the storm was a blessing. His Riga-based brother Leopold, whom Boder probably also visited for the final time, did not get out before the war. Many years later, Boder was still unsure of his brother's

fate, never, it seems, having received the news that Leopold perished in the Riga ghetto.<sup>61</sup> The year 1936 also witnessed noteworthy changes locally. Boder's daughter, Elena, having been granted an MD, left Chicago to pursue her career in medicine and settled in Los Angeles.<sup>62</sup> Franklin Fearing made the same move in the same year.

Boder himself, however, with the opening of the Psychological Museum in 1937, became even more firmly wed to Chicago.<sup>63</sup> Officially, Boder was the museum's executive director and one of the three trustees. But beyond official titles, the museum was his baby. Based on the campus of the Lewis Institute, the museum was premised on the belief that academic psychology could speak directly to a broad public. It thus conducted tours for high school, college, and community groups; organized open houses consisting of "ten day exhibits demonstrating equipment and procedures of experimental psychology in the general as well as in the applied fields",<sup>64</sup> sponsored lectures; and offered a reading lounge and library. The creation of such an institution exemplifies Boder's popularizing instinct. A decade later, Boder was to conceive his DP interviews in a similar fashion, whereby the tools of the psychologist could if used properly bring essential information and knowledge to the public at large.

Boder's manner of dealing with the founding of the museum would also find expression in the interview project. He solicited responses to the museum's opening from many heavyweights in American psychology and the museum's second newsletter reproduced a number of the replies.<sup>65</sup> What is especially interesting is that Boder included critical as well as appreciative comments. John Watson, the founder of behavioral psychology, was unhappy with the name: "Somehow, I don't like the name. Museum, although it is in good repute, seems to connote death and relics. Isn't there some other name?" Boder never did change the institution's name, despite Watson's reservations. Harvard professor E. G. Boring, one of the most prestigious figures in academic psychology in this era, was more generally skeptical about the "visual means" to exhibit psychology: "My doubt about such a project," concluded Boring, "arises in my uncertainty as to whether enough subjects of this sort can be found." These statements are not representative; most comments were approving, even enthusiastic, without sounding so much as a negative note. And, to be sure, to receive interested replies from such luminaries, whatever the character and tone of their contribution, could be considered a plus. But inclusion of Watson and Boring's comments on the front page of the newsletter suggests Boder's commitment to unedited texts—a practice he would take to its fullest in producing the recordings and minimally edited interview transcriptions a decade later.

Boder's academic responsibilities increased when in 1938 he was named head of the Department of Philosophy and Psychology at the Lewis Institute. Confirming Boder's value to the institution (he had been at Lewis for over a decade), the appointment was remarkable

because it went so much against the grain of the marginal position of Jews in American academic psychology in this era. This widely shared disfavor was a product, according to Andrew Winston, of anti-Semitism in the highest places.<sup>66</sup> Winston has documented how the bias against Jews, particularly against those who acted with what were deemed typical Jewish traits, shaped the hiring practices of psychology departments, making it highly unusual for a Jew to be offered a job. Boder was thus something of an anomaly, not only securing a position and successfully climbing the academic ladder, but also in a matter of years directing a department. What enabled Boder to succeed where most others did not isn't clear. But Boder's contacts with some of the great European figures in psychology, contacts he regularly (and understandably) alluded to in his teaching and collegial conversations, may have provided him with a pedigree that neutralized whatever bias, if there was any, maintained by his colleagues at the Lewis Institute.<sup>67</sup>

At first, Boder was something of a big fish in a small pond at Lewis. That changed in 1940, when Lewis merged with the Armour Institute to form the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). The change was one of both size and notoriety. A few years before, Armour had brought on board the world-class architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, member of the Bauhaus school. He became the director of the School of Architecture and, over the next period, not only shaped its curriculum but designed the buildings that dotted the expanded IIT campus. Finding himself in a progressively bigger pond may have suited Boder just fine. He was, after all, anything but parochial, and his cosmopolitan experience and sensibility meshed well with the new direction of the institute. In point of fact, this rise in stature may have encouraged the grander visions that in time led to the idea of the interview project. The merger also brought Boder into closer proximity to the technological concerns that animated Armour and then IIT; the merger of Lewis and Armour in a sense foreshadowed the scholarly fusion that Boder engineered between the human sciences and the technology of the wire recorder.

In the summer of 1940, Boder's study of language earned him a slot in *Time* magazine.<sup>68</sup> This attention came in spite of the fact that adjectives and verbs, the featured elements of Boder's analysis, were not *Time's* major concern, which was understandably with the war in Europe and America's uneasy neutrality. "Planes cost money—a lot of it," President Roosevelt informed the nation on the magazine's cover, speculating on the costs of military preparedness. Inside, letters debated Lindberg's German sympathies and articles followed the unnerving progress of the "world war" as Belgium reeled from bombings of "noncombatants" and maps showed how the "Nazi trap" was closing on France. Yet other sections of the magazine charted normal developments on the domestic front, including Boder's study of word choice, literary genre, and personality. Grammatical preference, bland as it may appear, could according to Boder (or the magazine's version of Boder's thesis) reveal divergent

personality traits. The article was neither particularly accurate nor inspired. Yet Boder's arcane methods and nuanced conclusions were shown to have popular appeal—a salutary message for a scholar increasingly concerned about finding a responsive lay audience.

By 1941, Boder was no longer a department head. But during the war years he continued to teach, write, and oversee the operation of the Psychological Museum. He also directly engaged the war through his scholarship. First published in fall 1942, his article "Nazi Science" examined the case of Erik Jaensch, a highly regarded German experimental psychologist. Jaensch was for Boder symptomatic of the "men of science" who had come to espouse Nazi ideology and allow it to guide their research. Jaensch used the methods of psychology to indict a destructive biological type (an "antitype"), of whom the Jews were not the only, but rather the main, figure. Among the many causes of concern, this group weakened the health of German society, increasing the spread of tuberculosis and schizophrenia. Incapable of having its insidious traits corrected, the antitype could only be removed from society, a conclusion that also sanctioned brutal measures to carry it out. The noxious effect of such antitypes was visible at all levels of society; Jaensch even vilifies psychological testing because it is constructed by members of the antitype, thereby explaining why Jews scored so high.

By showcasing the foibles of a highly regarded scholar, Boder wanted to expose the extent to which Nazi ideology had co-opted science. He emphasized that Jaensch used this ideology not only to attack Jews but also to condemn commonplace aspects of modern society such as psychological testing. This was an area about which Boder, having refined various tests and made use of many others, would have been especially sensitive.

The focus of the article is telling. At this stage, a year after the United States had entered the war and two years after the establishment of the Warsaw Ghetto, Boder is concerned with the perpetrator, with showing how diverse and subtle are those who constitute the enemy. He feels obliged to delineate the arsenal of scholarly weapons they resort to. No one should think that the war is only to be fought on the ground and in the air; the battle is also to be waged in the academies. There, everything is at risk, even, as Boder nimbly puts it, in the "less pliable laboratory sciences." Like most others, Boder's contribution at this point is geared toward waging the war more effectively. The victims appear only in the outrageous terms fashioned by the perpetrator. Even in Boder's case, voicing explicit concern on behalf of the victim came only once victory was in sight.

Waging the war more effectively also demanded increased proficiency in sending, receiving, and breaking coded messages. As psychological consultant with the war training program at IIT, Boder was one of several psychologists to develop new ways of learning this process. To this end, he published in 1943 the *IIT Morse Code Training Forms: A Method*

of *Learning by Anticipated Recognition*, one of six wartime publications on the topic.

#### RECORDING THE HOLOCAUST

The war's end was Boder's beginning. He himself marked the germination of the interview project as May 1945, "shortly after the peace treaty was signed."<sup>69</sup> The project was apparently only conceivable in an officially proclaimed postwar era. He spent from May 1945 to June 1946 getting government approval for the visit to Europe, refining the conceptual basis of the interview project, and raising funds to finance the journey (though he viewed funding as a secondary concern). As late as June 1946 it was still not clear he would be going. But approval, concept, and funding came together enough to have him set sail in late July aboard the U.S.S. *Brazil*, a ship contracted by the U.S. government to convey delegates to the Paris Peace Conference, which was also scheduled to get underway at the end of July and the duration of which, incidentally, nearly paralleled the nine weeks of Boder's expedition.

When he returned to Chicago in early October, Boder was busy with honoring his commitment to teach the fall semester at IIT. But the aftermath of the trip pressed him with obligations of its own. He gave talks, lectured, made contact with relatives of the interviewees, and, on occasion, arranged for them to hear the voice of their loved one recounting what had happened. But voices were not enough. Boder set about transcribing the interviews soon after his return. In 1947 came the publication of the first excerpt; by 1948, astonishingly, a book manuscript was ready. Yet this, too, was not enough. To demonstrate the significance of the horrors recounted, Boder had to submit the interviews to analysis, setting forth a kind of commentary on word and narrative as well as codifying the narrators' experiences in terms of the kind of trauma suffered. It was all of a piece with contemporary work in the social sciences on the human document as a lens to the study of personality. These interviews were the quintessential human document. Thus under the heading "interests" in his American Psychological Association Directory entry for 1948, Boder added the line "transfiguration of personality in displaced people of Europe." His personality was not so much transfigured as it was galvanized.

The book that grew out of the project, containing a selection of transcribed interviews and a modicum of analysis, was called in manuscript "The D.P. Story" and was eventually published under the title *I Did Not Interview the Dead*. Both the book and its haunting title receive attention in later chapters. For now, it is sufficient simply to note the labor that went into finding a suitable publisher, preparing the manuscript for publication, and taking the steps to ensure its success. Boder was already prospecting for publishers in the summer of 1947; the book

almost found a home about a year later, but that possibility fell through; a commitment came only in spring 1949. Boder was resolute about finding a publisher who would bring out a book as near as possible to his conception. This meant, on the one hand, a book that, with its varied and engaging interviews, could be profitably read by lay readers young and old. On the other hand, the original manuscript was equipped with scholarly material and apparatus that mainly addressed the professional. On top of that, Boder insisted that the language of the interviews, while translated into idiomatic English, would retain the "verbal peculiarities" of the original speakers; Boder believed that these peculiarities bore linguistic evidence of the trauma they had suffered. The engaging material would therefore remain moderately difficult to read. Trying with integrity to have the book be meaningful for radically diverse audiences, Boder wanted to have his cake and eat it, too. The search for a publisher that was interested and would honor something of Boder's unwieldy conception came down to two. The Jewish Publication Society gave the manuscript careful consideration but then decided in the negative, one of the factors seemingly Boder's insistence on preserving the "awkward" English translation. The University of Illinois Press, less beholden to a lay readership and under the influence of approbation from some big names in the field, gave a positive answer. Boder spent from April refining the manuscript, which had been trimmed of substantial scholarly material but held onto the awkward language. The book appeared in late fall 1949, and by December Boder was sending copies to friends, colleagues, and potential reviewers.

One of the book's recipients was Dr. G. Seeger, project review officer at the National Institute of Health. Boder had recently been informed that his 1948 grant would be continued in 1949 and he was dutifully sending along to the granting organization the publication that was one product of the work supported. Indeed, interest and support were coming from many different directions, giving Boder, along with encouragement, the time and assistance necessary to duplicate, transcribe, and analyze the interviews. The publication of *I Did Not Interview the Dead* was in this regard a stepping stone, the first major outgrowth of the interview project to see the light of day. But it was also a fragment, an abridgment, a product of compromise after compromise, undertaken undoubtedly with a sense of resignation but also with the belief that it was only the first step. No less, but no more. Coming just as the book was brought out, the renewal of the grant gave tangible expression to the hope that he would be able to carry out the processing of the interviews in full and on his exacting terms.

This period, bountiful in so many ways, also took a toll. In November 1949, close to the time of his sixty-third birthday, Boder suffered a heart attack (in his own ponderous phrase, a "seizure of coronary"). He spent some time in the hospital but, responding well to treatment, he was back at work in a matter of months. He labored hard to help his book obtain

the widest possible circulation among both professional and lay readers. Yet he also went further with the interviews, bringing out the first series of *Topical Autobiographies*, a volume that contained *I Did Not Interview the Dead*'s eight interviews together with another eight interviews (subsequent volumes appeared in 1953, 1955, 1956, and 1957). The volume was Boder's personally produced collection of the sixteen interviews that he had originally envisioned for *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, which the press had forced him to condense and abridge. *Topical Autobiographies* restored things to their original proportions, the full number of interview transcriptions he had wished, with their length intact (one interview with Abraham Kimmelman, who had been referred to as "Abe Mohnblum," had been considerably shortened in the book version). The fact that he republished the interviews included in the book declares his wish to produce a different kind of collection, encyclopedic and comprehensive. It would contain whatever the researcher might want to examine. There were clearly trade-offs in turning to self-publishing. On the one hand, Boder lost the imprimatur of a press and the associated publicity secured by it; his self-published volumes were never reviewed. But on the other hand, he gained the freedom to do as he pleased. Because the project was so vast and the linguistic issues so complex, this was a significant gain.

Intent in this period to bring the raw material before a public, Boder also found students to analyze the interviews and thereby subject them to their first scholarly scrutiny. Three master's-level students in psychology drew on the interviews, each focusing on a different strand: Polly Hammond dealt with the young, Alice Brown with the mature, and Audrey Uher with the Christians. Each worked with three to five interviews, which they classified as personal documents, mined for linguistic cues and then rated according to a trauma. The students' research clearly derived from Boder's, the fruits of which would partially appear in 1954. Yet the students' efforts, completed in 1951 and 1952, preceded and abetted his, demonstrating the feasibility of such an approach and experimenting with the division of the interviews according to age (Hammond and Brown) or religion (Uher)—categories that Boder never himself invoked. That the three students who carried out this work were women is intriguing. Boder directed male graduate students during the same period but, even though assisting Boder with processing the interviews, they did not devote their thesis work to them. It may be that the women were more pliable, willing (or acculturated) to follow their supervisor's directives. Again, the three were also not Jewish, confirming professionally Boder's belief that although the interviews might well have a special interest for the Jewish community, the subject was universal.

Although he recovered from illness enough to collate interviews and mentor students, Boder's health continued to be a factor. When he decided in summer 1951 to undertake another set of on-site interviews,

he was not able to do it alone this time. This was the case even though the physical demands of the trip—to Kansas City, a few hundred miles away—were much more modest than those of the first one. Boder brought along a graduate student, Vin Rosenthal, who not only eased the physical burden of the journey but also conducted a number of the interviews.

The trip came in response to a formidable natural disaster: July 9–13, unprecedented rainfall had caused vast flooding in several Midwestern states, the worst on record for over a hundred years. From the headwaters of the Kansas River to the mouth of the Missouri River at St. Louis, about 2 million acres were flooded. Although the loss of life was comparatively small, damage to property was immense, including the destruction of 45,000 homes, which displaced huge numbers of people. Boder was once again interested in gauging the “impact of the disaster” by means of interviews with the “individual private citizen.” He was again in the midst of communities of displaced persons. The proximity of the flooded region to Boder’s home base meant that he did not this time have to wait long to hear from the victims. Indeed, he arrived on July 21, less than ten days after the most intense rainfall. Over the next days he and Rosenthal conducted in English and Spanish forty-seven interviews.

Of intrinsic interest, the Kansas City interviews were undertaken with the idea of a comparison to his European DP interviews conducted nearly five years previously, contrasting the response to a natural disaster to that with a man-made one. Boder found the differences enormous and had hoped to analyze them systematically. Yet the approach was strikingly similar. Having once traveled to the site to conduct the interviews, Boder felt that the only way to obtain the necessary information for such a comparative study was to travel again to the site of the disaster. Only the year before, Boder had brought out the first series of transcribed European DP interviews. As he continued to process them, it was almost as if he were waiting for the opportunity for such a comparison to arise. Kansas City fit the bill.

Sometime over the next year, Boder was advised for reasons of health not to spend another winter in Chicago. He heeded the advice, retired from IIT in 1952, and arranged to be based in the psychology department of UCLA, where, supported by the National Institute of Mental Health grant, he continued processing the DP interviews. The change could not help but be profound. He had resided in Chicago for twenty-six years, far longer than anywhere else. It was also in Chicago that he had found a professional niche and, perhaps even more consequential, the intellectual stimulation and support to conceive extraordinary academic enterprises.<sup>70</sup> Yet the move to Los Angeles had several points of continuity. His daughter Elena had by this time built up a private practice and an academic career in pediatric neurology there. She had married, and her husband’s family also lived in LA. They, together with

his wife Dora's California relatives, would become one of the Boder's social circles. On the academic side, Franklin Fearing had already been at UCLA for over fifteen years. He and Boder would pick up where they had left off.

Boder said goodbye in Chicago to dedicated students who had helped organize the DP interviews and launch the serious study of them. But he had the good fortune in Los Angeles of finding other students. Foremost among these was Donald Procter, whom Boder cites as editor on a number of the transcriptions and whom he lists as a coauthor on the proposed linguistic study of the interviews. Crucial to the transcriptions, moreover, was translator Bernard Wolf, a Polish Jewish survivor who had enrolled at UCLA as a student of English literature. As I later argue, Wolf's role was profound in terms of what he as a survivor of labor and concentration camps could contribute both to translating more than two dozen interviews and to deciphering the special concentration camp vocabulary used by many of the interviewees. In Chicago, the students had harnessed the interviews for conceptual analysis, but, lacking familiarity with the interview languages, they had to rely on Boder's English-language transcripts; in Los Angeles, new students, particularly Wolf, helped release the potential and nuances of the raw material.

The move to Los Angeles thus maintained the project's momentum. It was two years after arriving at UCLA that Boder published "The Impact of Catastrophe," one of the major essays that he devoted to analyzing the interviews and the only one thus far to be published. The article appeared in 1954 in the *Journal of Psychology* and brought together many of Boder's psychological concerns. The article yoked the study of word frequency (the backbone of his master's thesis) to an index of physical and cultural dimensions of trauma. A review of previous studies drawing on the personal document (autobiographies, journals, and letters) justified Boder's use of the DP interviews. But he argued that these precedent-setting studies lacked the authority to deal with catastrophe as experienced by his interviewees. Boder clearly saw the article as a milestone. He sent it out to a long list of colleagues and institutions (a 1957 "alphabetical list of recipients of reprint" records 129 mailings from 1954 on). The article was for the academic world what his book was for the popular one. It was also more open ended. It provided data, made classifications, drew conclusions; yet it also pointed to future studies (including a comparison between the impact of natural and man-made catastrophes) that were to complement this one.

The article gave tangible evidence of what could be done with the interviews from a social science perspective. But it ended up marking a high point; the follow-up articles were not carried out, or at least not completed. This may be because, as I detail in a later chapter, the raw material had a greater value in the eyes of his patrons. Boder's ongoing publication of the transcripts, with his tenacious dedication to worldwide distribution, offered to the scholarly community at large an

ever-growing stock of material to draw on. His energies were thus in one sense directed, in another deflected, toward transcription.

Over the next two years, the time-consuming occupation of transcription thus intensified, with a dramatic boost in production. Yet by 1956, the task of transcription, too, had almost run its course. The National Institute of Mental Health funding that had supported Boder's work for nearly ten years was coming to an end. One response was a last-ditch effort on his part to have the agency reconsider the decision. Strikingly, Boder emphasized that it was the unprecedented nature of his task that caused him to underestimate both the time and expense involved:

In dealing with procedures at least technically without precedent, the investigator, in applying for funds, was unable from the start to envision the great complexity involved in the task, and to make accordingly a more precise estimate as to costs, or time required for the full completion of the project.<sup>71</sup>

This explanation is dated March 1957. In private correspondence two months later, Boder was of two minds as to how to assess the work he had carried out. On one side, there was simply discontent: "Of course, I am not all on the up and up. My project although unfinished terminates this month. No more funds." Yet from another side he also voiced an appreciation for what had been accomplished: "Of course the material is available in microcard form, deposited in the principal libraries of the world, and there are fifty sets in mimeographed form."<sup>72</sup> Perhaps as revealing as the two-sided assessment is in both cases the litany of resignation marked by the refrain, "of course." This consolatory refrain did not, however, keep Boder from pursuing with his characteristic industry and imagination other avenues of support for the project, one of which was an ambitious plan to transfer it to a different venue, that is, Israel. The fascinating story of Boder's efforts to base the project in Jerusalem, and the mystery that continues to surround the outcome of this attempt, are told in a later chapter.

The transcription work had dominated Boder's professional life for more than a decade. Yet his other interests, if subordinate, continued to be of consequence. In 1956, for instance, Boder prepared a UCLA lecture on Bekhterev and Pavlov, the first his teacher a half-century earlier and the second a renowned contributor to the development of the notion of psychological conditioning in particular and behavioral psychology in general.<sup>73</sup> This return to the origins of physiological psychology in Russia was to play an increasingly important role. Indeed, as support for the transcription work diminished, Boder turned back to the Russian progenitors, translating, for example, portions of a volume on the history of physiology in Russia. In actuality, the turning back may have been part of an ongoing reworking of these earlier, European influences. It might be fairer to say that he continued throughout his career to maintain his tie to the Russian founders of behavioral psychology, their concepts filtered

perhaps through his mentor Fearing's work on reflex. This thread existed side by side with Boder's extension of American psychologists Gordon Allport and John Dollard's study of the personal document. Boder's copious sensibility seemingly held onto what was old even while guided by what was new. In the course of his career, the pursuit of an objective psychology as articulated by the Russians was joined to an appreciation of the radically subjective as set forth by the Americans. His way was not so much to choose sides as to synthesize.

The health condition that had afflicted Boder for over a decade finally killed him; he died of a heart attack in his Los Angeles home on the morning of December 18, 1961. His wife Dora lived until 1975; his daughter Elena, who had no children of her own, until 1995. The American Psychological Directory for 1962, published when Boder was no longer alive, may give his last characterization of the interview project: a "collection and content analysis of verbatim recorded DP interviews." What had hitherto been cast under the rubric of transfiguring personality is here rendered in a less confined idiom, highlighting instead the nature of the material and its historical circumstances. In the final statement, personality yields to genre and history. It is a suggestive, if not conclusive, personal and professional epitaph.

The postwar setting in which Boder conducted his "verbatim recorded DP interviews" itself presented many challenges, for conditions were makeshift and in flux. Although Boder knew, more or less, what he wanted to do when he got to Europe, even his concept of who he would interview and where he would do it shifted numbers of times. Once he actually began to interview, he was moved to revamp his idea of how to proceed, especially as he traveled to different locations sheltering diverse communities. Over time, as he came to learn in detail about what his narrators had suffered, he began to ask other kinds of questions. It is to chronicle the evolving nature of Boder's European expedition, a watershed in his career and in the history of Holocaust testimony, that we now turn.

## Chapter 2

### Summer, 1946, Part I

#### THE EUROPEAN EXPEDITION AND THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF TESTIMONY

##### POSITIVELY NO SPACE

Boder arrived in Paris some fourteen months after the end of the war and nearly two years after the city's liberation. He knew well that Paris, and particularly the Jews of Paris, had by no means escaped the onslaught. In a letter posted just before the war's end, a Parisian cousin of Boder's set out in stark terms what the Jews of Paris had gone through and where that had left them:

I am well and so are the children, but their mother has been deported by the Germans in July 1942. Since that time, we never heard of her. Useless to say that the years of German Occupation will remain for the rest of our life the bitterest memory of shame, despair and humiliation.... Most of our friends have been deported and in fact to me anyhow, Paris is now like a cemetery, as my best friends are gone.... I thank you very much for your generous offer of assistance, but we are managing so far. But should you be able to send to the children some kind of foodstuff parcel (containing eventually fat, cocoa, rice, dried milk, sugar, etc.) we should appreciate it very much.<sup>1</sup>

By the time of his 1946 arrival, material privation, at least, was no longer acute, and services—such as the taxis Boder depended on to reach the DP centers in and around Paris—had returned almost to normal.<sup>2</sup> Yet he was often compelled to carry out the interviews under makeshift conditions that were the lot of displaced persons:

When I appeared at the J. D. C. office I was informed that there positively was no space available with the required privacy for recorded interviews. As usual, I found some space, a storage room. There was trouble with the electric power. As far as I remember, I had to work with a transformer / from 220 to 110 volts/, or possible [sic] through the converter from DC to AC. There were frequent interruptions by messenger boys who needed their bicycles. There was also now and then some shrilling noise from nearby power machinery. However, the series [conducted at this site] contains some of the most extensive and instructive interviews.<sup>3</sup>

Boder was at work in the field. Though he had not previously carried out interviews under such conditions, he knew enough about ethnography to improvise, finding space, for instance, when there was seemingly no space to be had. What's more, the formula he invokes is that the more difficult the material circumstances (trouble, transformers, interruptions, noise), the more satisfying the outcome. His field notes on the visit to the Paris JDC tell this story, standing in for the narrative account of his trip that he never got around to writing.

The kind of interview space that Boder usually found—where, with whom, when, and under what circumstances—deserves its own story. He left some written notes and recorded some brief comments on how he conducted the expedition: the shelters he visited, the criteria and means by which he attracted and chose interviewees, the protocol he followed during the interviews. His remarks on these points are essential, if spotty and incomplete. Yet they are also not the final word, and they can be misleading if taken as such.

The key to appreciating Boder's expedition is chronology. The early postwar date at which he carried out the interviews has aroused interest.<sup>4</sup> But what is essential is to reconstruct the evolution of the project over time, particularly once Boder arrived in Europe. Previous commentary on Boder's interviews looks at them without regard to when or where the individual interviews took place. This indifference to time and setting, it must be said, is largely of a piece with Boder's own retrospective indifference to the chronology of his expedition. He organized his main interview publications (*I Did Not Interview the Dead*, *Topical Autobiographies*, and the "The Impact of Catastrophe") based on an interview's content and technical quality. This said, Boder did not go to the other extreme, weeding out chronology in order to mythologize the expedition. Rather, he left in plenty of traces, including the wire recorder spool numbers, which generally (though not always) were used in sequence. Indeed, the spool numbers give a schematic picture of the expedition from beginning to end.<sup>5</sup> Attending to the day-by-day sequence of the interviews reveals the ongoing challenges Boder faced and how he tried to meet them.

His work in the field was not only comprised of interviews. In true ethnographic spirit, Boder collected songs and poetry from the war period and also documented singing and music in the concentration camps. Valued in its own right, singing also became pivotal to the interview process. The "common denominator [of Boder's project]," as one commentator has aptly put it, "was song," the attempt to do justice to the aural dimension of the victim's experience.<sup>6</sup> And like so much else having to do with the project, Boder's mode of collecting song changed during the expedition, effecting in turn a change in his interview protocol and in his use and conception of the wire recorder.

## EARLY STAGES

Boder's earliest reference to such a project dates from May 1, 1945, some fourteen months before he was finally able to depart for Europe.<sup>7</sup> The reference took the form of a "memorandum," outlining in six numbered paragraphs multiple aspects of the project in the making:

1. The technical know-how to "record human speech."
2. The victims should be recorded "in their own language" and "their own voice" for "psychological and historical reasons."
3. The victims' many exotic languages make it impossible for journalists to do the job competently.
4. A psychologist must get the stories of all the participants: victims, perpetrators, and bystanders.
5. The recordings can be used both for documenting the war and for educating Americans and Europeans.
6. Time is of the essence since memory and emotion fade.<sup>8</sup>

Boder modified the memorandum to keep pace with the quickly changing circumstances of postwar Europe. A July 9, 1945, version, for instance, gives the title a slightly more academic tone ("Memorandum on the Recording and Study of Personal Verbatim Reports of War Sufferers of Certain Samples of the European Population"), specifies the participation of German perpetrators, emphasizes the role of children (both German and "orphaned children of displaced people"), and projects in a year's time a follow-up study. The possible sites where Boder would conduct the interviews also shifted rapidly: the May 1 memorandum spoke of "victims found in prison and concentration camps, as well as in areas to be liberated within the next few days"; the July 9 revision designated the "victims now to be found in relocation camps and hospitals in the Allied occupied zones." Perhaps unwittingly, the versions of the memoranda were marking the transition from wartime to postwar Europe.

Boder circulated the memorandum widely, elaborating and nuancing points in letters to prospective benefactors. On July 11, for instance, he sent a copy to Assistant Secretary of State for Cultural and Public Affairs, Archibald MacLeish: "Attached you will find," Boder began, "a memorandum referring to a scientific project which I have planned some time ago." Just how long ago Boder unfortunately does not say; the date of the memorandum supplies what we know of the project's origins. Though the attached memorandum summarized his plan, Boder did not rely on it to convey the project's aims and significance: "The basic aim," he spelled out to MacLeish in the letter proper, "is to obtain several hundred verbatim records of people in one way or another affected by the war in Europe. Never before have verbal recordings of stories of such people been made, at least not in reasonable quantity." Two more pages detail the "scientific and cultural material" to be gleaned in "such verbatim records." These materials would be, on the one hand, culture

specific, including "valuable data on the moods, grievances, hopes, and aspirations of the European peoples with whom we have dealt in the present conflict either as friends or foes." On the other hand, the materials would also illuminate the human condition in general, presenting the researcher "with patterns of thought and behavior the analysis of which seems indispensable, if a better understanding of man is to [be] attained." The conclusion of the letter quotes from the memorandum to drive home the urgency of his request: "We must take into account the failure of human memory and the fading of emotions due to time."<sup>9</sup>

As Boder's glosses show, the memorandum could not speak for itself. Yet time and again, Boder quoted from it as a self-authorizing source of the project's "indispensable" value. Indeed, he continued to quote it in the expedition's aftermath. In the course of time, the memorandum took on the status of a founding document that not only articulated the project's aims, guided their realization, and broadened the base of support, but testified to the project's integrity after the fact.<sup>10</sup>

Having articulated the expedition's basic outlines, Boder went about trying to actualize it in the summer of 1945. His contacts were many and multiple: government (such as MacLeish), academic, and Jewish communal. Communication and negotiation were by means of letter and telephone, with some personal visits when he could get away from Chicago and when he felt a face-to-face meeting might tip the balance. Everyone was interested, many were supportive, and numbers worked on his behalf to get him to Europe.

But to travel to Europe in summer 1945, even with the best of academic intentions, was not simple. Boder could not go on his own initiative: America continued to fight in the Pacific theater and the Allies occupied Europe as a virtual war zone. He was required to attach himself to one or another organization that already had a base of operations in Europe. To do this, he had to make a case for the value of what he planned to do in terms of postwar needs and desires. He had, in other words, to frame his scientific work according to humanitarian or political concerns. One strategy was to be as accommodating as possible, offering to tailor the project to the needs of the agency. Yet this flexible strategy had to be set forth in such a way as not to appear merely opportunistic. It was a tightrope that Boder could perhaps not always walk with the necessary balance.

Through June and July 1945, it looked likely that he would make the trip under the auspices of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).<sup>11</sup> Yet even when that option seemed a good bet, Boder, with a sense that nothing could yet be counted on, pursued other possibilities. The main alternatives were the Jewish agencies that were sending representatives to Europe. They too showed interest in Boder's project, and Boder for his part demonstrated how the project could be slanted so as to fit comfortably under their various rubrics. Toward the end of August, in fact, something changed and prospects for the government-sponsored trip

dimmed. Indeed, Boder himself explained it in terms of the shifting fortunes of the OSS.

Two things stand out when comparing Boder's ideas in this period with the project as it eventually came to be. First, the people whom Boder originally considered as potential interviewees came from a far broader spectrum than those he finally settled on. In Boder's earliest conception, DPs were only one group among many "wartime sufferers"; some potential interviewees were not even sufferers at all. Boder's early roster included various sectors of the European population; the rank and file of perpetrators of atrocities; and children (either DPs or children of German families). This compilation is striking both because it includes perpetrators and because the term "rank and file" will eventually be applied not to perpetrators but to victims. Another roster of candidates penned in the same period specifies the targets, approach, and numbers in greater detail: the main group would consist of 150 fifteen-minute interviews with DPs, 75–100 of which would be interviews with DP children in Switzerland, France, and Palestine. This is clearly a variation on the DP theme. But the list also appends a broader spectrum of interview candidates: (1) German children, (2) adult Germans who had lived near concentration camps, and (3) perpetrators. At this stage, Boder cast his net widely, including victims, bystanders, and perpetrators. They all had things to say worth recording, even if they all had not suffered equally.<sup>12</sup>

The matter of the countries in which he would conduct the interviews was also in flux. As we saw above, Switzerland, France, and Palestine were in the running, with the first and last as chief contenders. Indeed, at different points, Boder contemplated making either Switzerland or Palestine the sole interview site. Switzerland was attractive for several reasons. In addition to the fact that DPs had been sheltered there and neutral Switzerland was easier to gain entry to than the other countries in postwar Western Europe, Boder also had a prewar Swiss colleague that he could count on for support.<sup>13</sup> Palestine must have been attractive for its own reasons: Boder had relatives living there; DPs were arriving in some numbers; and the fact that it was not part of wartime Europe meant less damage to basic services. It served as a fallback plan. If he failed to get a sponsor for Europe, Boder noted in mid-July 1945, he would head to Palestine, where it was said that 1,800 survivors of the Buchenwald concentration camp had (or were soon to have) arrived. Yet even this option did not pan out in 1945 and, by the time he set sail a year later, Palestine was no longer part of his itinerary.

Of those countries he traveled to in 1946, Switzerland was always front and center, France somewhat less so, while Italy and Germany were added later. The delay of a year allowed for focus in the interview sites; the wide net was pulled in. Based in France, he could get to the maximum number of shelters while undertaking a minimum of travel. In contrast, the original conception would have meant traveling far to reach

only a few. What Boder lost through the year's delay due to the interviewees' fading memories, he gained in terms of access and mobility.

As the roster of people and places came into focus and material support for travel to Western Europe came through, Boder presumed he would arrive in Europe in July 1946 and leave in September. The dates of travel were postponed several times. Eventually, he arrived in Paris on July 29 and left there on October 4.

His date of arrival is actually not quite so clear-cut. In several documents Boder notes that he "arrived in Paris on Saturday, July 29, 1946." But the day and date do not square: July 29, 1946, was a Monday. In "The Displaced People" he details the sequence: Saturday was the day of arrival "and the following Monday I had my first interviews"—which are properly dated July 29. So he must have arrived in Europe on Saturday, July 27. How to explain Boder's apparent confusion? I am tempted to read his mistake symbolically: the day the interviews began was perhaps the true "arrival" date; once he started what he had come for, the calendar actually began; once he heard from the first interviewees in Paris—Leon Shachnovski, Polia Bisenhaus, and others—he knew he was no longer in America. Hence he may have "arrived" in Europe—psychologically speaking, as Boder might say—only on July 29.<sup>14</sup>

#### ON SITE: BODER'S ITINERARY

Paris was Boder's base of operations. This put him in proximity to the largest number of DPs in Western Europe outside of Germany. And for a month he remained within the orbit of Paris, shuttling to and fro between suburban sites and his base of operations at the Grand Hotel. Even when he expanded his reach and traveled outside of France, he always returned to his Parisian base. Postwar Paris thus defined the possibilities and limitations of Boder's 1946 sojourn. If while in the United States he had received clearance to travel to Germany, he might well have chosen a different address—but perhaps not, given that he had friends in Paris who could help him get along in a Europe still very much recovering from the war's devastation.

It was these Paris-based friends who guided him to the Grand Hotel, situated across from L'Opera, a circa 1860s building erected at the time of Hausmann's redesign of medieval Paris to meet modern cosmopolitan sensibilities. Apparently Boder had not arranged beforehand for a place to stay: "My first problem [once having arrived] was to get located. With the help of some friends residing permanently in Paris I got lodging at the Grand Hotel."<sup>15</sup> Perhaps Boder deferred arranging his "get[ting] located" in order to first obtain information about interview sites. Only then could he know what location would serve best. The friends were clearly important in making sure he did not end up in an out-of-the-way section of the city. Striking as well is Boder's characteristic formulation

of the help provided by friends "residing permanently in Paris"—a phrase (unlike "Paris-based friends" or "French friends") flowing from the pen of an émigré about his counterparts whose permanence anywhere is something not to be taken for granted.

The Grand Hotel was central enough to meet Boder's needs: "It soon became obvious that my choice of residence was a wise one. From the entrance of the hotel I had a reasonable chance to get a taxi, at least in the daytime."<sup>16</sup> The reasonable chance was crucial, given Boder's "urgent dependence" on taxis to ferry him and his equipment to the "shelter houses" where the DPs resided. The hotel was to prove important as an improvised interview site at the time of an ORT international conference in mid-August 1946, which brought to Paris a number of leaders of the European Jewish DP community. Boder participated in the conference, recorded its proceedings, and conducted interviews in the hotel with some of those who were in attendance—interviews that turned out to be significant on many levels.<sup>17</sup>

Boder's itinerary eventually included four countries—France, Switzerland, Italy, and Germany—and sixteen different interview sites:

Date	Location	Institution
July 29–30	Paris	ORT Training School
July 31–August 2	outside Paris	Chateau Boucicaut
August 3–7	Paris,	Rue de patin
August 12	Paris	Joint (JDC) Office
August 16–20	Paris	Grand Hotel
August 21	Paris	Home of the Kahn Family
August 22–23	Paris	Joint (JDC) Office
August 26–27	Geneva, Switzerland	ORT Training School
August 31– September 2	outside Milan, Italy	Castle Tradate DP Camp
September 8	Paris, Bellevue	children's orphanage
September 12–13	outside Paris	ORT Henonville DP Camp
September 19–20	Munich	Flak Kaserne DP Camp
September 21	Munich	Lohengrin DP Camp
September 23	outside Munich	Feldafing DP Camp
September 24	Munich	UNRRA University
September 25	Wiesbaden, Germany	Jewish Community House/
September 26	Wiesbaden	Synagogue
October 4	Paris	Grand Hotel

This list is in some respects deceptive. Boder had always hoped that he would interview in Germany where the main DP camps were located. But, despite his many efforts to get clearance, he left America without obtaining it. Once in Europe, he vigorously continued to press his case, but by the third week in August he had virtually given up hope. Indeed, even as late as mid-September, when he had returned to France from his brief visits to Geneva and the suburbs of Milan, he presumed he was leaving Europe the next week, without spending so much as a day in Germany. Only then, already on or past the midpoint of the month, did he receive the clearance he had so badly wanted. Permission in hand, he cut short a return visit to Geneva, pushed back his departure to America, and made plans to go to Germany later that week.

For most of the expedition—a month and a half, through eighty interviews, over 70 percent of both—Boder believed that he would have to make do with the interviews in France, Switzerland, and Italy. To be sure, these sites yielded in-depth stories with a varied population of DPs whose experience and background ranged widely. Yet Boder was aware that not visiting Germany would mean missing a crucial aspect of the DPs' fate. This prospect did not stop him from undertaking the expedition as originally planned; he went with the understanding that he would have to settle for second best. But the missing piece of Germany (and, in a related but different way, of Poland too) colored his views and questions. As we will see, he tried through various strategies to compensate for this lack. But to read the itinerary without this context would wrongly give us the impression that everything that occurred was in place from the beginning. It wasn't, and the interviews have to be listened to, or read, with this in mind.

For all that, the itinerary does reveal some useful data. On the vast majority of days Boder conducted multiple interviews, usually between two and five, with each interview lasting from fifteen minutes to as much as four hours. As the days went by and Boder sensed his time drawing short—he was obliged to return to Chicago to teach in the fall semester—he stepped up the pace. Toward the end, he completed as many as nine in a single day. This withering day of interviews was September 21. That breakneck pace was even beyond what Boder could maintain, and most days total half that number. Some days are simply unaccounted for.

#### TIMING: SUMMER, 1946

Today we are struck by Boder's resourcefulness in carrying out these interviews at such an early date, less than a year and a half after the war's end. Yet what for us is early was for him late. He had hoped to reach the DPs while their "memories [were] still fresh." This clearly referred to obtaining a detailed, accurate account of what a DP had

experienced. But it also implied a certain degree of emotional fidelity. In one instance, Boder elaborates what was lost by arriving as late as he did:

What strikes one is the matter of factness in the description of the liberation (by the Russians). In this respect one feels that by not having taken immediate impressions in 1945, we have lost a number of enthusiastic stories full of hopes which by 1946 have proved empty illusions.<sup>18</sup>

Immediate impressions would have told a different story than mediated ones; the empty illusions of the present configure a different past than that actually experienced.<sup>19</sup> One wonders whether Boder's assessment is accurate, or whether in this case he is projecting a hope that, at least according to some survivor accounts, never existed.<sup>20</sup> Yet what is crucial is that Boder felt keenly the difference between 1946 and 1945 in terms of fidelity to lived experience.

Timing played a decisive role in another respect. Boder's task was clearly affected by the dramatic shift in the DP population that took place in summer 1946.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Boder's arrival intersected with some of the most gripping events in the postwar era. The first set of events brought to Germany thousands of Eastern European Jews desperate to leave the inhospitable climate of postwar Poland and Russia. The decision to leave Eastern Europe evolved over time. Initially, most camp survivors who were physically able returned to home towns and cities with the hope of finding relatives and friends. More often than not, however, they did not find anyone. Further, Jews who returned to or remained in postwar Poland experienced acute and often violent anti-Semitism.<sup>22</sup> Beatings and killings became regular events, prompted by traditional anti-Semitism inflamed by greed for the property of former Jewish residents and by resentment at communist rule and its alleged Jewish supporters. Religious and civil authorities did little to deter these abuses. The violence against returnees culminated on July 4–5, 1946, when a blood libel in Kielce led to the murder of over forty Jews. This horrendous episode confirmed for most that Poland could not serve as a postwar home. Over the next few months, the Jews who left Poland numbered close to 70,000, most of whom headed to Germany as a way station out of Europe.

It was in the wake of Kielce and in the midst of the relocation of Polish Jews to Western Europe that Boder came, saw, and listened. That the Kielce pogrom had occurred only three weeks before his arrival led Boder to ask pointed questions about its implications and the state of Polish Jewry in general. Moreover, the massive shift of postwar population west from Poland more generally affected whom he spoke to and about what. It also intensified his quest to make sense of the DP's fate, as he termed it, and of the fate of Europe's remaining Jews at large.

## IN SEARCH OF THE NOT UNUSUAL STORY

Boder was careful to set down, albeit briefly, the protocol that he followed for conducting the interviews: the people he interviewed and how he chose them; the amount of time that he spent with the interviewee; the guidelines he would offer in preparation for the interview; some brief particulars about his role as interviewer; and the number of days he would spend at any given site.

A summary of the protocol appears in the introduction to *I Did Not Interview the Dead*:

I would meet a colony of DPs in a particular shelter house for lunch or dinner. After the meal I would ask them to sing and, with their knowledge, I recorded the songs. When I played these back, the wonder of hearing their own voices recorded was boundless. Then I would explain my project and ask for volunteers. Very often the group leaders would suggest persons whose stories were considered exceptional and I had to explain that I wanted the rank and file experience—not the unusual story. I would limit my stay to about two days in once place, partly because the narratives would begin to show signs of preparation and lose their spontaneity, and partly because of the desire to record the experiences of individuals in many and dissimilar groups.<sup>23</sup>

From the outset, Boder used the wire recorder as a tool to capture the attention of the DPs, almost like a barker at a carnival (which he was not and the DP centers were not). His sense that he needed some gimmick to pique their curiosity was probably not misplaced; we know from the work of the historical commissions of the low percentage of DPs who were willing or able to tell their story. The recorder was what Boder had that others did not (indeed, its own story in relation to his project is related in chapter 5). To hear their voices coming out of a machine was a form of magic; the prestige it garnered him gave Boder an opening to explain what he wanted in return.

Yet it took some work to get what he wanted, mainly because, as he tells us, the group leaders had their own ideas about the stories worth hearing. By summer 1946, they may have thought that the usual story was so well known that it did not bear repeating.<sup>24</sup> What was worth hearing was what was out of the ordinary. For Boder, however, exactly the opposite was true. He wanted to interview those whose stories were "not unusual," were rather as common as could be. Armed with such "rank and file" stories he could upon return to America claim in good faith that the dozens of stories he recorded represented the experience of thousands. In terms of audience, no one would be able to argue that such experiences were the exception to the rule. In terms of his scientific study, the "not unusual" stories would allow him to generalize from his findings.

His travel to various sites aimed to make the most of the wide range of DPs; Boder hence conceived the project with an awareness that the DP community was anything but monolithic. Just how dramatically so likely

came into focus only when he had actually gone from place to place. Out of a desire for the many and dissimilar came interviews with young and old, women and men, Western and Eastern Europeans, religious and nonreligious, and, perhaps most singular among like-minded projects, Jews and Christians.

Most of the interviews were conducted with Eastern European Jews, and of these the majority were from Poland. Yet Boder was keen on speaking to "dissimilar" groups: Western European Jews (including seven Greek Jews that did not fit neatly in either contingent) number close to twenty.<sup>25</sup> His interviewees touched at the extreme ends of the spectrum of modern Jewish experience, from passionately Torah-observant Jews who hailed from great yeshiva centers in Lithuania to assimilated German Jews married to non-Jewish spouses. Most fell somewhere in between. Wartime experience brought them together: whether their origins were Eastern or Western European, Hungarian or Greek, most had ended up in labor or concentration camps. The terrible rigors of this experience were what Boder believed his American audience needed an education about: "we know very little in America about the things that happened to you people who were in concentration camps" was how Boder would orient his narrator to the task and purpose of the interview.<sup>26</sup> But such a mandate did not stop Boder from interviewing over twenty Jews who had not been in the camps. Their stories of enduring the privation of ghettos, of hiding in woods or on farms, of fleeing to or fighting for Russia presumably qualified as "not unusual stories" and could similarly perform the task of educating an audience across the ocean.

This dissimilarity of experience was no doubt important and, at least in terms of the breadth of nationality and interview language, atypical when compared to other postwar interview projects. But more radical still was the inclusion of twenty-one non-Jews, approximately 19 percent of the interviews. To be sure, most of these interviews took place only once Boder had arrived in Germany and had access to a larger pool of DPs. Had he not received the clearance to visit Germany, his constituency would look much more like those of other interview projects from this period. But this assessment is itself in need of nuance. Non-Jews appear on Boder's interview slate from early on, with three such interviews (Czeleski, Marson, and Rudo) taking place at the first Paris interview site. And even earlier, in the planning stages of the trip, Boder apparently gave up a chance at American Jewish Committee funding because he intended to include non-Jewish DPs.<sup>27</sup> From beginning to end, then, Christian DPs were on the docket. The meaning and implications of their inclusion receives consideration of its own further on.

Able to interview Christian DPs en masse only toward the end of the expedition, Boder highlighted children and youth from early on. Three of the interview sites he visited were geared especially for young DPs: two (Chateau Boucicaut and ORT Geneva) for "Buchenwald children"

and the third (Paris, Bellevue) an orphanage transplanted from Poland to France and headed by the legendary Lena Kuechler. Over all, thirty-three of Boder's interviewees were twenty-five years old or under and of those at least sixteen were under twenty. A good 30 percent were still teenagers during the war.<sup>28</sup> Boder's early formulations of the project's character emphasize children, which, for him as well as for most post-war agencies, included teenagers.<sup>29</sup>

This was a population that he had dealt with clinically in his professional life and had done some writing about.<sup>30</sup> The interest in children becomes more sharply delineated in his accounts of the expedition. His first published postwar review of the DPs features Lena Kuechler's orphans as well as the Buchenwald group.<sup>31</sup> A less formal press release goes even farther, putting the age of the children between eight and fifteen (which, as the press release fails to mention, had to have been their ages at the beginning of the war rather than at the time of the interviews). It also boldly asserted that "Dr. Boder did a rather comprehensive study of the children, which will be preserved and recorded for history and investigation"—a study that, without mention elsewhere in Boder's papers, was if anything contemplated rather than actualized.<sup>32</sup> The reference to "a study of the children" is instructive nonetheless, reinforcing the idea that Boder saw (or perhaps wanted his audience to see) children at the center of the expedition.

Important though these special groups are to the distinctive cast of Boder's project, he himself generally represented his interviewees under the rubric of "rank and file," of "many and dissimilar"—in terms that favored no particular group and that conveyed his interest in the typical story of a wartime sufferer. These terms may well have guided Boder's approach. Yet, as we will see, he was never subservient to them.

#### WE KNOW VERY LITTLE IN AMERICA

At some point before he turned on the recorder, Boder let the DP know what the interview was to consist of:

We know very little in America about the things that happened to you people who were in concentration camps. If you want to help us out, by contributing information about the fate of the displaced person, tell us your personal story. Tell us what is your name, how old you are, and where you were and what happened to you when the war started.<sup>33</sup>

Audience is key. The interview is being conducted for the sake of those at a distance who know little, that is, Americans. The interviewee would have needed such a cue. Living in Europe, in a community of those who by and large shared wartime afflictions, they would have presumed that their story was already well known—perhaps, indeed, more in need of forgetting than of calling to mind.<sup>34</sup> The personal story is related to

inform the ignorant. By focusing on America's ignorance, Boder sets aside the scientific, scholarly basis for the interview. Perhaps he believed that documentation for study or posterity would appeal less to the DP; the professional audience who would benefit from the study of their stories was more amorphous than the common American who would be informed, and hopefully moved, by them. Perhaps Boder truly believed that informing America came first, not only in terms of bringing knowledge to those who had little but also in terms of making it easier to lobby on behalf of the DPs for immigration to America—an issue, as we will see, high on Boder's list of priorities.

Telling the personal story would be the way to overcome America's ignorance of Europe's evil. This directive aimed to elicit from the DP an account of what he or she had seen or heard. Yet to tell such a story was easier said than done, and the task of keeping the story personal in this respect—on track, not veering into hearsay, history, or speculation—occupied Boder ongoingly.

The point at which to begin the story is when the war started. With this directive the strict boundaries of the topical autobiography kick in, the topic being the war that uprooted the narrator from home and family, and which led to his or her present lot as a DP. From the outset, Boder informs the DP that he does not want a life story but a war story; life before the war is almost immaterial. From this vantage point, the interview began in *medias res* and takes for granted the momentum of a life already fully in motion. Thus the topical autobiography frame both narrowed and enlarged the lens. In contrast to a comprehensive autobiography or life story, which detailed life before the crisis in order to appreciate—and, perhaps, to mourn—what was lost, Boder's approach narrowed the lens. In contrast to the newsreels in circulation during this period, which were fixed on the gruesome concentration camp scenes at the time of liberation, the topical autobiography enlarged it.

In this 1947 version of the guidelines, the ending is somewhat abrupt, leaving one with the sense that, if read or heard literally, the only story Boder sought was limited to the war's beginning. Thus, in the revised version of the guidelines that appeared in 1949 in *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, Boder added a tag line to remove the ambiguity:

We know very little in America about the things that happened to you in concentration camps. If you want to help us out by contributing information about the fate of the displaced persons, tell your own story. Begin with your name, give your age, and tell where you were when the war started and what has happened to you since.<sup>35</sup>

The tag may have also done more than clarify. It may have communicated that the interviewee's postwar experience was also, if not the focus, nonetheless important to hear about. The guidelines do feature the "fate of the displaced person" as being the issue at hand; the rewording

suggests a greater consistency between attention to their fate and the nature of the interview itself. At least in some interviews, the fate of the DP qua DP did receive consideration.

For all its importance in giving a context, audience, and purpose to the interviews, this introduction is not to be heard on the recorded interviews or read in the transcripts. Stated before the recording was under way, it served as something the narrator needed to hear but the listener—the audience in question—did not. For later researchers who hope to reconstruct the context of the interviews, the exclusion of this introductory material feels conspicuous. That it was left out shows how much Boder, though having in mind scholars who would eventually use the recordings, focused his efforts on overcoming American ignorance. The audience needed to hear the story, not to be instructed in the particulars of the interview process.

#### PRACTICALLY EXPERIMENTAL INTERVIEWS, OR HOW TO BEGIN

Boder sets forth his interview protocol as if it was unvarying, the same from the beginning of the expedition to the end, from shelter to shelter, from population to population, from DP to DP. He gives the impression, wittingly or not, that neither his approach nor his conceptions changed during the expedition. But that was not the case.

Boder's annotations in the transcripts reveal an acute sense of evolution. Indeed, the initial comments to the first recorded interviews in Europe spell this out:

Spools 3A and 3B were taken within the first two days of my arrival in Paris. They were practically experimental interviews and served as stepping stones in the development of procedures.<sup>36</sup>

At least in retrospect, Boder was well aware that he was trying out different procedures and learning about the kind of interviewing to pursue.

After arriving in Paris in late July, Boder almost immediately initiated meetings with DPs, the first being with Leon Shachnovski, a camp survivor. Yet this first DP interview was preceded by a casual encounter and recorded conversation with Michail Vasilievich Khichenko, the janitor of the main ORT office in which the interviews were to take place. In many respects, this "chat" of a few minutes seems a warm-up, a way to test out the equipment and to refine evolving interview techniques. The conversation's casualness underscores the spontaneity and gives some local color; through the brief unrehearsed exchange with this fellow, ORT Paris is given a character of its own.

BODER: What is your last name?

KHICHENKO: Khichenko

BODER: Khichenko. And your first name?

KHICHENKO: My name is Michail Vasilievich.

BODER: Michail Vasilievich Khichenko. Are you long in Paris, Mr. Khichenko?

KHICHENKO: In France I am almost twenty years. This year, at the end of the year it will be twenty years.

BODER: Twenty years. That means you are...

KHICHENKO: After...

BODER: Yes...

KHICHENKO: After the evacuation....

BODER: What evacuation?

KHICHENKO: Of Russia, of the Crimea.

BODER: Of.... after the evacuation of the Crimea you found yourself in Paris.

KHICHENKO: I was in /word not clear/ then in Bulgaria and then I got to France.

BODER: Aha, and now you are with the ORT?

KHICHENKO: Yes. Now already the second year I serve with the ORT.

BODER: What are you doing here?

KHICHENKO: I am in charge of the building. I watch for its cleanliness and order.<sup>37</sup>

The brief exchange seems to elicit a few basic facts, nothing more. Yet Boder's prefacing notes, albeit added six years later, suggest more at stake than initially meets the eye. Khichenko the janitor

was a so called White Russian. He told me about a friend, a countess so and so, whose name appeared very prominent, but which I am unable to recall now in 1952. The countess supposedly lived on funds collected for her by her former English governess among the nobility of England. The countess supposedly was sharing these whites' funds with other whites who were made destitute by the Bolsheviks. In spite of my repeated requests he was unable to arrange for me an interview-recording with that woman, or any of her friends. Among the many reasons for her reluctance—provided such a real countess existed—two should be considered. (1) She did not want to be interviewed by a Jew. (2) The white Russians considered the Americans, right after the war, as definitely pro-Soviet and therefore dangerous to associate with.<sup>38</sup>

Boder's remarks are striking for several reasons. He prefacing almost every transcribed interview with vital data: who is being interviewed, when and where the interview is taking place, and the language in which it was conducted. In this particular case, politics are at the forefront, shaped largely by issues of class and power. In this scenario, the Bolsheviks not only exiled the White Russians but made them "des-  
titute." Yet class loyalties extending beyond national boundaries (the countess's funds were collected from English nobility) have tempered the consequences of such uprooting; the Bolsheviks have won the battle but lost the war. When all is said and done, class society in Europe remains firmly entrenched.

The story is, however, being told by the janitor, a White Russian who, like the countess, took refuge in Paris. He seems to have taken a step

down on the class ladder, so not everyone has come out of the Russian debacle unscathed. The picture of an exile community is hence complicated, with some members, like the countess, retaining their social position (and the prejudices and politics that accompany it) and others, like Mikhail Khichenko, needing to be newly resourceful. The drama also sets forth Boder's various identities, at least two of which—Jew and American—are the cause of conflict and rejection. There is no doubt that, even though he is speaking to Khichenko in native Russian, he is wearing his current Jewish American identity on his sleeve. Boder clearly thinks of himself as someone from outside, and the rejection he envisions suggests that being an outsider might cause him some problems. These reflections on the difficult position of an outsider are a striking entry point to a summer of DP interviews conducted by one both insider and outsider, one who spoke the language but had not lived the experience.

The vignette also portrays Boder at work off camera, having conversations that were not recorded and making requests that, at least in this case, went unfulfilled. The repeated requests, for that matter, are puzzling: why would Boder be so interested in meeting with this White Russian countess? And how would recording her story fit into the interview project's conception? Khichenko's role also is not straightforward. Apparently arriving on the scene by chance and providing local color, he turns out to have had important contacts. There is no sense that Boder went out of his way to get this interview or took steps to arrange it. That Khichenko's name does not appear separately in Boder's interview lists confirms this point.

The unrequited desire to record the countess has two explanations (mirroring in a sense Boder's two speculative explanations for why she would not wish to meet with him). First, his conception of the project was initially fluid, allowing for interviews with refugees in exile as well as those directly uprooted by World War II. The project never completely lost this fluidity, since Boder made time and occasion to interview some who were not DPs.<sup>39</sup> Second, Boder remained interested in refugees who, like himself, had chosen to leave Russia rather than continue to live under Bolshevik rule.

As we know, Boder left Russia in 1919 to avoid the hardship of the Russian Civil War. Exactly how pressing it was to leave is not clear. One anecdote tells of 'his urgent flight out of Russia and the need to take an assumed name (David Boder) as a form of protection. Whatever actually happened, Boder, much like the White Russians he was so interested to meet, sought refuge at the time of the Russian Civil War. The countess ("provided such a real countess existed"), for all of her pointed social and political rejection of Boder, shared with him a common fate.

This fate is hinted at when, having abruptly ended with Khichenko, Boder commences with Shachnovski and asks him, too, when he left

his native Russia:

BODER: Leon Moiseievich. Now then Leon Moiseievich, we are today here in Paris, on the 29th of July, the day of the Peace Conference. Tell me Leon Moiseievich, when did /you/ leave Russia?

SHACHNOVSKI: I left Russia a very long time ago. I left Russia in '41.

BODER: Oh, that is not very long ago. That means you left Soviet Russia.

SHACHNOVSKI: Yes from Soviet.... I left Soviet Russia.<sup>40</sup>

What was long ago for Shachnovski was not for Boder, who had left pre-Soviet Russia more than two decades earlier. The contrast between the two periods of leave-taking was likely sharpened by Boder having just compared notes with Khichenko, who had like Boder fled from Civil War-era Russia decades before. But while Boder begins the Shachnovski interview establishing “normal” concepts of long and short, Shachnovski, chronicling the destruction of Jewish Kovno and his internment in labor and concentration camps, ends by implicitly challenging these terms. Shachnovski did leave Soviet Russia a “very long time ago” in relation to the dramatic reversal of fortunes that occurred from the time he resided in Kovno to the time of the interview in postwar Paris.

Boder’s earliest interviews, scheduled and impromptu alike, thus invoke questions around Russia, its refugees, its past, and its present—issues that Boder himself knew intimately. Such associations occasionally surface throughout the two months of interviews. But they again come to the fore in the final interview, conducted in early October with another Russian émigré based in Paris for several decades. In this case, moreover, Boder knew the interviewee from his days in Russia; it was, in fact, the only occasion in which Boder had a previous connection with the interviewee. As we will see, for that reason, among others, Boder approached the interview from a number of special perspectives. As it fell out, the fate of White Russians, refugees from a different era and a different perpetrator, frame the two months of DP interviews.

Boder likely began with Shachnovski because he came to visit to Paris from the German DP camps. Boder may have hoped to hear about the war years and also, in light of not gaining travel clearance to Germany, to vicariously learn more about that community from those who knew it from the inside.<sup>41</sup> As it turns out, the formal recorded interview yields little in this respect.

In a broader frame, Boder’s start corresponds to that of the Paris Peace Conference, the diplomatic effort on the part of the Allies to establish a new European order. Having traveled from America to Paris aboard the ship bringing the United States’ conference delegates, Boder was acutely aware that the conference’s beginnings paralleled his own: “we are today here in Paris,” he thus informs his listeners, “on the 29th of July, the day of the Peace Conference.” The parallel tracks could not but give him a sense that his timing was appropriate. If the conference sought to

establish postwar relations between countries on a peaceful footing, the interviews with DPs aimed to represent the war through the words of those who suffered most. The interviews would show just what was at stake for the individuals of the countries whose fate was under discussion. Indeed, the blanket term by which Boder often referred to prospective interviewees was "war sufferers",<sup>42</sup> no one had more to gain from the consultations than those who had been displaced.

In two weeks, Boder conducted over thirty interviews that by and large reflect the protocol as he later set it down. He interviewed in Paris and in the suburbs, in half a dozen languages, at four different centers housing "many and dissimilar" DPs. These interviews acquainted him with the standard features of their experience—often ghettos, frequently deportation, generally labor and concentration camps—and the special terms that described them. The interviews cited in the introduction—with Moskovitz, Kestenberg, Unikowski, and Serras—all took place during this period, eliciting from Boder perplexity in the face of the incongruities: hiding, burning, gas as well as unfathomable acts of decency.

#### ON THE TOTAL SITUATION

Although Boder was determined to elicit personal testimony from the ordinary man and woman, he gave over a number of interviews to what he referred to as "background." As he writes in his notes on visiting Polish ORT official Jacob Wilf, he shifted course "in order to obtain some illuminating views on the total situation."<sup>43</sup> Those who would be able to address the DPs' "total situation" were by definition not members of the rank and file but rather those who, like Wilf, held an official position. Boder thus deviated from one of his protocol's main tenets in order to go beyond the information he had obtained till then. He conducted a series of these interviews at the Grand Hotel in Paris some two weeks into his journey, from August 16 to August 20.

Boder elaborated on the special nature of this approach in the prologue to the interview with Jacob Oleiski, one of the leading figures among the DPs in Germany. These interviews

belong to the so-called background recordings. They are either speeches [given at the international ORT conference in Paris], or interviews with members of the conference who were so absorbed in their community responsibilities that they could not be induced to keep the interview predominantly on topics of a strictly personal nature. They were also people who, due to their official position, were compelled at times to refrain from criticism of the allied occupational authorities.<sup>44</sup>

These interviewees had a personal story to tell; they were, like most of Boder's interviewees, Jews who had suffered grave losses during the war. Yet they also held postwar positions of authority that gave them

a vantage point from which to observe the workings of the DP communities. Boder frames their participation rather ungraciously, as if these personages were so anxious to address the bigger issues that he, Boder, could not do anything to hold them back. He was thus forced to let them deviate from the preferred path of the personal story. Yet this hardly does justice to their role. Boder must have invited them to be interviewed with the express purpose of obtaining this background; his wording may be a backhanded way of acknowledging his own deviation from his commitment to interview only the rank and file. This shift to the official voice also compromised the spontaneity that Boder prized so highly, especially when it came to discussing the "allied occupational authorities" treatment of DPs. We will again see Boder state his qualms regarding the official voice when he comments on Oleiski's conversational style.

Julian Weinberg, Jacob Wilf, and Rachel Gurmanova were Polish Jews who in the war's aftermath continued to reside in Poland and who had come to Paris to attend the World ORT Union conference. Alert to the great numbers of Jews leaving Poland, Boder was aware that the Kielce pogrom, which had taken place only six weeks before, had intensified the desire among many to leave. These conference-associated interviews with Polish Jews gave him the chance to assess the current predicament of Polish Jewry. To this end, he asks Jacob Wilf about numbers:

BODER: Now tell me, how many Jews have remained in Poland?  
 WILF: Nowadays we have in Poland a population of a hundred and thirty to a hundred and forty thousand Jews.

BODER: That is all... all that has remained of the Jews in Poland?  
 WILF: That is what has remained after a part of the Jews have left Poland...

BODER: Yes...  
 WILF:...for various countries.

BODER: How many....How many, do you estimate, have left?  
 WILF: We estimate that during the time of repatriation, within a year...about a year, the number who have left comes to about a hundred thousand Jews.

This questioning leads to a statistical comparison of the present Jewish community to that of prewar Poland:

BODER: A hundred thousand...Now, altogether how many Jews were there in Poland before the war?

WILF: Before the war there were three and half million Jews in Poland.  
 BODER: That is all?

WILF: That was the Jewish population in Poland.

BODER: And what was the population in Poland?

WILF: Pardon...

BODER:...the whole population of Poland?

WILF: The total population of Poland was about thirty million.

BODER: So the Jews constituted about twelve percent.

WILF: Yes.

BODER: All right. And what is the Polish population now, according to new estimates?

WILF: According to new estimates it is /twenty-/four...twenty-two million.

BODER: How come?

WILF: Because the rest were killed off in Poland, and part are still outside the country. /He refers apparently to the Andres' regiments, and other Poles who were taken to Germany as slave laborers, or fled to Russia and remained there/.

BODER: Yes. And then a part of Poland has been taken by Russia. Isn't that so?

WILF: Yes. But they, according to an accord between Russia and Poland, have repatriated themselves to the regions which form present day Poland.

BODER: Now then, at present, with a Polish population of twenty-two million...

WILF: Yes...

BODER:...and about one hundred and fifty thousand Jews...

WILF: Yes.

BODER:...the...the population of the Jews amounts to less than one percent?

WILF: Yes.

BODER: And that has remained of all the Jews in Poland?

WILF: That has remained...in total there have remained of the Jews percent-wise,...

BODER: Yes...

WILF:...two percent of the former Jewish population of Poland.

BODER: And you say...

WILF: Ninety-eight percent of the Polish Jews, those who were in the country during the occupation...not counting those who were abroad...

BODER: Yes...

WILF: Ninety-eight percent of the Polish Jews who were there during the occupation have been murdered. There remained only—they saved themselves on so-called Arian, Christian papers...

BODER: Yes...

WILF:...These have saved themselves /a few words in Hebrew/ in certain numbers /??/.

Having established a picture of the tragic remnant of Jews in Poland and the diminishment of the community since the end of the war, Boder wants to see how a Jew that has remained behind—one of the 2 percent of Polish Jewry who were not murdered—understands the fate of the Jews in Europe:

BODER: Now, what would you think would be the best solution of the problem for the Jews who are now all over—in the German lagers, here in France? For example, I understand that last week a whole Yeshiva /Hebrew theological college/ arrived from Lodz, and still

more are coming from there. Now what do you think... what shall be done with all these people?

WILF: This is precisely the incorrect approach taken on the part of the social/political/ parties <sup>/?</sup>. To us it is clear that since there are Jews in Poland who desire to emigrate to their relatives, or who let us say, those who following an ideological view wish to go to the Land of Israel... it is clear that such people should be given a chance /to do so/. But the social agencies <sup>/?</sup> who deal with this problem should and must first of all establish emigration opportunities—legal human emigration opportunities; not to lead out of Poland the Jews in a state of chaos.

To simply move Jews out of Poland, to Wilf's mind, is irresponsible. How much more so if the only option available to them is virtually a dead end:

To lead them into lagers, while we are being informed that the Jews in the German lagers live under very hard economic conditions... very hard economic conditions... and, in addition to it, there are at present—at this time there are no legal facilities to lead out the Jews anywhere, into some land where they could find a place of /safe/ settlement. At present they sit around in the lager waiting to receive either "certificates" for the Land of Israel, or emigration permits for other countries. It is clear that this situation—the liquidation of the Jewish lagers in Germany—will take no less than two years; and the sufferings of the Jews during these two years—the life of the Jews in the lagers—is obviously /to be/ very hard.

From Wilf's point of view, the Jews who leave Poland really have nowhere to go; whatever difficulties life in Poland presents for Jews, life in DP centers is every bit as hard—indeed, "very hard." Boder takes Wilf at his word and follows the logic of his position through to the question of return:

BODER: /A long pause/ Would you really take it unto yourself to tell the Polish Jews who now dwell in Germany, or in France, that it is safe for them... for them to return to Poland?

WILF: We have already cases at present... although these are isolated cases...

BODER: Yes...

WILF: Very few cases, but there are cases where Jews are returning to Poland. Because, as I have already stated, if there are Jews who consider that there is no safety for them to live in Poland, or who want to leave for other reasons, it is clear that for such reasons they will have a chance to leave. Because the Polish government does not impose obstructions against departure. But it seems clear that since there are no proper conditions to live in the lagers of Germany, that it would be more rational, logical, to remain in Poland—to make contact with relatives in America, in Canada, /or/ in other countries—to obtain immigration permits, and to journey directly from Poland to their relatives and not to go through with one of the most horrible interludes as we picture to ourselves the lagers of Germany.<sup>45</sup>

When push comes to shove, Wilf is willing to advise Jews to choose the volatility of Poland over the "horrible interludes" of the German DP camps. To whatever degree Boder was aware that Wilf was speaking a party line, Boder still must have had his desire intensified to go to Germany to see whether the situation was anything like Wilf described.<sup>46</sup>

This Boder tried vicariously to do in his interview with Jacob Oleiski. From the time of the liberation onward, Oleiski had been in the forefront of putting together a material and cultural infrastructure in the German DP camps. Like Wilf, Oleiski was, and had been in the prewar period, a leader in the ORT.<sup>47</sup> And like Wilf, he too believed that, for the survivors of labor and concentration camps, the ORT had a particularly important role to play, not only in teaching skills that would allow the survivors to find gainful employment, but also in rehabilitating the notion of work that had been so badly abused through the agonies of slave labor. He acknowledged the hardship Jews faced in the German DP camps. But he also had a different message regarding these camps than did his colleague from Poland.

Boder rightly saw Oleiski as able to address the DPs' total situation. Moreover, Oleiski's authoritative reportage enabled him to view the situation of German-based DPs vicariously: "Now tell me, I have little hope that I will be able to enter the American Zone [of Germany]," Boder resignedly put it. "Will you please describe, how do the Jews live and where do they live now in the American Zone?" Oleiski did just that. Hence Boder not only conducted the formal interview but also arranged to meet with him for breakfast. Oleiski's speech to the ORT convention, moreover, was the only one that Boder included in *Topical Autobiographies*. The interviews and speech present an overall picture of Jewish DPs in the fourteen months since the war's end, with attention to the different phases as well as to relations to non-Jewish DPs. Oleiski begins,

I consider it my duty and I consider it necessary to give you a bird's [eye] view, a short, condensed sketch, on the way in which the present Jewish commonwealth in the American Zone [of Germany] was created.

The first point was the reason for a separate Jewish commonwealth:

Germany is a sediment basin of Ukrainians, Whites /here it means Czarist Russians/, Poles /he uses Polacks, which in Eastern Europe does not always have the connotation of contempt/, and Lithuanians and Letts—those criminals which are afraid to return home for the day of Judgment /reckoning/ which is expecting them. And we said, we cannot be together with them in the lagers, and we ought not to be with them, and we must separate our lives and begin to build up our lives anew /?/ on the Jewish social principles as we understand them.

To return to one's home was a natural desire. But in contrast to Wilf, Oleiski sees such a return as temporary at best:

I want to be objective, and I shall endeavor to be as objective as possible; but after the "honors of welcome" which met the Jews at the border, not

only a part [of the returning Jews] has run away from the border but also those who returned to Lithuania and other countries have turned around in a few days /??/ and returned back /to the lagers in Germany./ *All have come back from the places to which they had returned.* [emphasis added]

On top of the everyday obstacles, the Kielce pogrom has set in motion its own exodus, "which now continues to grow incessantly from day to day."<sup>48</sup>

Wilf viewed life in the German DP camps as "very hard," and for that reason argued against the camps as a way station for Poland's Jews. Oleiski's assessment echoes that of Wilf: "The conditions under which we live," he allows, "are hard, very hard." Indeed, the difficult conditions of the DP camps keep the events of the recent past all too fresh:

And that is one of the gravest of the.../[Oleiski] raises his voice/ better to say, not only the gravest but the utmost unjust treatment of the gravely tortured people, that conditions [in the DP camps] cannot be brought about so that the mournful past could be forgotten.

One of the key factors was the crowded conditions. The path to forgetting the abuses of the recent past and getting on with life "would be greatly enhanced if we could create conditions under which Jewish families could live by themselves." Hearing about the lack of privacy to meet even basic needs, Boder, in a deft gesture, puts the DPs' circumstances into everyday terms:

Now tell me, Mr. Oleiski /the name is mispronounced/... I am a sociologist, I am a psychologist. Let us imagine that there is a room of this size /the interview took place in an average size room in the Grand Hotel in Paris, about 12' x 12', if I remember correctly/ or a bit larger. How can several families live there? Describe it to me—it is unbelievable.

If Boder cannot go to the DP camps, he will bring the camps to him, imaginatively transporting the DPs' constricted living conditions to his Parisian accommodations. Indeed, putting it in such palpable terms moved him to an unusual expression of outrage on behalf on the DPs: "It is unbelievable."

Oleiski condemns in outright fashion the DP camps' conditions. In contrast to Wilf, however, he does not see Jewish life in the camps as a "horrible interlude":

When we observe the present way of life in the Jewish lagers, we must say, and we may say it with pride, that such a vitality has emerged again among the Jewish people; and we see a Jewish social and cultural life gushing in all little corners...we can say with pride that the Jew has returned again...that in a social and cultural sense he has again risen to the heights. And those ethical principles which we have carried through generations are firmly ingrained into the soul of the Jew, and we see it return to full development and to full spiritual ascent, as we have seen it before.

In spite of the physical constrictions, and in spite of the difficulty of overcoming the past, Jewish life, in Oleiski's account, flourishes. This was clearly a different vision than that presented by Jacob Wilf. Boder had somehow to reconcile the two. He knew that the Polish representatives to the ORT conference, including Wilf, were compelled to speak a party line that would not make life difficult for them when they returned to Poland. Oleiski was in this regard much more of a free agent, able to speak his mind.

Yet Boder was aware that Oleiski, too, had an agenda. Several times Boder notes that Oleiski spoke in "a solemn voice" and spells out its two possible interpretations: "as if 'Once an orator, always an orator,' or as if 'No opportunity should be missed to work for the cause, which in his case, has definitely absorbed his existence.'" According to the first interpretation, Oleiski the orator is always giving speeches, even in a one-on-one interview. The public persona overwhelms the private person, leaving little room for spontaneity. The second interpretation shares with the first a suspicion about a public persona; it adds an observation about "the cause"—perhaps ORT, perhaps the German-based DPs' situation—consuming his life so that all of his comments are ideological in nature. Here, too, the stifling of spontaneity is likely Boder's concern.

On another level is a note that Boder adds to the end of the Oleiski transcript:

At the conclusion of the interview (Spool 54) I invited Mr. Oleiski to have breakfast with me. I asked him the stereotyped question whether he plans to come to the United States. He told me that he has his Consular affidavit but has no intention of going to the United States until he has completed the work with the ORT and the refugees which he has outlined for himself. He then showed me his affidavit. Glancing at it in a rather perfunctory manner my eyes caught a statement of the financial status of his sponsor. It read in part: "no less than \$100,000 a year for the last several (seven) years." Only then I looked for the name of the sponsor. It was Ben Hecht to whom Mr. Oleiski appeared related.

The connection to Hollywood celebrity Ben Hecht gave Oleiski exceptional political and economic clout. Hecht was known not only for his movie scripts but also for his vocal agitation on behalf of European Jewry during and after the war.<sup>49</sup> In professional terms, Boder may have added the postscript—which he did only years after the interview itself—because it showed Oleiski to be even less a rank and file DP, most of whom had no such connections. Oleiski's observations were thus not those of the common person but rather were crafted according to sophisticated rhetorical, ideological, and social factors.

Whatever Boder's reservations, Oleiski gave him a picture of the main Jewish community in postwar Europe. It was supposed to stand in for Boder's unsuccessful attempt to travel to Germany. But such a complex picture had to whet his appetite to see it for himself. How else was he

to make sense of the “very hard” conditions together with the “vitality [that] has emerged again”? How to reconcile Wilf’s view of the German DP camps as a “horrible interlude” with Oleiski’s statement that “all have come back from the places to which they had returned”?

Boder also played a role at the ORT conference that drew a number of the background interviewees to Paris. The conference was designed to report on the rehabilitation of DPs in ORT centers in Europe and America. Having a sense of the historical occasion, Boder apparently took it upon himself to record many of the addresses. He also gave a short address of his own, in Yiddish. The choice of language was important, he stated at the outset, because “I feel everyone [i.e., all the European Jews in attendance] should understand me.” The brunt of his remarks stresses in a distinctly Jewish idiom what it meant to be a bystander in America:

When Haman the evil one had wanted to exterminate all Jews, Mordechai dressed in sackcloth and put ash on his head. If we in America had pleaded and had gone to Washington, perhaps we would have accomplished something. We did not do it and therefore we feel guilty toward you, the Jews of Europe.<sup>50</sup>

Boder opposes the activist approach of Mordechai in ancient Persia as described in the biblical scroll of Esther with the lack of response in wartime America. The disparity is stark—indeed, probably starker than the facts warrant. There was anguish among America’s Jews, and there were protests in Washington.<sup>51</sup> For the purposes of the moment, Boder, however, is not after subtlety and nuance. He rather means to emphasize that such responses were not ongoing and, in contrast to Mordechai’s intervention, they were largely ineffective in halting the extermination of a large portion of European Jewry.<sup>52</sup>

What is striking about Boder’s remarks is how fully he casts himself in the role of a representative of American Jewry. He wants to make it understood “what we in America felt when you [Jews of Europe] were bleeding.” There is no effort (aside from his choice to speak in Yiddish) to blend in with his European brethren. Moreover, Boder has nothing to say about the up-and-coming leadership of American Jewry in the postwar world. He highlights not what America can do or has done, but rather what it “did not do.”

These remarks may be the fruit of three weeks of interviews, a number of which were conducted over the period of the conference. I have seen no other occasion where Boder dwelt on guilt or where he so clearly drew on the idiom of Jewish catastrophe. His words—necessarily spoken in Yiddish—were shaped by what he had heard over the course of those weeks and by the audience of (mostly) European Jews that he addressed.

Boder’s presence at the conference had its own aftereffects. The ORT administration was eager to obtain the wire recordings of the conference speeches and wrote to Boder even before he returned to the United

States. They hoped that he would supplement the recordings with original-language transcription. Boder, overworked and understaffed, eventually bowed out of this end of the bargain, but did supply ORT with three Soundscriber disc copies of the speeches. Listed as 200-299 in Boder's notes, the ORT conference wire recordings have turned up neither in Boder's archives nor in the ORT's.<sup>53</sup>

# Chapter 3

## Summer, 1946, Part II

### THE EXPANSION OF TESTIMONY

Boder undoubtedly obtained from the background interviews an expanded view of the DPs' situation in Europe. It is therefore not surprising that, on August 24 or 25, after completing his interviews at the Grand Hotel and finishing up a second leg at the Paris Joint Distribution Committee, Boder left France en route to Switzerland and Italy, where he would spend just over a week. He would see for himself something of the life of DPs outside France. Germany was still off limits (one wonders whether Boder, aware of Oleiski's high-ranking position in the German DP community, asked him to intervene); the smaller Swiss and Italian DP communities were the next best thing.

In some respects, Switzerland may have offered DPs the best post-war environment in Europe. This is certainly how Jacob Oleiski saw it. Oleiski paints a picture of survivors, whether in Germany, Poland, France, or elsewhere, trying to find a place to regain health, search for loved ones, overcome the antipathy toward work, and nurture a life once again filled with culture and activity. The place that he sees in a different light than the others is Switzerland:

We have received help from Switzerland. Switzerland has given us not only machinery and tools, but my stay in Switzerland has given me...it refreshed me. Since my stay in Switzerland I came to see a new world and new people. I started remembering /thinking about/ a new life. And so I began to conceive new forms of rehabilitation and new opportunities. I have seen the new, the new, and I beheld a people, a land which has not gone through the holocaust—and from which one may learn...and I am introducing it now into all the schools, and I assemble my teachers and I enlighten them, and so the work proceeds.

Switzerland, "a land which has not gone through the holocaust," gave Oleiski a new way to "conceive" the DPs' future. Most areas were beset with problems; Switzerland was full of "new opportunities." That Boder's first interview site outside of France was Geneva, and that a number of crucial developments in Boder's project took place there, may have also been prompted, if not mandated, by Oleiski's ode to Switzerland.<sup>1</sup>

Boder arrived in Geneva less than a week after the interview with Oleiski. The tender age of the interviewees at the ORT workshop where he conducted the interviews—all of them around eighteen years old—must have made a decided impression. Youth was not an altogether new factor; Boder's second stop had been comprised largely of Buchenwald children. Yet something in Geneva revolutionized both the process of interviewing and the collection of songs. The Geneva interviews set a new standard in length, depth, and conception. More precisely, the watershed occurred with the interview of Abraham Kimmelman, the young Polish Jew who, like so many, had lost all of his immediate family.

The interview began on Tuesday, August 27. The fifty-fourth interview conducted by Boder, it took place just about a month into the expedition. In the Jewish calendar, the date fell out on the beginning of the Jewish month of Elul, the start of the period leading up to the High Holidays. Boder had begun interviewing in Geneva on Monday, the 26th, and would stay through the 28th. The interview with Kimmelman was the fourth that day, the eighth of what altogether would be ten interviews in Geneva.

Kimmelman's interview was special in several ways. At four and a half hours, it was the longest by far. To put this in perspective: the next longest, with Henja Frydman in Paris two weeks earlier, lasted two hours—less than half as long. Boder felt that getting the rest of Kimmelman's story was so important that he returned to Geneva nearly three weeks later. He did not end up continuing the interview because he arrived back in Geneva to find that he had finally received clearance to go to Germany and so departed immediately. The attempt to continue and conclude Kimmelman's interview by returning to an interview site was the only case where Boder made such an effort. Indeed, writing in his spool book April 6, 1947, after processing Kimmelman's interview, Boder sounds a wistful note:

That completes [Kimmelman]. Too bad we were unable to finish. A liberation story from so good a narrator would have been a pearl.

Kimmelman's interview became one of eight chapters (chapter 4, "What Is Man") in Boder's 1949 book, *I Did Not Interview the Dead*. Boder, who rarely shortened any interview material, felt that it was essential to include even an abridged version of the epic-sized interview in the book. One year later, when Boder brought out the first series of his magnum opus, *Topical Autobiographies*, Kimmelman's interview, now in its full version, served as the first chapter.

How to account for this watershed? Some part has to be attributed to Kimmelman himself—his thoughtfulness, his exacting sense of detail, his all-consuming drive to get to the truth of what had happened. That said, what moved Boder to make room for these exceptional features at this stage of his expedition? Why believe that what Kimmelman had to say (or how he said it) was worth the extra time, the extra effort, the overhaul of customary protocol and the disruption of his schedule?

The beginning of the interview is distinctive in its own right, setting out in a “little introduction” how the DPs’ narratives in general differ from conventional narratives of the past:

BODER: Now tell me, you said you want to make a little introduction.

KIMMELMANN: You are not so much interested in that which we are doing now but you want to go in more in detail about our past.

BODER: Yes, you are right. Especially about the times during the war.

KIMMELMANN: You told us before when we were eating what some boys from the lager /camp/ have told you so far. And that they told it to you in different ways, that one said that it was relatively good and that the other reported that he was very badly off; and in spite of that both have told you the truth. Now you have to make it clear to yourself, that they have not only told you the truth but that they are not able to relate everything the way how it really was. Because if you look back to history, or if one writes a book about something, so it is usually said that one writes always more than is true. But in this case it is entirely in the reverse. One can never tell enough and present the things how they really were.

By contrasting what is “usually” the manner of narrating the past with what is done “in this case,” Kimmelman challenges the very premises of Boder’s enterprise. If one cannot present things as they really were, if what one tells is going to fall short of the truth or misrepresent what took place, why go ahead with the interview?

Kimmelman’s terms for describing the special character of the DPs’ narration of their experience—“in this case entirely the reverse”—already conveys that this interview might be (perhaps even should be) different. To be sure, the reversal from the usual that Kimmelman sets forth is referring to “history” in general. At least in theory, the other DPs should also tell stories of their experience that reverse the normal relation between narration and experience. But Kimmelman’s dramatic phrasing, coming as it does at the opening moments of his account, can be taken as establishing the “reversing” terms by which his particular interview should be viewed—by Boder and by us.

Kimmelman’s conviction about the presumed inadequacy of the testimony—“One can never tell enough and present the things how they really were”—forces Boder to formulate a notion of truth that guides his project:

BODER: You see that is why I talk to many. That is why I interview many and have them tell their story. So from the little that I get from everyone, the mosaic, a total picture can be assembled. Now you understand my purpose. Why I want to collect two-hundred spools of these interviews because nobody can tell the whole story. You understand that.

Boder builds on the idea of topical autobiographies—numbers of life stories that when assembled in a collection can illuminate a given topical event. In this respect, Boder was likely reiterating for Kimmelman

the idea that drove the project from its inception: a collection of interviews of displaced persons that Boder had borrowed from psychologist Gordon Allport. Boder's path to this conception of his work receives close attention in a later chapter. But for now it is important to note that Kimmelmann's challenge had Boder sharpen the idea of topicality and invoke the notion of a mosaic, an evocative visual image for the patient accumulation of details and stories from multiple narrators. Indeed, Boder probably did not notice that he had taken a visual metaphor to explain the nature of his aural interview project. Perhaps even he who had conceived the project to give the aural its due remained in the grip of the dominant visual paradigm.

That Kimmelmann launches the interview by expressing his desire to make a little introduction and proceeds to question the nature of truth must have impressed Boder greatly. The professor was back in the lab with a star student who was not content to carry through what had been asked of him but had to probe the value of making the experiment in the first place. And this student was presumably all of eighteen years old. Yet the combination of youth with mature reflection apparently convinced Boder that a change in the protocol (a change initiated by the interviewee, no less) was warranted.<sup>2</sup> Strikingly, Boder did not give Kimmelmann carte blanche to voice his iconoclastic thoughts through the course of the interview. Indeed, there are moments when Boder lets him know that such ruminations coming from someone so young and largely unschooled were simply out of place.<sup>3</sup> But for the most part, Boder allows Kimmelmann unprecedented time and occasion to both tell and ruminate.

The little introduction, moreover, not only changes (or defers) the usual interview protocol but causes a kind of conceptional revolution in the relation between the individual interview and the project as a whole. This revolution no doubt contributed to the different sense of time that set Kimmelmann's interview apart from all others. Thus, even though Boder puts forward that "nobody"—no single interviewee—"can tell the whole story," and asks Kimmelmann to envision the whole project (all "two hundred spools" worth) as the means to arrive at the truth, he still conceives the interview with Kimmelmann in a manner that will allow "a lot" of the story to be told:

BODER: Now tell me a lot of details, you don't have to hurry, we have enough wire and we have enough time, you understand. I prefer to listen to less people who tell me much than to people who tell me little. Where were you when the war started? What has happened to you? Tell me, possibly day by day, week by week, what has happened.

Kimmelmann's is not the only interview in which Boder emphasizes, "we have enough time." Such pronouncements regularly punctuate the Geneva interviews, apparently a period where Boder was particularly given to the "less people who tell me much" approach. But the "day by day, week by week" proposal sounds a new note. This permission to

move at a diarist's pace may be one way to account for the expansion of Kimmelman's narrative to twice the length of any previous.

This accounts for the detail, the remarkable thoroughness with which Kimmelman describes (and is exhorted by Boder to describe) incidents from home, work, ghetto, and camp, taking pains to provide information only in its proper place. A good example (because it is one of at least a dozen) comes when he recounts being told that his mother, who had been selected for an Auschwitz transport, was actually safe, sound, and uncannily nearby:

KIMMELMANN: Yes, [the workers] were Christians. I was the only Jew there. There were only Christian workers. I was the only Jew. So they say, "Why do you weep?" So I told them the whole story. And so they just shook their heads and what could they do. As they returned to the plant they told it to the foreman head. He came out right away and said, "Why do you cry? Your mother is upstairs with the Deratishes. Your mother is with the family Deratish upstairs." Now I shall tell you who the family Deratish was. In the place where I worked, that place was formerly a barn for cattle feed. And when the war started, the owner of the place had a lot of money, and so he bought some machinery and wanted to open a shop. But the Germans came and confiscated the place.

BODER: Was he a Jew?

KIMMELMANN: No, he was not a Jew. He was a Pole. They found that the place was good for a plant. They wanted to expand it, they made wonderful plans, they wanted to build it up and put in more machinery. They confiscated the place in such a manner that the whole business was transferred in the name of the German, and the Pole remained there as some kind of a supply man. His business was to obtain materials. He had to supervise the work, see that things were properly done, well, be a sort of supervisor. But he was on a straight salary, nothing else. And in the house where he lived, also lived his in-laws. They were very nice and because I worked in the plant, and my mother frequently used to come over there, although she had no right to go to Bensburg—but people were running across the fields on foot; sometimes it was necessary—when I slept there as I told you before. Well, they got somehow acquainted so they knew each other. And the man says, "She is upstairs." In that moment I just did not understand what he was saying. I think—well, if it would have come to my consciousness what he is telling me I would have kissed him; I don't know myself what I would have done. And so I let him stay there and I run upstairs. Lo, there is my mother in bed, and the old man puts compresses on her knees, and the old woman is preparing some food for her, and so on, like one acts in such a situation. And then it didn't occur to me at the moment even to ask her how she happened to be there. I let her stay there, lie there. I immediately returned home and told it to my sister, and took again the next streetcar and returned again. I brought her some food and when I got upstairs I asked her, "Mother, how did you do it? How do you happened to be here?" And she told me thus...

The account of his mother's clever escape goes on for considerable length. The quoted interview segment gives an idea of the density of detail, the movement between background and foreground, the importance of recollecting crucial dialogue.

Boder clearly recognized Kimmelman's mastery and proceeded according to the "day by day, week by week" calculus. Indeed, even his usual interventions recede to a bare minimum. But another element also comes to the fore: what Boder calls "evaluation." The narrator was generally asked to describe what happened and what he or she had seen. Boder had no interest in rumor or opinion. Yet with Kimmelman he was willing to make room for this interpretive dimension:

BODER: /We continue last night's interview with Abraham Kimmelman, who wishes to give, together with the facts, [an] evaluation of events./

The "evaluation" that comes after Boder's lead-in provides a stunning example of Kimmelman's style of commentary and of Boder's willingness to create the occasion for it. The point of departure is an episode of cruelty perpetrated by a Jewish policeman on a fellow Jew:

KIMMELMANN: When I saw all these occurrences at the time, I started thinking, What really is a human being? I have heard, I knew that time vaguely, that there are people of all kinds, and all kinds of governments. And I have asked myself is it possible that if somebody from birth has a definite character, whether such a character never alters, during life. But I came to a conclusion that the basic character never changes. But the detailed aspects change a great deal. For example, for instance, let us look at a tree. The roots, they are rooted deep and the base of a tree is always a tree. A tree follows the wind. When the wind blows in this direction, the branches follow the same direction. That is what I have compared with the character of man. Conditions demand that the character of a man bend itself a bit and he follow the conditions which contribute to it. One could see people, intelligent people, educated people, learned people, of whom one could never think that they are capable of certain things, or of such things. Nevertheless, the conditions of the Nazi terror have led them to a complete change. What could one expect from them? In general, you would say what could one not expect from them. And they, themselves, never thought probably, before, that they would be capable of doing such things.

Why did Boder allow time for such commentary—commentary, moreover, that focused not on the issue of what happened but why it happened? One reason may well emerge from Boder's own special area of concern—personality under the impact of catastrophe. As we will see in greater detail in a later chapter, this issue was one of the driving forces behind the interviews; Kimmelman took this investigation of personality another step, moving from the "occurrences" he had witnessed (and

likely suffered) to generalizations about the type of person who would become a policeman and the circumstances that would "bend" him toward acts of brutality committed against his own people. In a sense, Kimmelman was doing Boder's psychological work for him.

Added to this was Kimmelman's poetic flair—the reflections on personality are effortlessly presented in the image of the tree that, despite the fact that its roots remain planted in the same soil, bends whichever way the wind blows. The image is simple, straightforward—and not altogether coherent. But it is not the academic or artistic sophistication that spoke to Boder. It was rather the ability to move from an intensely thick description of his experiences to an explanation as to why they had occurred—and then back again.

A crucial element was the perplexity that surrounded the attempt to explain these events in hindsight. Having circled the issue, Kimmelman directly addresses it a few minutes further on in the interview:

That's why I say, today one could say if one would ask me a question, if they would have offered you to become a militia man, what would you have done? Today one can say if one does not want to be /truthful/, "Yes, I definitely would have refused." I would never have taken such a dirty job. But one can never be sure that if it would come to it, that one would simply have replied, "I don't want to do it." Because a human being is only a human being. If one stands over him with a gun and he is being threatened—if you don't do that you shall lose your life—one cannot be responsible for the deeds that one may perpetrate. And in such light one also has to see the Jewish militia.

Kimmelman's tempering of judgment against the Jewish police shows a rare moral breadth. Yet the larger issue of evaluation—in hindsight and by those who were not similarly oppressed—relates not only to the police but rather to all of the events, institutions, and personalities involved in the wartime fate of the Jews, at least of the side of the victims. One cannot judge according to usual standards because one does not know what in those malevolent circumstances one would have done. In light of this standard, Kimmelman actually asks for forbearance when it comes to the act of evaluation itself. This plea for restraint could well have been taken by Boder as a caution for his own enterprise. Indeed, having not been caught up in the Second World War and coming as an outsider to the DP centers, Boder may have heard the caution as all the more directed to him and to those of the audience who, encouraged by the onset of postwar court trials, were eager to pass judgment. The question of judgment, as we shall soon see, loomed particularly large when Boder came to the final days of his interviews and tried grittily to measure what he had accomplished. At this earlier, transitional stage of his expedition, Kimmelman's epic narrative was crucial: for its unparalleled exposition of so many forms of suffering and loss; for its attempt to formulate a nascent theory of personality amid acts of unprecedented brutality; and for its call for interpretative restraint.

## PICKING UP SPECIAL EPISODES

Boder was now primed to experiment with new forms of narration. Less than a week after finishing up the marathon interview with Kimmelmann and having moved on to the Italian DP center in Tradate (outside of Milan),<sup>4</sup> Boder decided to try a different tack in the interview with Benjamin Piskorz: "We are making an experiment now to pick up special episodes rather than to take the whole story." Instead of starting out with his usual prompt about life and family on the verge of the war, he would have the interviewee focus on a known event the scope of which was large enough to fill an entire interview, or at least most of it. In Piskorz's case, he is asked to recount his participation in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in April 1943: "Tell us your name," Boder leads off, "and tell us please the story of the entire uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, the way you personally have experienced it." Boder thus took what was already a constricted focus and made it more so, compressing nearly six years of the war into a few months. As it turned out, the compression was not as severe as all that. Piskorz responsibly tells of the uprising and his harrowing fate during and after it, including being compelled to watch his mother burned to death in a kind of auto-da-fé. But the bulk of the interview is given over to the episodes that followed: torture, deportation, relocation, death march, escape, wandering through Germany and Czechoslovakia, and, finally, a postwar saga replete with tales of revenge, jail, marriage, and the birth of a baby. Boder's strategy ends up not so much compressing as articulating a new beginning, where the later events of the war take precedence; in consequence, the entry of the Nazis into Piskorz's town, the upheaval of life under their rule, and the time in the ghetto qua ghetto do not enter into the picture.

One wonders how Boder understood the effect of the new focus on the narrator and on himself. The account of the uprising goes on at times without any intervention on Boder's part, clarification or otherwise, as if the special episode designation had Boder hold back an extra measure. Once done with the uprising, however, Piskorz narrates so episodically that Boder is compelled to intervene simply to untangle the narrative and clarify the logic that moves it along. Paradoxically, the narrow focus ends up encouraging dilation; indeed, Piskorz's is the longest interview up to that point in Tradate. More interesting yet is that Boder never shows signs of bringing the interview to a close because Piskorz has violated the special episode rubric under which the interview was conducted.

And more than most, Piskorz tells stories of telling his story: to the Jewish Russian lieutenant who comes to execute him because Piskorz, masquerading as a Nazi overseer on a farm, is taken to truly be a member of the enemy forces; and to the military judge who must decide his culpability in a fight that landed Piskorz in jail. In these cases, telling his story saved his life and freed him from prison. Piskorz was thus aware of the tangible achievements of recounting his terrible tale. Perhaps, after

all, it was he who suggested to Boder that he begin with the ghetto uprising, a special episode that would serve as a prologue of sorts to the harrowing scenes that followed. Having accomplished so much before, Piskorz could well have hoped that relating his story once again—this time to Boder—could reap equal benefits.

The interview strangely resembled these many-times-told tales in another way: Boder interviewed Piskorz for some twenty minutes when the wire recorder spool broke and the material was lost; they thus had to begin again, an exigency that left Boder worrying about the “influence [on] the fluency or the details of [Piskorz’s] story.” Piskorz thus had to tell his story to Boder twice, a circumstance brought about by mechanical failure but fitting for the narrative about telling his story again and again that Piskorz unfolds.

Boder felt the experimental focus on the special episode successful enough to carry it over to the following interview with Bernard Warsager:

We will also, instead of taking the whole detailed story, try to get at *some high points*. This is an experimental approach for the *second time* of this in this fashion, *instead of letting them tell the whole story*, just to see whether the high points will bring out sufficient material. [emphasis added]

Unlike Piskorz’s, however, Warsager’s story had no climactic event on which to focus; his days in Buchenwald were almost equally marked by hardship, brutality, and the attendant strategies of coping. And even the new point of beginning that distinguished Piskorz’s interview from the previous did not come into play with Warsager’s. To be sure, Boder headed in this direction; he did not ask Warsager to begin with what happened at the start of the war but was guided by Warsager’s long internment in Buchenwald:

you told me that you were in Buchenwald, right?... And so tell us please why you were arrested, where you were, of what country you were a citizen, and how you fared personally in Buchenwald.

But since Warsager had been arrested just after the war began, his narrative begins where most do and proceeds from there year by sad year. Perhaps the focus on a single camp was warrant enough for Boder to believe that Warsager’s interview was also experimental. Alternately, perhaps Boder intended to experiment with the special episodes approach and found that once underway the material (and Warsager’s steady recounting of it) pointed in a different direction. This may be why in the subsequent interview with Abram Perl the following day, Boder, without so much as a mention of the experimental approach, returned to standard operating procedure.

Nor did Boder in the nearly fifty remaining interviews again use this approach. Nevertheless, his willingness to try it at all shows how he searched in midstream for new interview strategies. Further, the term

"experimental" was important for Boder, with associations not only to the laboratory but also to the use of methods that were not tried and true. Boder uses it this way in the two main studies that were to come out of the interview project. Despite the social scientific frame that he gives them, he borrows the term "*experimental*" in its sense of methodological innovation from a then-recent literary study of Robert Penn Warren, "A Poem of Pure Imagination: An Experiment in Reading."<sup>5</sup> Experiment and experimental were thus terms that, for Boder, bridged the sciences and the humanities. In this respect, they forged the synthesis between the two that, to his mind, was the only way to do justice to the impact of this particular catastrophe. Short-lived as an interview technique, the importance of the "experimental" went beyond its application to the two Tradate interviews.

#### GROUP LEADERS

The leaders who were in charge of the sites created friction in the process of selecting interviewees: "Very often the group leaders would suggest persons whose stories were considered exceptional and I had to explain that I wanted the rank and file experience." In this brief profile, the leaders had the authority to determine who would be interviewed; Boder had to go through them to get to the interviewee proper. And the leaders espoused their own idea about representative experience, which conflicted with that of Boder. Whatever the reality at the different centers, Boder's retrospective account pictures the leaders as antagonists, a foil for his own counterintuitive way of conceiving what stories were best.

This hinted-at antagonism may account for the fact that no group leaders were interviewed until late in the day. To be sure, it may have been the nature of the DP centers; both Bellevue and Henonville, where Boder carried out lengthy interviews with the leader, were transplanted from Poland to France and thus may have had a cohesion beyond the previous communities. In any case, Boder, again shifting protocol, proceeded upon his return to France to conduct his first interview at the next three sites with the leader of the group.

It was back in Paris on September 8 with Lena Kuechler that Boder inaugurated the practice. To be sure, Kuechler, like the other leaders, had her own riveting story to tell of her wartime experience, including her escape from Nazi detention amid a hail of bullets and her refuge in the guise of a Christian nanny at the estate of a Polish count. But she could also speak as the founder and head of an orphanage housing dozens of children, narrate the remarkable story of its coming into being, and detail the desperate circumstances that compelled the move from Poland to France. Moreover, she switched languages midstream (from Yiddish to Polish), choosing, as Boder put it in his suggestive remarks, the language that fit best the milieu of which she spoke. Indeed, she

herself would authoritatively write (in Polish) the story in a memoir first published (in Yiddish) not long after she recounted it to Boder.<sup>6</sup> In the next few years, the drama surrounding her “children,” as she called them, continued to unfold, as Kuechler in 1948 shepherded the community to the new state of Israel. She then expanded her memoir to include this homecoming as well.<sup>7</sup>

In a number of respects, Kuechler was Boder’s alter ego. She had an advanced degree in psychology (Boder, clearly impressed, mistakenly called her a “doctor of philosophy”) and had begun to pursue a career in research, helping to reestablish Polish academic life. Raised like Boder in a traditional Eastern European Jewish home, her command of the *lingua franca* made it possible to circulate in elite academic and cultural circles. She eventually directed her psychological skills toward rebuilding the lives of Jewish children. In mustering the resources to provide a sanitarium retreat for her charges and, in time, to ferry them to the more hospitable environment of France, Kuechler demonstrated an entrepreneurial spirit that resembled Boder’s own.<sup>8</sup> Immersed in caring for the children’s day-to-day needs, Kuechler, for her part, went on to document in her first book the plight of nine of the children by using a verbatim method reminiscent of Boder’s.<sup>9</sup> In the years that followed, she too searched for the most fitting way to narrate her own topical autobiography, shifting from a documentary focus on individual children to a novelistically shaped account of their plight via her own.

In its own way, this, too, was a background interview, a follow-up to the Oleiski/Wilf controversy on the postwar fate of Poland’s remaining Jews. In hearing about the conditions that drove Kuechler’s orphanage out of the Polish resort town of Zakopane, Boder was again apprised of the extent and viciousness of the hatred coming from certain quarters:

We were surrounded by a wave of such anti-Semitism that is impossible to describe. The children could not go out on the street at all. They were hit with stones on the head. When I sent three boys to movies, other Polish boys sitting behind them were threatening them all the time to stick a knife in their backs. I could not send the children to Polish schools, because there they were so persecuted and insulted. The clerks, the officials of the supply service, did not want to give us any rations. They constantly tried to cut them down to the utmost.

Boder said little in response. His brief acknowledgments rather let Kuechler narrate the ordeal on her terms. But he endeavored to tease out the implications of Kuechler’s dire chronicle when interviewing Joseph Ferber, a staff member of the orphanage. Ferber had escaped the Nazi onslaught by fleeing from his hometown of Brody, had spent the duration of the war serving in the Soviet Army, and had returned home to find nothing but ruins. He found his way to Cracow, joined Kuechler’s enterprise, and led the defense against the anti-Semitic attacks directed toward the orphanage. He had nonetheless characterized Poland’s postwar government as “liberal,” moving Boder to play the devil’s advocate:

BODER: Nu, you say that in Poland the government is, more or less, liberal. Would it not be sensible to remain there and to combat the anti-Semitism, and to settle there and build there Jewish communities until the situation in Palestine will clear up?

FERBER: Something else is to be considered here. On the ruins which we find we do not want to build any more. When we come and find a burned home, a destroyed workshop, seeing that we have lost everything, everything that was dear was killed, we do not want to build any more on these ruins. And because of that the Jew thinks, if to start building, it is better to build in his own homeland, in one's own land. This is one /reason/. And the second—it is the unceasing danger which threatens. This is the peril to one's life. Because in Poland, as I have said before, exists a strong reactionary force which is committing murder and acts of death on every Jew that they chase in the street or even in his own home. An example of this is the pogrom which took place at this time a year ago in Cracow and a month ago in Kielce...

The acts of death that pursued every Jew, even Kuechler's orphans, corroborated Oleiski's view of the lethal nature of postwar Poland. Interviews with three of the orphans brought home to Boder how the choice of rebuilding or flight bore on the future of European Jewry.

The next stop on Boder's circuit, Henonville, a devout religious community outside of Paris, presented a different sort of challenge. Here, too, he began the series of interviews with the community's charismatic leader, Rabbi Solomon Horowitz. And while Boder did solicit the rabbi's remarkable personal story, he also sought background information on Henonville itself, which Rabbi Horowitz was happy to provide. Both strategies ran counter to Boder's explicit protocol. Yet the testimony of a leader was understood by Boder to be essential to the series of interviews conducted at a given site. And background information was not something that could remain at an informal level, obtained casually before the interview or over a meal. The background too was worth recording.

Confronted with a DP community whose day-to-day life was guided by the precepts of Jewish law, Boder displayed his knowledge of traditional Jewish practice and also the gaps in this knowledge. This came out most forcefully in respect to strictures of the Sabbath and Boder's quest to record as many interviews as possible during his Henonville visit. Rabbi Horowitz detailed the special place given to Sabbath observance:

We spend a Sabbath from beginning to end full of Godliness, with diffidence, with lectures, with study. The whole Sabbath is to us a spiritual day, free of labor.

Since the interview occurred on Thursday and Boder had planned to spend several days at the site, he realized Rabbi Horowitz's view of the Sabbath as a "spiritual day, free of labor," might not let him get the

number of interviews that he wished:

BODER: Tell me, will you allow me to use the machine on Saturday?

HOROWITZ: Saturday? Here? /In an apologetic whisper apparently to avoid the recording of his words:/ No. Not here.

BODER: I am not writing...

HOROWITZ: /Whisper:/ But it is an apparatus...

BODER: /Chuckle. Words not clear./

HOROWITZ: ...an apparatus. It is not /word not clear/.

BODER: Nu?

HOROWITZ: What for? You want to come out for Saturday? You are very welcome.

BODER: I want to stay here for...I am leaving already for America on Tuesday. But I still want to talk with many people here.

HOROWITZ: Will you stay over Saturday?

BODER: Well, I can't remain over...I want to stay here Friday and maybe Saturday till...but only if I could use the machine.

HOROWITZ: No, no.

BODER: No.

That Boder felt obliged to get permission to record on Shabbat indicates that he knows he is on shaky ground. Yet Boder's persistence and Horowitz's refusal clarifies the fundamental role of the recorder to Boder's project. For Boder, Henonville is a site of testimony; for Horowitz, it is a site of strengthening Torah.

The pressure to interview in Henonville on the Sabbath was unusually great because Boder thought that he would be leaving Europe on Tuesday of the following week. That turned out not to be the case; authorization to travel to Germany must have come over the next few days. But at this point Henonville was nearly the end point; he had to pack all he could into the short time remaining.

#### COMPLETE FREEDOM: GETTING CLEARANCE FOR GERMANY

There was one piece of unfinished business. Remembering the remarkable interview with Abraham Kimmelman two weeks before, Boder headed to Geneva to expand on the four hours that he had already spent with him—already by far the longest interview. No matter how enticing the prospect—Kimmelman's was, writes Boder poignantly, “the interview for which I specially returned”—the follow-up never took place. The news that he could go to Germany had Boder change direction; it put into place the final piece and had him extend the expedition for another two and a half weeks.<sup>10</sup> Boder's elation over receiving the go-ahead and, on top of that, to conduct the interviews on his own terms can still be felt in the words he penned some months after: “By the middle of September I got my clearance for Germany...with complete freedom of movement, unrestricted selection of human samples, and

no attempt at censorship of the collected material."<sup>11</sup> What had been beyond reach was suddenly within it.

Germany nevertheless had to have complicated immeasurably what had come before. Up to this point he had to rely on Oleiski's stunning portrait of deprivation and renewal. He also had to synthesize this insider's view with Wilf's far more critical assessment of the "horrible interlude" of Germany's DP centers. These contrary views would now be subjected to his own brief but on-site observations.

He began to interview in Munich on September 19, some fifty days into his expedition. It was no longer summer but nearly fall. In the Jewish calendar it was no longer the mourning period commemorating the destruction of the Temple but the time leading up to the high holidays, which would begin on the evening of September 25. In terms of the DPs' situation, Munich could not have been more different. Henonville, Boder's final French interview site, was a homogenous religious Jewish community; indeed, of all the interview sites Henonville was the one most thoroughly Jewish in character, not only in the makeup of its residents but in the way of life "according to the Torah." Munich's DP population was in contrast heterogeneous, made up of Jews and non-Jews, religious and nonreligious, Eastern and Western European, those who were clearly victims of the Nazis and others who had been either bystanders or even accomplices. "Only here," wrote Boder about his visit to Germany, "did I obtain a broad view of the problem of the displaced persons."<sup>12</sup> No wonder. The contrast of Munich to the other previous interview sites was profound. France, Switzerland, and Italy sheltered several thousand DPs; Germany's DPs numbered in the hundreds of thousands. And Munich continued to serve as a hub of the DP community.

To begin his Flak Kaserne DP camp interviews with Julius Kluver, head of the camp's Mennonite community, followed the now-established pattern of first interviewing a group leader. Kluver recounted his own ordeal as well as historical background crucial to understanding the plight of his community. Indeed, the ambiguous wartime fortunes of the Mennonites brought up with a vengeance the issue of the bystander—an issue crucial to Boder's sojourn in Germany and to the interview project overall.

#### FRIENDLY EASTERN REFUGEES: BODER'S CONCEPT OF THE BYSTANDER

In this respect, Kluver's interview appears in *I Did Not Interview the Dead* at a particularly telling juncture. After five chapters relating interviews with Jews (most of which chronicle the experience of ghettos and concentration camps), Kluver's is the first of two interviews with non-Jews, those whom Boder later referred to as "Friendly Eastern Refugees."

The juxtaposition with the chapter directly before is especially sharp, wherein "Fela Lichtheim" (actually Fela Nichthauser) tells of the destruction of her Polish Jewish family and her own deportation to work and concentration camps, including her time at Bergen-Belsen at the war's conclusion.

Kluver's plight, lodged in a UNRRA DP camp with his wife and two children, during the war neither forcefully deported nor interned in any form of prison camp, appears to bear little likeness to the preceding interview. Yet the contrast helps to throw into relief the position of each narrator and helps Boder to clarify the status of those who were onlookers. Choosing not to interview perpetrators (though at one time he did entertain the idea), he does interview those who witnessed the events but were themselves not fully caught up in them. Eventually Boder designates this special category of displaced person as "friendly Eastern refugees"—in flight from Eastern European homes, these non-Jews were perceived by the Nazis not as enemies but as "friendly" or sympathetic bystanders. At the time of the interviews, however, Boder was still in the early stages of trying to understand how to reckon with the "onlookers." What has become known as the "gray zone" of morally ambiguous action during the Holocaust was for Boder even grayer.<sup>13</sup>

In *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, Kluver's interview bears the title "Not a Single Night in Peace." The phrase is taken from Kluver's evasive response to Boder's question about life in postwar Germany:

How can I tell you [about the German situation]? I have so little interest in the situation right here. My interests, my thoughts are all overseas. To get away from here as soon as possible so that finally I should have a homeland. *Since 1920 I had not a single night in peace.* And to have a little, little land of my own. [emphasis added]<sup>14</sup>

Kluver expresses a sense of displacement, a feeling of needing to be elsewhere so profound that he cannot address "the situation right here." His yearning to be elsewhere blocks his access to the here and now. Though typical of the DPs' desire to leave the temporary refuge of the camp or shelter, Kluver's response may have gone against the grain of what Boder anticipated. A German- (and Dutch-) speaking Mennonite, Kluver was one of the "friendly Eastern refugees" who had been evacuated from Russia by the Germans during the war and brought to Germany because they ostensibly shared that nation's language and customs. Boder may thus have expected that Kluver would speak of feeling at home in Germany, no longer persecuted by the communists. Kluver dispels such an idea, distancing himself here and elsewhere from a notion that taking refuge in Germany means a return home. Indeed, only by again leaving—by "get[ting] away" from Germany—can Kluver find a "homeland." The chapter title, "Not a Single Night in Peace," refers in 1946 to this extended period of unrest, of feeling homeless, that has dogged Kluver up until that very moment.

The 1920 date disturbs Boder's usual interview parameters, going back beyond the beginning of World War II, the time that typically serves as the interviews' point of departure ("Where were you and what happened to you when the war started?"). Kluver has earlier in the interview stressed that year, the start of Soviet rule, as the end of the Mennonites' peaceful domicile in Russia. It was in 1920 that the Russians no longer kept "their promise" that the Mennonites would not be compelled to bear arms and began to draft recruits from the Mennonite ranks. More particularly, 1920 initiated the destruction of Kluver's family and of the comfortable life they had built:

Take for example, my case. My father was rich. He owned a farm. My father was shot in 1920 because he was a rich man.<sup>15</sup>

The lack of peace that Kluver reports begins with the shooting of his father, a personal tragedy that coincides with the violation of the promise that had been made to the Mennonite community at large. Thus 1920 marks the end of a golden era, ushering in a long span of time without a "single night of peace."

Pushing the time frame of the interview back beyond Boder's wartime focus, Kluver's personal chronology of familial and communal disaster sets in motion several conflicting issues. First of all, the 1920 date comes close to the time of Boder's own upheaval, his flight from Russia to America in 1919 occasioned by the advent of Soviet rule. Boder himself may well, if asked, have given the same year as the turning point for his life, with his fortunes rising rather than falling. In Kluver's story of lacking a single peaceful night, Boder thus hears of life under the Soviets that seems to live out a shadow of his own. More generally, Kluver's prewar dating poses an alternative to World War II as the preeminent disaster and indirectly addresses (or attempts to redress) Kluver's ambiguous position with regard to the war that has recently ended.

Spoken in German, Boder's questions try to clarify Kluver's relation to the German army that liberated him. "Tell me," asks Boder, "were most of the Mennonites German?" Seemingly an attempt to determine national affiliation, Boder's presumption that most of the Mennonites, including Kluver, are German potentially shifts Kluver from the position of a bystander, with its neutral connotations, closer to that of the enemy. Kluver, for his part, immediately tries to set the record straight, pointing out that "the Mennonites are Dutch. They are of Dutch origin." This purportedly non-German heritage is underscored in Kluver's capsule summary of Mennonite history:

They emigrated from the Low Countries to southern Russia upon an invitation from the Empress Catherine the Second and her successors. They came to Russia to colonize the southern Ukraine. They left the Low Countries, the shores of the North Sea, on account of their religion and their refusal to bear arms.<sup>16</sup>

Reference again and again to the “Low Countries” as the point of departure drives the wedge between the Mennonites and the Germans yet deeper. And, just in case Boder’s question was taken to identify nationality, Kluver’s historical summary shows that nationality is not at bottom what defines the Mennonites. Even the affiliation with the “Low Countries” or the Dutch was set aside when religious or moral principles were challenged.<sup>17</sup>

This west-to-east movement as a sign of Mennonite independence from national (and especially German) affiliation runs up against recent wartime experience:

BODER: Well, what happened when the Germans came into Russia?

KLUVER: As soon as the Germans arrived in Russia some of the Mennonites moved west immediately.

BODER: You mean they went to meet the Germans?<sup>18</sup>

Having heard Kluver tell of Soviet persecution, Boder assumes that moving “immediately west” means welcoming what for the Mennonites would be a liberating force, the German army on its drive into the Ukraine. Boder’s readiness to turn the Mennonites’ westward movement into a welcoming committee for the Nazis suggests that he still presumes an underlying affinity between the Mennonites and the Germans, a presumption that would make of the arrival of the German army in Russia not only a liberation from Soviet persecution but also a return to the national group with whom the Mennonites are associated.

This reading, imputing to Boder a strategy of teasing out the ambiguous status of the “friendly Eastern refugee,” is confirmed by Kluver’s resolute response:

No [the Mennonites did not go to meet the Germans qua Germans], but they [simply] moved westward. To us it [the nationality of the liberating army] was immaterial. If there would have come a French army, a Dutch army, a Turkish army, we had only one goal—to get away from the East.

What Boder had cast as a reunion between landsmen—the German Mennonites who had taken flight centuries before and the German army that was set to vanquish the enemy to the East—is recast by Kluver into flight from a cruel Soviet oppressor toward a liberating army, the nationality of which is immaterial. This same contention is played out around the issue of permission to leave their Ukrainian home:

BODER: When did that movement westward start? Were you in Saratov when the war started.

KLUVER: No, I lived in Zaporozhe. The Germans arrived in the winter of '41 and part of us went already in 1942 to Poland. I went to Poland at the beginning of 1943.

BODER: Was that with permission of the Germans?

KLUVER: Yes, that was with permission of the Germans. We were permitted to go west.<sup>19</sup>

The granting of permission to go to Poland is another sign that Kluver was dealt with under the category of a "friendly" population, a designation that allowed the Mennonites relative freedom of movement. The permission was given because of this special status. For Boder, their opportunity to leave Russia may have come at the cost of courting the enemy; for Kluver, the opportunity to relocate came without any nationalist or ethnic strings attached.

What Boder insinuated about Mennonite ties to Germany by way of origin and loyalty also comes by way of ties to the German language. "Now tell me," Boder pointedly asks, "how did it happen that the Mennonites still preserved in Russia the German language?" This query, focusing on the persistent ties to German in spite of living elsewhere than Germany, comes in the midst of ascertaining when Kluver's family arrived in Russia, a way of locating his personal story against the general background of Mennonite settlement. The question of language, then, returns to establishing the customs of the community at large.

In what has become over the course of the interview a predictable pattern of Boder's querying about the Mennonite's German association and Kluver's circumspect denial thereof, Kluver responds: "You see, we talk among ourselves still Dutch, the Frisian Platt [the Low German dialect originally spoken in Holland's Friesland province]." In perfect complement to Boder's earlier ascription of German nationality to the Mennonites, Kluver's response again substitutes Dutch for German, a neutral tongue (and benign ethnic tie) for a malign one. Yet the history is complex enough to bring forth an involved answer that shows qualified ties to German nonetheless:

Originally we used a Dutch dialect, but since the Mennonite colonies in southern Russia were surrounded by a large number of German colonies and since years ago there was a better supply of German books, the language of our schools and of our religion has become German. But up to now, we still talk the Dutch language among ourselves at home.<sup>20</sup>

Boder's presumption that German is a Mennonite tongue was half right, it turns out. Key Mennonite institutions did adopt German. But even while acknowledging the Mennonite use of German as a significant tongue, Kluver's account cushions the association in several ways. First, he again returns to origins, noting Dutch, not German, as the starting point for the Mennonite community. A corollary to the first point is that German is a language that the Mennonites adopted, a concession necessitated by geographic and cultural circumstance. And finally, Kluver concludes the brief survey of German in the Mennonite community by reiterating the centrality of Dutch. The diglossic community turns to German when dealing with the mediating institutions of culture (including, in this case, taking part in a German-language interview with a researcher from abroad), but, "among themselves," in the essential

fabric of that community, German cedes to Dutch; the core, the home, remains un-Germanic.

Despite Kluver's repeated disclaimers, when Boder later wrote about Kluver and the Mennonites in the context of the "friendly Eastern refugees," he made clear the connection to the Germans—here spoken of more incriminatingly as the "Nazi government." And, to help make his case, Boder seemingly evaluated differently than Kluver the language question as well. The Mennonites from the Ukraine qualified as *Volksdeutsche* because,

As Russian subjects, who for centuries continued to use the German language as language of worship and to a large extent as their language of communication, they were accepted by the Nazi government as *Volksdeutsche*, "Folk-Germans," i.e. as "Germans abroad," who in spite of their residence for more than a hundred years in Russia, had by Nazi definition never ceased to be Germans.<sup>21</sup>

Language in this reckoning serves as the key to the community's identity, with the preservation of German, as Boder's original question phrased it, rather than the claim to "talk among ourselves Dutch," winning the day.

In truth, Boder's introduction to this chapter is studiously ambiguous. The only allusion to Kluver's connection to the Germans remains uncommitted, saying simply that Kluver (who in the book chapter is given the pseudonym Julius Braun) "took advantage of the German invasion of the Ukraine in order to leave Russia." This formulation leaves Kluver as one for whom the German invasion was an "advantage" but does not (as he does in the interview itself) press further the association with Germany or Germans.

Although Kluver regularly turns to Holland and the Dutch language to distance the Mennonites from Germany, the ties to Holland are themselves complex. Some eight months before his interview with Boder, Kluver and 315 Mennonite companions left Germany to seek refuge in Holland, inspired by rumors that Holland would give them asylum, even though they had no documentation. As it turned out, the Dutch officials would not permit their entry, and, after three days of trying to persuade the officials and obtain the necessary documents, the Mennonites were forced to return to Germany, "tired and dispirited," as one account puts it.<sup>22</sup> Kluver did not relate this episode to Boder, perhaps because the interview focused on the war period, perhaps because the brief remarks devoted to the postwar period emphasized "the present situation in Germany," or perhaps because the episode dramatizes not the Mennonite association with the Dutch but its opposite. Seeking asylum in the country that gave birth to the movement centuries before, the refugees painfully discovered that the Dutch officials no longer honored the original bond.

Having probed with Kluver the complicated predicament of the Mennonites' wartime sympathies, Boder continued to highlight the

bystander in the days that followed. Indeed, the next interview site—the Baltic DP camp at Lohengrin—was again homogenous but with a different emphasis: Lohengrin was Boder's only interview site that had no Jews. The Jewish DPs in Germany had sought this division of groups into separate camps to minimize contact with prisoners who had collaborated with the perpetrators. From their side, the Baltic groups may have preferred to have Jews elsewhere. Boder was aware of these undercurrents. He was nevertheless impressed by the camp's "organized self-government."

One of the strange twists of Boder's itinerary concerns the interviews conducted on September 23 at the Feldafing DP camp, a major center for Jewish DPs in Germany. Set on a lake on the highway to Innsbruck, the barracks had formerly served the Hitler Youth and Russian prisoners of war. Founded by U.S. Army Lieutenant Irving Smith, by July 1945 Feldafing was ahead of most in providing nourishment and services to promote recovery among its 6,000 residents. It likely earned this distinction because the camp served as, in Leo Schwarz's feisty phrase, "the very seedbed of Sheerith HaPletah [postwar Europe's Jewish survivors]," setting down the roots of self-government for the Jewish DPs in Germany's American Zone.<sup>23</sup>

Boder's decision to record only three interviews—with Max Meyer Sprecher and Helen and Erwin Tischauer—seems to run contrary to Feldafing's prominent position in the DP community.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, this was the smallest number of interviews that Boder conducted at any of his sixteen interview sites. Why the discrepancy between massive DP center and meager number of interviews? And why, given that small number, did he choose the Tischauers—who were, moreover, the only couple that he interviewed and recorded? Was it because of Helen Tischauer's inside, office position in Auschwitz? The way that Boder begins the interview suggests that this is the case, since in contrast with almost every other, this one jumps right into the period of concentration camp life. In this respect, Helen Tischauer's is like the "special episode" interviews conducted at the beginning of September, without being explicitly billed as such.<sup>25</sup>

The small number of interviews, for its part, may be due to the fact that interviewing had already been set in motion by Kaplan's Historical Commission, which had established a branch in Feldafing in December 1945. By February of the next year, a public call for participation had already gone out, circulated in the camp's gazette, *Dos Freye Wort*.<sup>26</sup> Boder only arrived on the scene some seven months later. He likely felt that, being a Johnny-come-lately, it would be difficult to obtain the spontaneity that he sought, or that he was encroaching on territory that had a previous claimant. Perhaps it was a combination of both.

A different mixed population of Jewish and non-Jewish DPs between the ages of twenty and forty-three awaited Boder at the UNRRA University, based at the Deutsches Museum in Munich. The university had opened its

doors in February 1946 and was to close them in September 1948; Boder's interviews took place during the university's relatively short life span.<sup>27</sup> Among the subjects offered were botany, law, pharmacology, and architecture. Organized by DP students and professors, the founders hoped to establish a nonsectarian place of study special to the postwar climate. More practically, in a city where universities remained closed, it enabled a return to academic life for those whose course of study had been interrupted. The institution clearly appealed to Boder, blending as it did the academic life of a university with his current fieldwork with DPs. Indeed, the Deutsches Museum itself served the DPs in various capacities, ministering to their economic and political as well as educational welfare. As Boder heard from some of the interviewees, the museum's multifaceted agenda at times made it the focal point of DP discontent, which in turn obstructed study at the university. And even under the best of circumstances, the university operated under austere conditions, making do with few supplies and without the benefit of a library. These difficult conditions impressed Boder so much that when he returned to the United States he attempted to arrange for a donation of books to be sent to Munich.

More than at other sites, politics left its imprint on the organization and protocol of these seven interviews. Only here was Boder required to use, as he tells us, no more than one spool ("half an hour") for each interview, a restriction imposed "by the management of the university" to allow "representatives of all groups" to get a chance. The university administration clearly felt under pressure to be evenhanded, favoring no group or nationality more than any other. Yet there was irony here, too, since the very mission of the university was to transcend in the postwar world the national conflicts that had decimated Europe and the world at large. This is how one of the student leaders, Valerius Michelson, from Latvia and Estonia, expressed it:

During this war, especially in Vienna, I had the opportunity to meet not only with Russians who had come from the East, but also with Poles, in part war prisoners who worked with the farmers, in part taken out of there /Poland/, and with Ukrainians, and most recently with Balts. And in all of them I noticed one common /character/ streak, a streak of desire to build somehow, after the war, a life on new foundations, especially among the young people. On bases of mutual friendship. And it appeared to me that if this university, which is just now being created, would gain strength, if this university will come to be an entity which could really live and exist, then it could bring about a real collaboration of one with another, and especially for us, the people from the East who, as I observed for the last three years, could never come to terms to be friends with each other. They wanted it, but always continued thinking, "I am a Ukrainian." "I am a Pole. We can't be together," or "I am a Ukrainian, and you are a Muscovite, a Russian. You are oppressing our nation," et cetera.

Boder was deeply interested in giving time to air such sentiments. But he also had to cope with what was again a change of protocol, this time,

however, imposed from without. He guessed that such constraints would compromise the scholarly value of his work, but the sacrifice was apparently worth it:

Well, we shall try to see what we can get /recorded/ in this short program, because we have changed our rule, and instead of letting everybody talk as long as possible, we are taking /a short silence on the wire; reference apparently to half hour limitation per person/...our stories, because it simply would be a great hardship to them of /my/ not having listened to the representatives of each nationality. Maybe scientifically this would not be immediately convertible into useful material, but we just have to do it.

Boder would have preferred fewer interviews with more time; but he compensated for making do with less time by invoking the notion of a "composite":

Now then, I am sorry we have to stop. I would like indeed to have every one of you for an hour or two, and probably that would have been better, but you see... I should have preferred to have two persons or three persons for three hours /each/ than each one /more people/ for half an hour. True? But since there are here /so many/ diverse groups, I don't want to hurt /offend/ anybody. True? And maybe I would be able to make a composite from the whole story /from all the stories/. True?

In this case Boder brought forth the notion of composite to make a virtue of necessity. Yet the idea of making a composite "from all the stories" clearly guided his overall approach. A month earlier, in his pathbreaking interview with Abraham Kimmelman, he spoke in a similar vein of the individual interviews adding up to a larger whole: "That is why I interview many," Boder avowed, "and have them tell their story, so from the little that I get from everyone, the mosaic, a total picture can be assembled." The setting for the Kimmelman interview in Geneva was nearly the obverse of that at UNRRA University. In Geneva, there was unlimited time. Yet even under optimal conditions, the individual interview, no matter how long or detailed, would be inadequate. One person can never tell enough. The UNRRA University restrictions, in contrast, left a minimum of time. Yet here, too, the concept of a collection comes to fore. Whatever the length of the contribution—long or short, detailed or sketchy—the narrative joins with others to fill in the "whole story."

The pressure of time at UNRRA University shows itself most forcibly in the interview with Roma Tchernabroda, a Jewish student of pharmacology. Born in Kielce and in her early twenties at the beginning of the war, Tchernabroda made a singular impression because she had lost both of her legs as a result of the difficult conditions she had to endure at the end of the war. Earlier, she tells how she was forced to take flight with her husband and ended up in Warsaw, whence she was deported. She clearly has the capacity to relate step by step and in detail what she saw. But the university administration's time restriction compels Boder

to skip and shorten:

BODER: I want to know more about you...

TCHARNABRODA:... from the lager

BODER: Now were you deported, and what happened to you later.

TCHARNABRODA: Deported—to Maidanek. The first transport  
during the last deportation went to Treblinka.

BODER: Nu. /In English/ It is here...as I said before an interview at  
the university where I am forced to interview a certain number  
of students. I therefore have to give them a limited time. That is  
the first time in my procedure that I am doing it and am therefore  
insisting to get the personal story of Mrs. Tchernabroda, to skip the  
possibly very important personal story about the ghetto and about  
the transportation to the concentration camp /continued in German/.

And so you were in Maidanek?

TCHARNABRODA: Yes.

By this time in his journey, Boder had a sure sense of the interview's progression. He thus feels a need to express what he was forced to leave out. His wish to get the fuller story must have been intensified by the prospect that he was soon to head back to America. In truth, Boder's end-of-trip schedule may have contributed to the time constraints; he reports that he conducted all of the UNRRA University interviews in a single afternoon because he was obliged to leave Munich that night. In any case, unprecedented circumstances forced him to abbreviate the UNRRA University interviews even though he would have preferred the blow-by-blow story.

All in all, Boder spent five days in Munich, during which time he conducted twenty-four interviews. The locations were diverse, the populations even more so. He acquired material for two contrasting sets of observations. On the one hand, he saw in Munich his main contingent of non-Jews. Their stories made an impression and were central to the chronicle of DPs. On the other hand, he took in something of Jewish life in German DP centers, having interviewed eight Jews of vastly different backgrounds and wartime experience. Though Boder did not comment directly on his Munich visit, he did include a significant portion of the interviews conducted there in his main interview publications: three of the eight in *I Did Not Interview the Dead* (1949); seven of sixteen in the first series of *Topical Autobiographies* (1950); six of ten in "The Impact of Catastrophe" (1954). The increasing percentage of these interviews per publication suggests that Munich's legacy grew greater over time, shaping Boder's preoccupations and offering material for them.

#### A MEMORIAL TO ALL WHO KNEW WIESBADEN

Boder traveled to one German site outside of Munich: the city of Wiesbaden, where he spent two or three days. He there arranged things

much in the manner he had before:

Upon my arrival in Wiesbaden, September 25, 1946, I made contact through UNRRA, with representatives of the Local Jewish Community. I told them that I was collecting first hand narratives of displaced people, in order to provide the American public with information concerning personal experiences of Nazi victims. They promised to secure willing individuals and schedule them for me. Within an hour I had my first interviewee.

Boder ended up conducting five interviews; two of them—with David Matzner and Anna Kovitzka—were among the most important of the entire trip. The thirty-two-year-old Matzner was born in Wiesbaden, had studied in a yeshiva in Jerusalem, and had returned to Europe only to be swept up in the deportations following Kristallnacht, the November 1938 pogrom that terrorized Germany's Jews.<sup>28</sup> He endured many labor and concentration camps and after liberation returned to Wiesbaden, "because I believed that from there I might start the search for my family. Also, because it was in the American Zone." Eventually he worked to restore the Wiesbaden synagogue where his family had prayed—and where, in a departure from the customary storerooms and offices, Boder conducted the final Wiesbaden interviews. An excerpt of Matzner's interview was the first transcript to be published (in 1947), a likely reflection of its high technical quality but also of its substance. The full transcribed interview appeared as the concluding chapter in *I Did Not Interview the Dead*. It was thus to Matzner that Boder gave the book's final word.

Anna Kovitzka, a thirty-four-year-old Polish Jew liberated in Germany, had come to Wiesbaden from Pfalzheim, where she worked in a Jewish kindergarten. Her interview highlights her husband's wish that she masquerade as a non-Jew, her attempt to save her baby by leaving it with a Christian acquaintance, her deportation to Auschwitz, and her liberation by the American Ninth Army. She concludes by telling how she learned of the horrible news of the murder of her baby and, on a distinctly more positive note, the meaningfulness of celebrating Rosh Hashanah by hosting American soldiers. Boder thought at the time that this was not only the final German interview (which it was) but the final interview of the project (which it was not). He immediately cast it as typical: "We have heard from this woman," he comments in English, "the story we have heard from everybody." Yet Kovitzka's story eventually became special, serving Boder as the first chapter of *I Did Not Interview the Dead* (under the title, "I Am Alone") and as the focus of a long analytic commentary—the only interview commentary of any length that he was able to write up.

Why did these last two interviews in Germany make such an impression on Boder? Was it because they came at the end of the time in Germany and hence the memory of them, almost uncluttered by later

encounters, remained most distinct and fresh? In relation to his interviewees, Boder was acutely sensitive to the fading of memory and to the diminishing of emotional intensity over time; perhaps he too felt himself susceptible to the same kind of impairment and thus drew on what stood out at the end.

This said, the exceptional circumstances under which he conducted the interviews had to have played a role in making them especially meaningful. The interviews took place in a German synagogue that had been desecrated during Kristallnacht and then only recently restored; the final minutes of Matzner's remarks recount his role in the restoration and the memorial the synagogue became for his family and for the "sake of the dead".<sup>29</sup>

for those who shall not return anymore, and for those who were able to leave this country in time, so the word of God may spread over all the world, a memorial to all who knew Wiesbaden and who once lived in Wiesbaden.<sup>30</sup>

Matzner may well have articulated what Boder left unsaid. After all, most of the interviews had been conducted in DP centers whose location meant little to the DPs and which formed merely a temporary shelter to enable a return to something of a normal life until the future could be sorted out. The Wiesbaden synagogue was a starkly different setting. It was itself a symbol of the continuity of Jewish life (especially in postwar Germany) while also serving as a memorial to the dead and to those able to leave Nazi Germany. Boder's epilogue at the conclusion of the Kovitzka interview refers explicitly to the desecrated-then-restored synagogue; its symbolic power was not lost on him. Matzner's personal connection both to the synagogue and to his childhood home also had to have made an impression. In contrast to all other interview sites, this one played a role in the story recounted.

The Matzner and Kovitzka interviews were special both because of place and because of time. The end of Boder's stay in Germany coincided with Rosh Hashanah, the holiday that marks the beginning of the new year in the Jewish calendar and renders God's judgment on the world for the coming year. Boder had apparently attended some portion of the evening and morning services at the synagogue and then commenced with the interviews in the afternoon. These two interviews conducted following Rosh Hashanah prayers 1946/5707 continued in a different register the somber reflections of the day.

The influence of the holiday on Boder in these concluding moments can be seen in another way. The epilogue that Boder spoke just before leaving the synagogue mainly acknowledges the names of those who helped him make his way in Germany and with the expedition in general.<sup>31</sup> Yet he is also moved to a searching moment of reflection, stated in the form of a question: "Who is going to sit in judgment over all this," he asks, "and who is going to judge my work?" It is one of the few places

where Boder shifts to a philosophical, even theological register—a shift made all the more striking because he joins a question about the events to his role in chronicling them. At the end of the road, the two have become almost indistinguishable—certainly a statement in its own right regarding Boder's immersion in his task.

Yet there are two questions, and, if joined, they are also distinguishable: the “all this” seemingly alludes to the tragedy and loss that fill the DPs’ stories. The second question follows from the first: given the overwhelming nature of the loss and the importance of a faithful record, Boder queries whether he has done justice in compiling over these two months the stories that he has in the way that he has.

This reading of Boder’s questions fails to account for two related aspects. First, he does not voice the questions in terms of what but rather in terms of who. And second, he chooses the idiom of judgment and judging in which to pose them. Strangely, the only other critical interpretation of this summing up, by journalist Carl Marziali, eschews the place and time when Boder posed the questions and instead believes, “You could read almost anything into it.”<sup>32</sup> Yet both aspects point to the context of the holiday of Rosh Hashanah and the liturgy that the Wiesbaden congregation had recited over the course of the previous night and morning.

A key to the Rosh Hashanah liturgy is the fact that the holiday also bears the name “the Day of Judgment,” and references to the motif of judgment abound. An appropriate verse taken from the Psalms announces the evening prayer proper: “For it is a decree for Israel, a judgment day for Jacob.” In the first morning service, several special songs develop this theme; one repeats it again and again: “To God who prepares man for judgment / To the one who tests hearts on the day of judgment,” and alternates in twenty subsequent verses between the endings “in judgment” and “on the day of judgment.” Judgment is again central in the verses introducing the ritual unique to this holiday, the shofar service: “Your very first utterance is truth, and Your righteous judgment is eternal,” followed by “teach me your judgments.” The second part of the morning service intensifies the focus on judgment, culminating in the holiday’s most famous prayer, *Unesaneh tokef*: “It is true that You alone are the One Who judges” and the angels will say, “Behold, it is the Day of Judgment, to muster the heavenly host for judgment.” Finally, the three concluding prayers elaborating the character of the day bear the same refrain: “Today all creatures of the world stand in judgment.”

No one and nothing escapes judgment. Over and over again the liturgy announces this fact and proclaims that God, King of the Universe, is the one who judges. Boder’s laconic reflection regarding judgment and judging thus transposes terms central to the day to the concluding moments of his project. The transpositions are of course multiple: from liturgy to analysis, from sacred tongue to vernacular, and, most important, from proclamation to question. Yet the idiom of judgment is shared. The time and place of the closing interviews in Germany left their telltale mark

on Boder's summing up and likely on his estimation of the significance of the interviews as well.

Memorialization took on a more formal character once Boder arrived back in Paris and on Sunday, September 29, attended and recorded a memorial service for concentration camp victims orchestrated by a Rabbi Sheely. In Wiesbaden, the memorial had come through the restoration of a desecrated synagogue dedicated in the name of family and community. To erect a building (or in this case, to restore one) in the name of family members no longer living was a traditional Jewish way to honor the dead. In Paris, the memorial service had a more innovative streak, and was one that would grow increasingly popular over time. Boder's last days in Europe thus presented him with two different kinds of memorial for the victims about whom he had heard so much. Although memorial was not the form that Boder himself gave to his project, it may have been one that, with Wiesbaden and Paris in mind, spurred his efforts in the succeeding months.

#### FROM PETERSBURG TO PARIS: THE FINAL INTERVIEW

The Wiesbaden epilogue, with its expression of gratitude and refrain of judgment, makes it seem as if these interviews were the last. Any that followed would have to have been unplanned. But it is tempting to see Boder's interview with Dimitri Odinetz as strategically arranged, simply because it brings together so many strands of the previous interviews while adding yet a new dimension: that of a personal relationship with the interviewee that dates back decades. Hence the Odinetz interview also brings together the strands of Boder's life and work, crisscrossing countries and continents.

The interview took place October 4, back at the Grand Hotel in Paris, site of the important "background" interviews a month and a half before. Although the meeting with Odinetz follows the general pattern of the hundred-plus interviews that came before it, it also has several unique aspects. First, Odinetz was a different kind of DP, having resided in Paris since 1920, when he fled the instability in Russia brought about by the Revolution and Civil War (Boder fled Russia at a similar time for similar reasons). Thus, Odinetz found himself based in Paris not because of the convulsions of the Second World War, as had most of Boder's other Paris interviewees, but, it might be said, because of those of the First World War. Moreover, during his lengthy sojourn, he had obtained positions of intellectual and cultural distinction, such as professor of history at the Sorbonne and at the Russian University in Paris, and president of the Turgenev Library, the largest Russian-language library outside of the then-Soviet Union.<sup>33</sup> His was thus a glaringly different status from the rank and file Boder interviewee who was housed in a DP center and who had an unsure future ahead.

Interviewed in this second home, Odinetz broadened the notion of a DP and stretched the circle of those included as friendly Eastern refugees. Indeed, in "The Impact of Catastrophe," Boder selected Odinetz as one of the five representative friendly Eastern refugees, though it is not clear how representative he was. Indeed, Boder referred to him in the essay as "a case by himself."

This interview's second special feature is that, while Boder resolutely seeks topical autobiographies among the rest of the interviewees—a chronicle of firsthand experience of the Second World War and its aftermath—he here begins decades before:

The interviewee is Professor Dimitri Michailovitch Odinetz, a professor of history, of Russian history, and educator, a former director of gymnasium, a professor of several universities and at one time a member of the cabinet of the Ukrainian regional government. He will talk to us in Russian.—Dimitri Michailovitch kindly tell us first of all, briefly, your so to speak, official occupations of your official career, let us say beginning with the year 1912. Only, so to speak, in brief factual remarks.

Prompted by Boder, Odinetz relays the high points of his curriculum vitae, both in Russia and later in Paris. Beginning with 1912, however, seems on Boder's part less official than personal. In that year, Boder and Odinetz were colleagues in St. Petersburg, in not one but two different institutions. Their connection thus predates the interview by some thirty-four years. In St. Petersburg, both men were teachers at a local gymnasium in the city center, and Odinetz was also on the faculty of the Psychoneurological Institute—the institute which, under the direction of Vladimir Bekhterev, was known for its liberal admissions policy toward Jews and where, apparently because of this policy, Boder found a hospitable place to pursue his studies. Boder's prologue makes explicit the important relationship: "And you were at that time [1912] our professor of [*sic*] the Psycho-Neurological Institute as well, isn't that so?" That Odinetz was actually a professor seems somewhat doubtful; a 1929 volume that includes his lengthy contribution refers to him as "M. Odinetz" while being sure to attribute to other contributors the title of professor.<sup>34</sup> For Boder and Odinetz, however, the title fit, conferring honor retroactively where it was thought due. The date 1912 then marks not only a point in Odinetz's career but also the beginning of a collegial relationship between the two decades before, when both were still on their home turf and were ambitious young men in their twenties setting out on their careers. Two world wars and two émigré careers later, they reunite in Paris.

No other interview has anything like the character of this one. To be sure, the stories told by some interviewees mirror or echo Boder's European circumstances, leading him to show a personal interest in setting or situation beyond what he normally might. Isaac Ostland's recollections of Vilna, for example, move Boder to ask about people and

places there as if trying to catch up after a time away. But in no other case does the interview actually carry forward a previous relationship. And that the reunion occurs in the closing interview intensifies expectations surrounding its special character. What new information about Boder will come to light? But the interview prologue, recalling with affection Odinetz's role as teacher from years back, promises more than the remainder of the interview delivers, at least in terms of supplying information on Boder's European years. Neither man says more about institutions they shared or ones that they went on to. It is as if, for these old acquaintances, too much could be taken for granted and did not need to be spoken. For us, however, their intimacy and concentration on the task at hand leaves out precious details of their life and time together.

But there is a backdrop to the interview, where Boder brings up previous encounters or conversations, a prehistory that, for all that is not said, places the interview as one among a series of ongoing conversations between the two émigrés: "the evening before," we learn from the interview postscript, "in an informal conversation with me and some friends Odinetz told us the following..." Boder then goes on to relate the historical material that his colleague shared, perhaps over supper, perhaps in another venue. But for our immediate purposes, it is not the content but the ongoing process of communication that sets this interview apart from the others. The recorded interview was in some sense a follow-up to the rendezvous the "evening before"—an occasion that seemingly served as an informal airing of issues that would receive a formal review in the interview itself.

The years of acquaintance move Boder to alter the standard interview protocol and commence at a significantly prewar date. By doing so, he lets the nature of the interview be shaped by the special circumstances of the interviewee. This flexibility was clearly one of Boder's convictions, one seen most clearly perhaps in his willingness to adapt the interview language to the narrator's preference. And yet he also maintains a professionalism that has him return to his routine set of questions:

BODER: Well, let us begin again. Be so kind and inform us... I know that you are an historian, but I collect primarily the experience of eye witness.

ODINETZ: Yes.

BODER: Tell me p[1]ease, what happened to you personally and to your family, of course, evaluating the events—you could not do it otherwise, beginning with the moment of the German invasion in Poland.

To begin again means to turn to Odinetz as an eyewitness of wartime events, and as such to elicit his testimony, just as Boder had done in the previous interviews. Whatever his special position, Odinetz too has a story to tell, and the interview protocol can best help it unfold. In a way, Odinetz serves as a test case, with all of his unprecedented

characteristics tempting the interview to go its own way, to leave behind standard operating procedures for the sake of a fuller personal portrait. In this sense, Boder explores what is for him another unconventional approach. He has experimented with various interview procedures along the way, sometimes abandoning cumbersome techniques, at other times making room for public personalities and their different kind of oratory, and at yet other times choosing to focus on single episodes rather than the war experience in toto. Here Boder both innovates and conserves, expands the parameters and reins them in. To "begin again" suggests a false start, as if the personal chronicle that came before was something off the record. But to begin again also implies multiple starting points, each setting in motion a strand of experience and witness.

In truth, the shift back to topical autobiography is not total, simply because Odinetz is a historian and as such will evaluate the events that he recounts even as he relates them. The dichotomy between history and eyewitness that Boder invokes is hence false—a fact of which he is well aware. This complexity comes through clearly in Boder's way of couching his request to Odinetz to "tell... what happened to you personally" in terms of a taken-for-granted qualification of the manner of his telling: "of course, evaluating the events—you could not do it otherwise." As a historian, Odinetz is used to interpreting the evidence that he gathers. He can only do the same, implies Boder, with the facts of his own experience, submitting them to evaluation. This too sets Odinetz's interview apart from most others. In previous interviews, Boder had to emphasize that what he wanted was firsthand witness—what was seen by the narrator personally. What was not seen firsthand was of a different order of experience, one that was much less compelling particularly when it came to the American audience Boder had in mind. In these cases Boder had to help the narrators distinguish between eyewitness and interpretation. In Odinetz's case—the historian who also lived through the events—Boder relaxed the distinction that he tried to elsewhere enforce so rigorously.

Odinetz's special circumstances evoke at least three dimensions—colleague, eyewitness, and historian. All of these dimensions were at work simultaneously in the Odinetz interview, having it serve as a coda, an unpremeditated summing up of the expedition at large.

#### "I WOULD ASK THEM TO SING"

Boder's trip to Europe also had other ends in view, some of which came more decidedly into focus only as time went on. The preservation of song was one of these.

Simply from the point of view of documenting Jewish song during the war, Boder's recordings add significantly.<sup>35</sup> "Although many [of the recordings] were popular songs that also appeared in other collections,"

writes historian Shirli Gilbert, "a substantial number have not appeared elsewhere."<sup>36</sup> In keeping with this assessment, the ORT "Music during the Holocaust" Web site posts ten Boder selections in its "Displaced Persons" section.<sup>37</sup> Although the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's online music exhibit highlights only one song ("Dort in dem Lager"), it recognizes Boder's song collection "as a significant addition to the repertoire of music related to the Shoah."<sup>38</sup>

The kinds of songs that make up Boder's collection vary considerably. They include songs from before the war that became popular during it ("Es Brent"); songs actually composed during the war ("Buchenwaldlied"; "Dort in dem Wald"; "Shtiller, Shtiller"), and songs composed after the war, expressing, for instance, the DPs' desire to reach Palestine ("Di Schiff 'Seder"). Some were already well known by the time they were recorded, others less so.<sup>39</sup>

Boder collected the songs both within the course of the interviews and at special sessions convened especially to record them. The performers—men, women, teens, and children—sang in groups, duos, and solos. In some cases, interviewees contributed to the song sessions; in most cases the performers were not those who gave interviews. The most formal session took place in the Flak Kaserne DP camp with the Mennonites, where both a youth and an adult choir performed, the former singing a hymn, the latter a classical motet.

As with the early postwar interviews, Boder's interest in collecting songs from the war period was by no means unique. At work on various levels of documenting Jewish life during the war, the DP historical commissions in Poland, Germany, Italy, and elsewhere included "songs, anecdotes, jokes, sayings, phrases, quotes, nicknames, passwords, curses, greetings" among the folklore materials they sought to gather.<sup>40</sup> The Central Historical Commission of Liberated Germany was perhaps most technologically savvy in its solicitations, arranging recording sessions on gramophone discs. The time commitment was billed at no more than seven minutes per person, modest enough to attract several hundred participants.

It is with sound recording that Boder's protocol contrasts in one crucial aspect with that of the historical commissions.<sup>41</sup> Both Boder and Israel Kaplan's Munich-based historical commission recorded DPs singing wartime and prewar songs; both were moreover moved to do so by the same ethnographic impulse. Yet only Boder also recorded the DPs' account of their wartime experience; Kaplan, for his part, apparently never thought of doing so.

What led Boder to do what the others did not? The difference between Boder and Kaplan's approaches can perhaps be attributed to the different context for sound culture. In the United States, scores of historically consequential interviews were recorded already in the 1930s. These included Alan Lomax's pioneering interviews in ethnomusicology, the remarkable Works Progress Administration interviews

with former slaves, the Linguistic Atlas projects, and independent folklore studies.<sup>42</sup> These still extant interviews continued into the 1940s. Such ventures in ethnographic sound recording, combined with the increasing use of audio recording by American psychologists and social scientists in general, established a ready context for Boder to adapt the wire recorder to his cause. His European counterparts, in contrast, could draw on no such precedent that combined testimonial narrative with sound recording. Europe had nothing to match America's ongoing experimentation with recording topical autobiographies. For Kaplan and company, putting words to paper was the most authoritative way to preserve the DPs' accounts. They were familiar with no better alternative.<sup>43</sup>

Others were busy with song collecting as well. Individuals such as Serge Kacerginski, a Vilna-born poet and partisan, focused his postwar efforts exclusively on song collecting, traveling from site to site in pursuit of material, and setting down in musical notation what he heard.<sup>44</sup> The exchange in this case went both ways: Kacerginski visited German DP camps to lecture on his musical findings. He also understood that there was an interested wider audience and published several volumes containing the songs and commentary on them within a few years after the war's end. The volumes remain to this day fundamental to any study of Holocaust music.

According to Gilbert, three goals motivated their efforts.<sup>45</sup> First, they wished to salvage from the threat of extinction precious artifacts of European Jewish culture. "Salvage ethnography" had been a driving force in Jewish life for over half a century, coalescing in St. Petersburg just as Boder was himself obtaining his professional training. Salvaging what was at risk had always had song high on its agenda. The scale of devastation in the wake of World War II intensified the efforts to collect multiple versions of all kinds of songs.

The second goal was to document Jewish life during the war from the inside, as a source "to fathom the soul of our people." This "internal" angle would correct the image of wartime Jewry presented in non-Jewish sources and chronicles. Songs, moreover, demonstrated Jewish creativity at a time of crisis; the lyrics addressed many wartime concerns, "internal" and otherwise. "The songs that Jews from ghettos, death camps and partisans sang from their sad hearts," wrote Kacerginski, "will be a great contribution to the history of Jewish martyrdom and struggle. [...] The daily Jewish life in the ghetto with all its accompanying phenomena, like arrests, death, work, Gestapo, Jewish power-mongers, internal way of life, etc.—are reflected in precisely this bloody folklore."<sup>46</sup> Songs from the war period illuminated how Jews responded to their tragic predicament and how they themselves viewed the turmoil of Jewish life. The third goal was to memorialize those who had perished. Songs served as a tombstone, recalling the life and death of the murdered Jews that had no other marker.

Boder did not spell out his reasons for collecting song, other than that of the need for preservation in general. He likely shared the goals of the commissions—at least in some measure. But there are several reasons why his goals may also have been different. First, Boder conceived of his expedition under the sign of psychology. This observation bears repeating. He sought documents that were personal documents—forms of personal expression that would reveal aspects of personality. He certainly knew that what he recorded would interest those who were not psychologists. But just like the spoken word, songs fell under his professional rubric. Second, his recordings were directed toward a foreign, that is, American, audience. They were aimed toward providing basic knowledge of what the victims had endured and, by way of this, to raise political consciousness on behalf of DP immigration. The recordings were meant as a spur to action. In that light, the songs likely fostered an emotional bond with the audience, kindling the sentiment that was needed to ensure the listener's sympathy. Third, Boder included songs from the non-Jewish groups, and thus operated under a broader conception of salvage ethnography. It was not only Jews who were at risk of losing precious cultural artifacts but rather the world at large.

There is yet another facet to Boder's collection of songs. Like so much else, the role and meaning of song changed for Boder over time. Initially, Boder prompted the singing of wartime songs within the course of interviews. From his arrival at the end of July to late August, the interviews served as the occasion for recording songs. The songs were an outgrowth of and a counterpoint to the topical autobiography.<sup>47</sup> Just as the story of what happened during the war had to be preserved, so did the songs from this time deserve to be preserved as well. In the second period, beginning in late August and continuing up through his final days in Europe in early October, Boder collected the songs outside of any interviews. He thereafter convened singing sessions at specific places and times, to last anywhere from fifteen to forty-five minutes. The decision to record outside of the interviews had its consequences for the interviews themselves. For when he began to record the songs in these special sessions, Boder left off asking during the interviews for songs the DPs might have remembered.

There was, however, another dimension of song that stood outside of collecting. Song is what set everything in motion. Boder is clear about its crucial role in recruiting interviewees:

I would meet a colony of DPs in a particular shelter house for lunch or dinner. After the meal I would ask them to sing and, with their knowledge, I recorded the songs. When I played these back, the wonder of hearing their own voices recorded was boundless. Then I would explain my project and ask for volunteers.

The wonder of mechanical reproduction was clearly significant. Yet it was not speech but song that was recorded; it was not their speaking but

singing voices that produced such wonder. Singing, in other words, came first. The reasons for choosing song as his opening gambit (reasons which Boder himself never explained) may have been multiple. Perhaps it was because singing served as a communal activity *par excellence*, letting the individual DPs overcome feelings of intimidation in the presence of a stranger from America; perhaps such an introduction allowed the DPs to warm up for the interview by reciting words other than their own; or perhaps beginning with song gave them a chance to recall the past as they knew it before the war.

The songs were recorded, played back, and listened to with "boundless" wonder. It is striking, however, that Boder did not apparently preserve any of these preliminary song recordings, which must have numbered around twelve or thirteen. The recordings were at this stage merely a means to an end; they were not for purposes of preservation. There is no indication that Boder began to record group singing *qua* singing until well along in the expedition.

His protocol description thus astonishingly implies that the recordings of song that were used to attract potential interviewees were eventually erased or, more likely because of Boder's concern for having enough spool hours, were recorded over by the spoken interviews. To be sure, the songs that were sung at these introductory meetings may not have been from the war years and may thus have not been seen as directly related to the testimony of wartime suffering that Boder was seeking. Yet the process of recording and then unrecording needs to be seen for what it is. Underneath layers of narrative was an inaccessible chronicle of the songs recorded at the beginning of each and every visit to a DP shelter. Only at a certain point did Boder decide to preserve the recordings of the songs in special song sessions as a mission in its own right.

From early on, Boder explored the nature of wartime singing. He first brings up the issue of singing on his second day of interviews (Tuesday, July 30) in the course of establishing Adam Krakowski's daily routine in a Galician labor camp. Boder must have had an idea that singing in the camp could be seen as a provocation, for his first reference to it has to do with whether the inmates were permitted to sing:

BODER: There was no light in the barracks. Did you have a chance to sit down and talk to one another?

KRAKOWSKI: No, just to lie down. The plankbeds were in two stories.

BODER: Oh, could you talk to one another?

KRAKOWSKI: Talk, yes.

BODER: Were you permitted to sing?

KRAKOWSKI: No, that they did not permit. Silence had to reign.

BODER: Silence had to reign.

Even though talking was permitted, the prohibition against singing is enough to have Krakowski speak of the reign of silence, as if the absence of song defines the condition of sound or silence itself.

That silence had to reign in one camp did not keep Boder from querying others who were in different ones. Indeed, the following day Boder records Kalman Eisenberg singing a “lager song”—a sure sign that silence did not pervade every camp. After mentioning his future plans, Eisenberg sings that which will “never leave my head”:

EISENBERG: And I think of going to America and there to spend my life together with my family. And now, to finish, I will sing a lager song, which lager song we were singing /?/ and which will never leave my head /be forgotten/. /Sings:/

/I./ Sadness and courage is in our hearts.  
 Every day brings new sorrows.  
 Everyday brings fresh sufferings,  
 And not a word is allowed to utter.  
 /Chorus:/ Oh and woe to our years  
 When we went to the lager.  
 Rather than eat lager bread,  
 It is better to suffer hunger and privation.

“For dinner,” ends the cruel last verse, “you shall eat disease and stones.” Eisenberg, who began the interview by singing a lead-in as if he were a radio announcer, had a flamboyance that Boder found difficult to stomach. Yet neither Krakowski’s report of silence nor Eisenberg’s bravado was typical. Coming first, each response stood at the extreme.

More typical was Israel Unikowski, the last in the series of Buchenwald children interviewed at Chateau Boucicaut, who knew songs from the camps but was reluctant to sing them. Unikowski was himself a special case, having come to the interview hoping to read from a prepared text, something that Boder believed would quash spontaneity and thus presumably limit the interview’s range. Unikowski was eventually persuaded to set aside the notes and the interview went ahead, reaching a point where Boder pauses in eliciting a narrative of “what happened”:

BODER: Now tell me one thing. Were there any poems there, songs?

UNIKOWSKI: In Buchenwald? Very many.

BODER: Do you know any?

UNIKOWSKI: Yes, I know them quite well.

BODER: Sing /one/ in a very soft voice, so that only the words should be audible, true? That only the words should be heard. Begin.

UNIKOWSKI: I’ll try.

BODER: Yes. In a very soft voice.

UNIKOWSKI: /Sings the famous song Es Brent/

‘It burns, brothers, it burns.

Our poor village, alas burns.....

The “famous song” had originally been composed by Mordechai Gebirtig to commemorate the victims of a 1936 Polish pogrom in the shtetl of Przystyk. The image of a town in flames with no help at hand struck a

chord with Jews in ghettos and camps and made it one of the standards to emerge from the war. Boder, for his part, was clearly at ease with recording well-known songs (he later asked other interviewees if they knew and would sing "Es Brent"<sup>48</sup>). He likely wanted to survey what was known and by whom. He may have also been on the lookout for different renditions of the same song.

Having helped Unikowski overcome his initial reluctance, Boder takes the opportunity to try again:

BODER: Nu. Another.

UNIKOWSKI: Another one?

BODER: Yes.

UNIKOWSKI: /Sings./

'There, deep in a forest,  
The barracks grey, /????/  
People were like animals imprisoned,  
Torn off from the free world  
And sentenced to silence, to silence.'

BODER: This concludes...this concludes Spool 18 of Israel Unikowski.

He sang the last three songs in a very low voice and what we hear here, of course, is amplification. We try to work the machine under best possible conditions, but we have no soundproof rooms, and we are working on fifty cycles. Hence we are to see what we are going to obtain when we use that in America.

Made anxious by the primitive recording conditions, Boder tries not to expect too much. Yet whatever the technical worries, he remains aware that Unikowski sacrificed his own prepared text to conform to Boder's wishes. He thus ends the interview with a message different than the one he gave at the beginning:

BODER: Nu, I thank you very much. It came out very well, and not written /without notes/. But I want to tell you, write as much as you are able and it will be collected in the future by Jewish academies and organizations that will want all that was written. And it will be very good. Write everything that you remember, all the *songs*, all the sayings, all the stories, of everything. As soon as you remind yourself of anything, that you had not written down, write it down.

This statement shows Boder at his most prophetic, in terms of both what will be done with primary source material from the DP camps and the value it will later have. And it is a statement of empowerment, outlining how Unikowski's memory is a key to the future. What's more, Boder sets out explicitly the kind of material he should preserve, including songs, just to make sure that something is not disregarded because it is deemed unworthy. Nor has the interview by any means exhausted what is worth preserving. Whatever value the interview has does not supplant what will come from the DP himself later on.

Two days later, on August 4, Boder returned to remembered songs in the interview with Bella Zgnilek. She quickly assures him that she remembers, but, like Unikowski, is hesitant when it comes to actually singing:

BODER: Now tell me this. Do you remember any of the songs that were made in the camp?

ZGNILEK: Yes.

BODER: Can you sing a song?

ZGNILEK: Oh,

BODER: You can sing in a very low voice. The main thing we want, the words very clear. You understand? The melody does...just go on and try one. We will see how it comes out.

ZGNILEK: I'll just sing a little bit of the end.

BODER: Yes.

ZGNILEK: This is the end, because before was /words not clear/. /

Recites in German/

And the damned German swines  
They will get their bones broken by us yet.  
And we must see ourselves  
How the Germans go Kaput quickly.

BODER: Well, why don't you want to sing the first part?

ZGNILEK: Oh. /Words not clear/ too much.

But the fragment leads Boder to press for more. This time, however, he lobbies for the material on behalf of posterity:

Well, go ahead. Do it. Perhaps you can do it now. We want to preserve that material. We don't want that material lost. It is very important that we preserve that material. Start the first part.

Zgnilek does go forward and sings the first part in German:

In front of the barracks in Gabesdorf  
Stands a barbed fence around the yard,  
And the girls with sorrowful faces /or sit sorrowfully/  
while outside freedom glitters.  
Good-bye Sudetenland.

Zgnilek's reluctance—and her decision to sing the last stanza first—may have also been related to the song's content. The second stanza (but the first sung) tells of revenge against the Germans and witnessing their demise; it looks forward to celebrating the victim's triumph. It thus speaks from the DPs' postwar position. It put into lyrics what was felt at the moment—and what Zgnilek expressed in her own lacerating idiom later in the interview. In contrast, the first stanza reenters the world of the camp and fate of the prisoners who are separated "sorrowfully" from an "outside" where "freedom glitters." These lyrics sing of the past, of the ordeal of being separated from everything meaningful, including home ("Good-bye Sudetenland"). This picture of imprisonment and sorrow was clearly not enticing. To be sure, during

the interview Zgnilek recounted in detail the ordeals she suffered. Yet to sing of them—to express again in symbolic idiom the oppressive predicament of a camp prisoner—may have been that much more grueling.

Boder's recourse to preservation was in any case enough to overcome Zgnilek's reluctance. As with Unikowski, Boder expressed a vision of the raw material having undoubted historical value. In Unikowski's case, Boder gives expression to this sentiment to empower him in the aftermath of the interview; with Zgnilek, he turns to this vision of history within the course of the interview itself.

In both cases, Boder invokes the spirit of preservation. Years before Claude Lanzmann in his film *Shoah* would prod survivor Simon Srebnik to sing again the ballads that he was compelled to sing as a child at Chelmno, Boder understood that remembered songs from the camps were worth pursuing aggressively. Sometimes the songs came forth easily, other times less so. On the scene at a period that, in Boder's eyes, was already long after the end of the war, he was anxious to get all he could. The medium of song was so important that it even shaped the way Boder thought of the interviews themselves, characterizing them as "ballad-like narratives."<sup>49</sup>

The thread of song was now clearly with Boder, for later that day (August 4) he again pauses to ask Bertha Goldwasser about songs, this time of a somewhat different sort:

BODER: So. Tell me, please, did the Maquis have any poems, any songs?

GOLDWASSER: Yes, they created very beautiful songs.

BODER: Would you perhaps sing one for me?

GOLDWASSER: /Chuckle. Words not clear./ I can't sing. I have no voice.

BODER: You may do it in a very low voice. The important thing is that the words be clear. Right?

If, as Boder says, the words are the main thing, why did the words of the songs need to be accompanied by a melody at all? He likely knew that by downplaying the aspect of singing he would lower the stakes for the self-conscious DPs. The singing mattered, but what mattered more was to convince the narrator that vocal ability was not a factor. With some more urging, Boder persuades Goldwasser to set aside her qualms:

GOLDWASSER: I cannot remember.

BODER: Try, please. Let us see.

GOLDWASSER: In French /words not clear/? /Sings:/ Friends, you heard the glory of liberty, which has called you. Come to the ranks / word not clear/, stretch out your hand to your brothers, who agree with you /feel like you/ /three words not clear: to fight against?/ be it those who abandoned the legions /ranks/, be it those who abandoned the nations. Friends, you hear the glory which is calling you. On the hills is liberty, which will unite you, comrades, Jews, Italians /word not clear/. /End of song./

Successful on one front, Boder tries another, moving from the songs of the French resistance to "Jewish songs." Yet the transition is not smooth, mainly because Boder has so well inculcated the norms of testimony and evidence that Goldwasser is unsure whether her contribution measures up:

BODER: Yes. Do you know any Jewish songs from the lagers?

GOLDWASSER: From the lagers? Yes.

BODER: Yes. Will you please sing one for me?

GOLDWASSER: But I myself was not in the lager. These are songs which we have had come to us /?/.

Usually interested only in what the narrator has seen (or heard) firsthand, Boder is in this case unfazed by Goldwasser's sensitive qualification and continues to seek out what has been transmitted secondhand (what "we have had come to us"). This suggests that, to his mind, the folklore-inspired collection of artifacts was not bound by the same rules as that of narrative testimony. Indeed, folklore constitutes the record of the cultural artifacts that circulate among the community; testimony is rooted in the experience of the individual. Boder himself was able to move nimbly between the two. Yet the interaction with Goldwasser implies that the interviewees may not have always shared Boder's tacit understanding of the multiple codes at work in the interviews. Eventually, however, Goldwasser makes the leap:

BODER: Yes. Will you sing one?

GOLDWASSER: /Recites in German:/ /The first line is not clear./

Ravensbrueck, Ravensbrueck, you are in the abyss /?/. And perhaps one day we will see freedom. Then we shall say to life once again, yes, Ravensbrueck, you are the past, the sorrow, the destruction, by the Germans, by the Nazis, of the Jewish people. We the young have faith in life /?/. One must strive to live. But the Germans have besmirched this striving with black ink. /End of recitation./ There are some more words, but I do not remember them.

Up to this point, narrative and song have proceeded along overlapping but independent paths. The relationship shifted later that week (Wednesday, August 7) in the interview with Henja Frydman, wherein singing becomes an integral part of the narrative itself. Indeed, the collecting of songs starts out differently with Frydman, as she backtracks from describing her arrival in Auschwitz to speak of the singing that took place in the transport from the French camp Drancy—a singing apparently mixed with screaming and yelling:

FRYDMAN: Oswiencim is in Polish and Auschwitz in French. The first thing we saw were very emaciated men, in bathing suits. And we were thinking, "What could these be? Maybe we are out of our minds?" We could not imagine that these were our own Jews. We didn't recognize them. They were marching five abreast, and looked at us with horror in their eyes, and we also could not understand why

their faces were so full of terror when they saw us. I have to mention that in our transport there were a lot of children, and I also forgot to tell you that when we departed for Drancy we were singing.

BODER: From Drancy?

FRYDMAN: From Drancy. The French Marseillaise, a revolutionary song. We were screaming, we were yelling that they shouldn't let them deport us. And the police threw themselves on us and even wanted to fight with us.

The episode is brimming with drama, yet Boder, hearing that "we were singing," pauses in the narration to find out more about the songs:

BODER: Do you remember any of these songs?

FRYDMAN: The Marseillaise?

BODER: No; some other? Some of the Resistance, revolutionary songs?

Can you remember any? /There is a silence. Apparently she shook her head./

FRYDMAN: May be just the words.

BODER: Yes just in a low [voice] sing a few—just in a light voice, but give the words clearly.

FRYDMAN: I shall try. /She sings one verse, of eight lines in French, to the tune of the so-called Wrshavjanka, a melody which was sung by the Revolutionaries in Russia/... Now I will sing a song that I composed myself with a friend in Twize /??/ when I was imprisoned there. It is a Russian melody.<sup>50</sup>

This catalog of remembered and composed songs comes in the pause in Frydman's account between her brutal departure from Drancy and her terror-filled arrival in Auschwitz. Indeed, singing marks not only departure but also arrival:

FRYDMAN: She was yelling—I don't remember exactly. All I know is she went insane from the transport. She went insane because she left in France a child. From fright, we were lying one over the other like animals. Stepping one on the other. We finally lived to see the dawn, the day of Auschwitz. That is, the day begins at 4:00. A husky German women from those—with a black triangle, which we learned afterwards meant a German prostitute, started pushing us around, and led us to what was called a shower bath. That is, where people went to bathe. On the way to the zaune /shower-bath/ we had to stand in the lager, on the lager street they called it, and it was the hour when the men assembled to go to work. And we hear music. A march of death—exactly a march of death. We see how men are beaten, and people scream, and men fall, one cannot call them men. They had no more the appearance of men. Frightfully thin, dressed in rags, faces full of panic, in tatters, marching five abreast, and singing because they were ordered to sing.

BODER: What were they singing?

FRYDMAN: German songs. German songs, German marches, that the Germans have taught them in the lager. And so we had the first contact with Auschwitz.

Having begun with songs shouted out by the victims to demonstrate an unbroken spirit, and having shifted to a song composed by Frydman herself, the account of arrival at Auschwitz concludes with songs that the perpetrators forced down the throats of the victims: "singing because they were ordered to sing."<sup>51</sup> With Frydman, then, song reaches a pinnacle as a counterpoint to narrative. The story could not be told as it was without being interwoven with the songs sung at departure and on arrival. In this case, Boder does not need to prod the interviewee to remember songs. Rather must he intervene to keep the reference to song from slipping by.

The transformation set in motion with the Frydman interview had only a limited immediate effect. Indeed, in his August 26 interview with Ludwig Hamburger, the first in Geneva, Boder returned to his normal song-collecting prompt:

BODER: Nu. Tell me, were there any poems or stories...songs in  
Buchenwald?

HAMBURGER: Yes.

BODER: Do you know any poems from Buchenwald?

HAMBURGER: No. I know a song.

BODER: Well, would you sing it a bit.

HAMBURGER: I...I am not much of a singer.

Not put off by the disclaimer, Boder clarifies priorities in such a way as to show Hamburger that he can handle the task:

BODER: No, you do not have to be, so long as the words are heard  
clearly. Yes?

HAMBURGER: /Sings/

When the day awakens  
And the sun is laughing  
The columns go forth  
From the day's toil  
Through the grey of the morning.  
And the woods are black  
And the sky red.  
And we carry in the sack a piece of bread,  
But in our heart, in our heart the worry.

Oh, Buchenwald, I can never forget you, /Refrain./  
Because you are my fate.  
Who leaves you, he only is able to comprehend  
How wonderful freedom is.  
Oh, Buchenwald, we do not cry and complain.

Whatever may be our future  
We shall in spite of it say yes to life,  
Because once the day shall come  
When we shall be free! /Repeat last four lines./

Having elicited one kind of song, Boder angles for another, more specific repertoire:

BODER: Hm. Can you remember any Jewish songs from Auschwitz or anywhere else?

HAMBURGER: There are quite a few.

BODER: Yes. Try one. I want to have.... Can you remember "It Burns"?

HAMBURGER: One moment. /He thinks./

BODER: Yes. /Pause./

HAMBURGER: I know a song from deportation.

BODER: Yes?

HAMBURGER: When we were sent on the transport.

BODER: Yes?

HAMBURGER: When we returned home, alone, without parents, so we sang this song.

BODER: All right.

HAMBURGER: /Sings:/

Without a home and without a roof  
 We have wandered throughout the night,  
 Not knowing where we are going.  
 What will be our destination?  
 Because, without a home and without an end,  
 We have wandered throughout the night.  
 Through forests /?/ we were driven  
 Surrounded by /words not clear/.  
 With clubs we were beaten  
 Not knowing what for.  
 The children cry out, "Mother! I am hungry!"  
 And the mothers had no bread for them.  
 oi, oi had, oi oi had!  
 Because, without a home and without a roof...

Successful though he was at overcoming general reluctance, at pursuing multiple renditions from different locales, at ferreting out specific kinds of songs, and at moving between narrative and artifact, Boder did not after the interview with Hamburger urge the interviewee to "remember" songs from the war. Instead, toward the end of his stay in Geneva, he turned to group recording sessions—specific occasions given over to the singing and recording of songs. By sifting songs out of the interviews, Boder essentially separated the spoken word from that which was sung.

Apparently Boder had not planned in advance to make the group recordings an integral part of the expedition. But once begun nearly a month into it, he continued to the very end, setting aside time at almost every interview site. The first of seven sessions took place on August 27 in Geneva; then followed September 1 in Tradate; September 8 at Bellevue in Paris; September 13 in Henonville; September 20 at Flak Kaserne in Munich; September 21 at Lohengrin in Munich; and finally on October 4 in Paris. The recordings took place about a week apart until Munich where, like the interviews themselves, the pace quickened,

the recording session in *Lohengrin* occurring just one day after that at Flak Kaserne.

The breakthrough happened in Geneva shortly after Boder began his pathbreaking August 27 interview with Abraham Kimmelman. The feeling of having hit his stride with Kimmelman may have led Boder to envision the recordings as something worthwhile to try, in spite of the technical obstacles that he apologized for repeatedly. The interplay between song and interview, which was part of the project from its inception, here reaches a turning point, changing once again the notion of what Boder determined to be essential to bring home.

Several factors may account for the change of protocol. The first is technical. Boder periodically expressed frustration (quickly shifting to resignation) at the difficulties he was up against powering an American apparatus by unpredictable European voltage. The breakdown in Boder's equipment in the second week of August, which had him wiring his home institution for replacement parts, may have had him proceed even more cautiously. In this period, his already burdened machine labored to deal with the most essential recording tasks. Yet, by the end of August, having gotten over the crisis with his equipment and seen it perform adequately for a number of weeks, he may have been ready to expand the use of his wire recorder to include special song sessions.

Yet the change in conception of collecting also likely had reasons beyond the technical. It may have been ushered in by a change in the communities that he visited. The later interviews were conducted in communities more homogeneous in character and, at least in a number of cases, under the forceful direction of a charismatic leader. As such, the songs could better represent the distinct ethos of that community. According to this reckoning, it made sense to seek songs from individuals earlier on because the residents at those centers thought of themselves as individuals; it made sense to seek songs from groups later on because the residents at those centers thought of themselves as members of a larger community. But the contrast between earlier and later DP centers in this regard seems forced in some respects, especially when it comes to the two communities of Buchenwald children, Chateau Boucicaut in France and the ORT center in Geneva. Indeed, Boder did record songs at the earlier site, Chateau Boucicaut, but in a less formal way, not convening a group at a given time and place but soliciting songs from a number of individuals. Importantly, Boder himself did not include the first songs (sung by Kalman Eisenberg and others) among the special listing of songs that he collected, indicating that, however valuable they were, they were not of the same distinct genre as the later ones.<sup>52</sup>

The more likely explanation is that the ORT conference and the orientation interviews that took place in Paris in mid-August changed Boder's understanding of the DPs' predicament and hence how he conceived the project. The change did not so much relate to preservation *per se* as it did to what should be preserved and how. Boder had, after all, delivered

early on a rousing message (to Israel Unikowski) on the importance of preserving "all the *songs*, all the sayings, all the stories." He knew that what he was doing was for more than the moment. What was new from Geneva onward was to give over time outside of interviews to recording songs that were meant to be preserved.

Boder had begun to record some form of group singing from the outset. Yet from Geneva onward Boder decided not to erase it. He held back; he refrained from treating the songs as if they were simply a means by which to induce a number of DPs to volunteer to narrate their wartime stories.

By making song not only a means but an end in its own right, Boder confirmed his role as ethnographer. Before, ethnography was for him a method, a way of working in the field. As such, Boder used these methods as he was forced to improvise, conducting interviews in makeshift settings, often with uneven results. His repertoire of languages, a hallmark of ethnographers, was actually meant to serve psychology (the evidence of trauma) and politics (advocacy for the uprooted DPs). Working in the field also meant shifting the interview protocol repeatedly to try to get the best results.

With his new approach to preservation, Boder did not leave behind these objectives. But he took on the role of ethnographer with new earnestness, in essence splitting his vocation down the middle. If the psychologist was interested in personality, the ethnographer was interested in culture. Both sides were there from the beginning. The new emphasis on preservation grew out of his increasing sense of loss, a sense that expanded as he went further afield, adding to the French DP centers other countries, communities, and shelters. He came to see that the DPs were a culture in their own right, and that they had cultural resources which, once they were eventually dispersed, would no longer have the occasion to be shared. Boder came to realize, in other words, that the DP centers were not only a setting in which to collect the evidence of trauma. They also offered the opportunity to salvage the remnants of European culture.



David Boder takes notes alongside his wire recorder in his university office. This kind of recording device, the preferred one in the United States in the 1940s, was invented by Boder's Illinois Institute of Technology colleague, Marvin Camras. Courtesy Professor Yair Aharonowitz

The first page of Boder's "Spool Book" handwritten interview list (1-30), noting the wire recorder spool number, name of the interviewee, and, in a few cases, special information such as an unusual interview language or the interviewee's Auschwitz tattoo number. The first listed interview, with prominent American Jewish spokesperson Rabbi Stephen Wise, was one of several spools that has disappeared. Courtesy UCLA Charles E. Young Research Library Department of Special Collections, UCLA Library

250  
 Spool  
 1 Roll wire on board ship 55 Brazil  
 2 Abby Hirsch, Canadian spokesperson for  
 3 Bob Leibman, first words  
 4 Rose Ros et 15m Boleslaw Olszynski (45.22  
 Adam Piotrowski, first words, language  
 5 Samuel Lipszyc, 1946, Theresienstadt  
 6 Samuel Lipszyc, 1946, Theresienstadt  
 7 Paris, France, 1947  
 8 1/11/48 Chateau Bucineau Mandelblat, Konitz  
 9 Family continued  
 10 2/2/49 Berlin, Germany  
 11 2/2/49 Berlin, Germany  
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David Boder adjusts the wire recorder in one of the European DP centers. Characteristically attired in suit and tie, Professor Boder frequently had to conduct the interviews in makeshift settings. *Courtesy Bill Jarrico on behalf of the Boder/Levien Family Trust*



In early August 1946, David Boder interviewed half a dozen young DPs at Chateau Boucicaut outside Paris. The chateau was one of the sixteen sites in France, Switzerland, Italy, and Germany where Boder conducted his nearly 130 DP interviews. *Courtesy United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archive*



Young Buchenwald survivors, including four whom Boder interviewed (Adolph Heisler, Ludwig Hamburger, Wolf Norich, and Abraham Kimmelman), pose on a workbench at the ORT Geneva vocational training center in 1946. Boder conducted many of his interviews at ORT centers; he also spoke at and recorded the proceedings of the World ORT conference in Paris. Courtesy Avraham Kimmelman

UDEL STOPNITSKY\*

/Spool 122/

Question: France, September the 12th, 1946, at Henoville, a chateau which has now been given over to displaced Jews who belong to an extremely religious Kibbutz in which the ORT has its school of agriculture and various other trades. The interviewee is Mr. Udel Stopnitsky, 31 years of age. Note: Language used--Yiddish. Now, Mr. Stopnitsky, will you again tell me your full name...

Stopnitsky: Stopnitsky, Udel

Question: Yes...

Stopnitsky: Born in Bedzin, 1915

Question: Bedzin is not far from Sosnowiec?

Stopnitsky: Yes.

Question: Yes. In 1915, so how old are you now, 31?

Stopnitsky: Yes, 31 years old.

Question: Now, Mr. Stopnitsky, what are you doing here? With what are you occupied here?

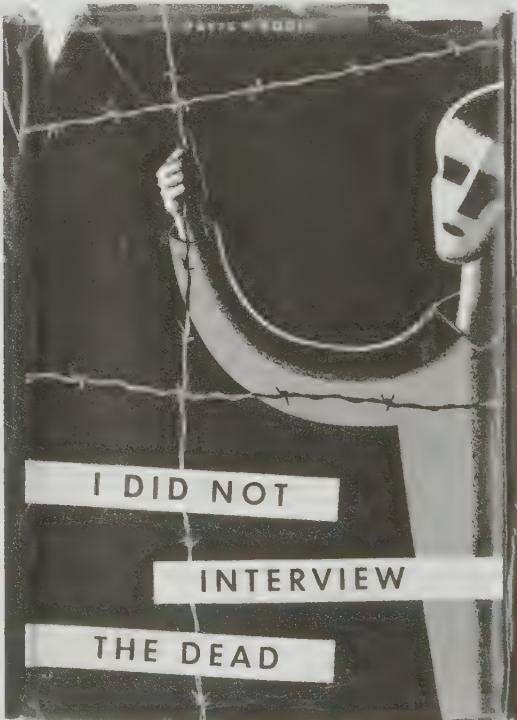
Stopnitsky: I arrived here in order to get in the fastest way to the land of Israel.

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\*It is possible that the name is spelled Stopnitzki.



Lena Kuechler and the Polish Jewish orphans under her care outside their school bus en route from Poland to France in March 1946. Boder interviewed Kuechler, several members of her staff, and three of the orphans, who at ages 13, 15, and 16 were among the youngest of Boder's interviewees. Courtesy Yad Vashem Library



A phantom-like prisoner clutches a barbed-wire fence on the dust jacket of David Boder's 1949 book, *I Did Not Interview the Dead*. Containing eight DP interviews, the book presented the first full-length transcriptions of what Boder called his "verbatim recorded narratives." Courtesy United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Library

Interview	Spool Numbers	Handwritten	Typed	Proofread for Stencil Typing	Stencilled	Proofread for Micrographing	Micrographed	Bound Volume Number	Chapter Number	Microcard Numbers	Filmstripped	Series Date	Number of Pages
Kimmelmann	83B-87 & 91-2B	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	1	1 1-4	x	1950	128	
Stopnitzky	122-3	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	1	2 5-6	x	1950	73	
Ostland	125B-126A	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	2	3 7	x	1950	42	
Kaletzka (Kovitzka)	164B-166A	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	2	4 8	x	1950	32	
Bassfreund	137B, 138B, 139A	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	2	5 9	x	1950	43	
Freilich (Freich)	36-38	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	2	6 10	x	1950	45	
Nichthauser (Lichtheim)	15-16	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	3	7 11	x	1950	42	
Kluver (Braun)	132	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	3	8 12	x	1950	17	
Paul (Prest)	140B-141A	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	3	9 13	x	1950	26	
Metzner	163-164A	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	3	10 14	x	1950	36	
Gutman	124-125A	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	3	11 15	x	1950	38	
Kaldore	97-99	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	4	12 16-7	x	1950	52	
Frydman	29-33	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	4	13 18-9	x	1950	65	
Odinetz	168-169A	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	4	14 20	x	1950	27	
Kharchenko	143C-144A	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	4	15 21	x	1950	23	
Braun, Anna	133-134	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	4	16 22	x	1950	40	
Bramson	45B-48	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	5	17 23-5	x	1953	96	
Tcharnabroda	155B-156A	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	5	18 26	x	1953	38	
Bisenhaus	3B	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	5	19 27	x	1953	22	
Feuer	64-65	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	6	20 28-9	x	1953	68	
Gurmanova	51-53	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	6	21 30-1	x	1953	65	
Shachnovski	3A	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	6	22 32	x	1953	13	
Binder	23	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	6	23 33	x	1953	31	
Roset	4A (or 4 ?)	x	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	6	24 34	x	1953	16 31	

A work chart of the 1950 and 1953 series of *Topical Autobiographies*, checked off according to each stage of Boder's preparation of the interview transcriptions. Courtesy Archives of the History of American Psychology—the David P. Boder Papers

# Chapter 4

## *From Listening to Reading*

### PUBLISHING THE INTERVIEWS

Boder insisted on the importance of the voice. First, too much attention had been devoted to the visual record of the catastrophe; Boder sought to bring to the forefront the victim's stories in their own voices. This other perceptual avenue, as Boder called the aural dimension, would fill a gap in the documentation. The second reason was practical in nature. The DPs presented such a diverse group that it would be impossible to recruit interviewers whose linguistic note-taking skills covered all nationalities. Recording the interviews solved the problem by doing away with the need for note taking, at least in the initial phase. What the DPs had to say would become known, to scholars and laymen alike, by listening to the recordings.

Yet at some point Boder decided to transcribe the interviews, to make them available to readers as well as to listeners. The aural dimension made way for the printed one. To be sure, the idea of circulating the interviews in print was there before the expedition got under way. The interviews, wrote Boder in one version of his 1945 memorandum, "could well be used for broadcast purposes" but also "for newspaper as well as magazine or book material."<sup>1</sup> But at this stage printed material was of secondary concern, a follow-up to actually recording the DPs.

This changed after Boder's return to the United States. He soon began to lecture and to publish accounts about his expedition, including excerpts from the interviews. It also soon became clear that it would be impossible to rely on the volatile fortunes of recording technology to get the message out. In March 1947, John Thompson, assistant editor of the *Westinghouse Engineer*, suggested that since "most people don't have wire recorders," Boder try distributing the interviews via a different playback medium.<sup>2</sup> Getting an audience to listen to the interviews was not going to come easy. But Boder, who even years later stuck by the wire recorder as a means to process the interviews, did not pursue the idea.<sup>3</sup>

Instead, he set about earnestly translating and transcribing. By 1948 he was able to publish an interview excerpt as an article in its own right. The excerpt was in turn part of a book manuscript that, by the time the article appeared, was already being sent out to prospective publishers.

In due course, the book manuscript would find a publisher, but only in a form different from that which Boder had originally conceived. In the years following, he turned to another forum for the huge enterprise of publishing the interviews in toto. Fortunately, this quest for the proper venue coincided with a revolution in publishing that allowed him nearly free rein to disseminate the interviews in the manner he desired. The task of getting as many as possible on paper occupied most of Boder's remaining years—a task that, until the present day, has come to overshadow the audio dimension that was the project's inspiration.

#### VOICES IN PRINT: SPOOL 169

The first published interview appeared in the *Chicago Jewish Forum* at the end of 1948, some two years after Boder had returned to the United States. In the excerpt, the interviewee, Jack Matzner, speaks of the last days of the war, his slow recovery in the aftermath, and his passion to rebuild the Wiesbaden synagogue, where he himself had celebrated his becoming a bar mitzvah. Matzner's interview was one of the last, taking place in Wiesbaden hours before Boder left Germany. Once back in America, the interviews conducted in Germany continued to hold Boder in their grip. Matzner himself—German-born, at age thirty-two neither very young nor very old, religious—was not particularly representative of any group of DPs, which perhaps made his story that much more appealing. Above all, the excerpt shows not only devastating hardship during the war but also tremendous gumption on Matzner's part in the postwar period. His industry in returning to his former home and his vision in leading the restoration of his family synagogue illustrates the DPs hard at work, taking into their own hands the repair of what the war had so badly damaged. This was the message about the DPs that Boder wanted to get across.

The title of the article was "Spool 169," a reference to the wire spool used to record the interview. Such a title perfectly catches the project's moment of transition. For, printed narrative notwithstanding, the title still underscores sound. It stresses the prominent position the wire recorder had in Boder's mind as well as in that of his audience. Seemingly vapid nomenclature for such formidable testimony, the spool number still best represented what was to follow in the article, driving home to an American audience that what they read issued from a "verbatim recording" for which Boder served as the emissary.<sup>4</sup>

Strangely enough, Matzner's interview was actually recorded not on spool 169, but rather on spools 163 and 164, a lack of correspondence that goes against the grain of Boder's otherwise careful documentation of the spools. Such an obvious disparity suggests that the error cropped up in the course of publication. Yet, however the mistake came to be, there is something fitting about the cleavage between the title and the

actual spool number. In the final analysis, the impression of objectivity and accuracy associated with the technological virtue of the recording machine was of greatest importance.

Spool 169 was also the spool number of the final interview. The beginning is thus curiously bound up with the end, as the first interview excerpt to be published bears the title of the last spool to be recorded. Perhaps to already have the "last spool" in circulation helped Boder envision the publication of all the interviews, from the first (number 3a) to the last (number 169).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the real spool 169, containing the interview with longtime associate, Dimitri Odinetz, had to have had a special meaning for Boder. Of all spool numbers, this one had behind it a strong personal connection. The technical-sounding title, then, could well have evoked for Boder the human warmth that at bottom propelled the machine-enabled project forward.

This was the only article devoted entirely to an interview excerpt. From "Spool 169" to Boder's book, *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, was a big leap. But the notion of a bigger publishing venture had been in the making for some time. Soon after his return to Chicago in fall 1946, Boder initiated a pilot project to publish a selection of the interviews, a comprehensive introduction, and a lengthy analysis of a single interview. The manuscript was ready in 1948 and, with eight interviews but without the analytic essay, it was published in 1949.

#### SO RADICAL A DEPARTURE FROM THE USUAL: THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY

But it was not a simple venture to publish a book attended by such complexities of organization, audience, and style. The difficulty of publication is usually laid at the door of an indifferent society. Boder is pictured as having struggled to publish his book at a time when interest in the Holocaust was at a low ebb and publishers were avoiding the subject. He did eventually find a publisher, but its alleged lack of success is again attributed to a lack of public interest.<sup>6</sup> This picture does not tell the whole story, however. To that end, it is useful to look at the case of one of the publishers that rejected the book. As we will see, the rejection cannot be chalked up to a lack of interest.

The Jewish Publication Society (JPS) began operations in 1888, at a time when, as Joshua Bloch noted in the introduction to the society's 1953 catalogue of publications, "there were hardly any books in English in which Jewish teachings, practices, and experiences were presented with accuracy, authority, and without any bias, by writers whose command of the English language was adequate for the purpose."<sup>7</sup> Serving primarily an American English-language reading membership, the society by 1948 had carried out its mandate by publishing books of Jewish history, biography (the "Jewish Worthies Series"), classics of religious

literature (critical editions and translations of Midrash and Musar), overviews of great European Jewish communities, children's literature, fiction and poetry, and important Bible translations. From early on, the society had also addressed the fate of oppressed Jewish communities. An 1891 American edition of *The Persecution of the Jews in Russia* was designed to give information to a broad public in order to lobby on behalf of Russian Jewry for improved conditions. Other volumes of a similar nature followed: in 1903, *Within the Pale: The True Story of Antisemitic Persecution in Russia*; and in 1904, *The Voice of America on Kishineff*, an impassioned response to the infamous 1903 pogrom in which forty-five Jews were murdered.

Advocacy of this sort continued periodically in the decades that followed. In the 1930s, the society responded to the plight of German Jewry in several ways. It aided European-based authors by sending generous advances to help them through difficult times, intervened on behalf of those trying to immigrate to America, and tried to find jobs for refugee authors once they had arrived. Several books informed American Jewry and Americans generally of increasing oppression, with the publication of Max Berges's novel *Cold Pogrom* in 1939 "showing more graphically...than in any newspaper report or historical treatise the terrible repercussion of the Hitlerian tragedy." But during the first half of the 1940s, the Holocaust period per se, the society published no book that directly chronicled the terrible fate of Europe's Jews, a decision made, according to one commentator, out of fear that ongoing attention to atrocities would psychologically "terroriz[e]" and undermine the self-confidence of American Jewry.<sup>8</sup>

By contrast, the post-World War II years saw the society's publication of one of the major English-language books on the Holocaust from this period, Marie Syrkin's *Blessed Is the Match: The Story of Jewish Resistance*. Syrkin had traveled to postwar Europe and Israel to interview survivors, in order to be faithful to their harrowing tales. Yet, as her subtitle suggests, Syrkin deliberately eschewed a direct confrontation with the destruction of European Jewry. Instead, she focused on resistance and rescue operations, especially those of the young Hanna Senesch and her fellow paratroopers sent from Palestine to Hungary in the last year of the war. This is how she explained the rationale for an indirect approach:

It is too hard to behold the spectacle [of destruction] which unfolds as soon as one dares lift the curtain be it ever so uncertainly or slightly. One needs strength to walk in and look about. Sometimes one has to borrow this strength. It is not to be had from the sufferers, no matter how heroic.... To seek inspiration from them smacked of indecency.... But the young parachutists who jumped from the skies and afterwards told me their stories in the settlement of Palestine.... The vitality of their adventure, even when it ended in death, helped one to approach the ashes of six million murdered human beings.<sup>9</sup>

Syrkin's focus on Senesch and her comrades was recognized to be oblique and to have skirted much of the story of the Holocaust. "The fate of the Jews in Germany under the Nazis and in countries under their domination," noted Bloch in his introduction, "has not yet been described [in a JPS publication] in its fullest gruesome details. A *bit of it* is offered in *Blessed is the Match*."<sup>10</sup> Syrkin's chronicle nevertheless stamped JPS as a promising venue for books dealing with the fate of Jews during World War II.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, her oblique strategy also pointed to the need for a study that would directly approach "the ashes of six million."

In the meantime, the postwar predicament of Jewish refugees elicited attention of its own, as witnessed by the 1948 publication of Mark Wischnitzer's *To Dwell in Safety: The Story of Jewish Migration Since 1800*. Wischnitzer begins his 150-year survey with direct reference to the DPs:

The recent world conflict has displaced, uprooted, and scattered millions of human beings. No single group has suffered heavier blows in this respect than the Jews of Europe. Nor has the final crushing of Nazism brought their wandering to an end. On the contrary: the post-war years have witnessed mass shifts in population, and the Jewish survivors of the holocaust still seek to establish new homes in various parts of the world.<sup>12</sup>

While five of eight chapters go on to chronicle Jewish migration up through World War I and its aftermath, Wischnitzer devotes three chapters to Holocaust-related refugees, with the closing chapter ("The Struggle for Immigration after the Victory in Europe") detailing the continuing hurdles that blocked the DPs' immigration to America and elsewhere.

The Syrkin-Wischnitzer combination would seem to have served as the perfect prelude to publication of Boder's collection of human documents, the voices of the refugees themselves recounting what happened to them during the war augmented by Boder's profiles sketching their predicament as DPs. One can thus understand how Boder's manuscript, "The DP Story," could have met JPS's needs of the moment. Like Syrkin's and Wischnitzer's chronicles, it too was a story of resistance and of migration, but also (even mainly) of brutality and loss. It had the full complement of gruesome details that a chronicle of the period demanded and that had not yet been sufficiently described.

Still, several factors make it remarkable that Boder's "DP Story" received the society's careful consideration. First, JPS published a very small number of books each year: seven in 1948, five in 1949, and only four in 1950. Competition had to have been stiff. On top of that, within such a minuscule field, each book's potential contribution to Jewish knowledge in America was likely given exceeding weight. Boder had hoped that the interviews would add greatly to America's little knowledge of the concentration camps. But, as we will see, his resources for bringing out the Holocaust's Jewish dimension were perhaps less certain.

Boder first contacted JPS in spring 1948 and was told by editor-in-chief Solomon Grayzel to forward the manuscript. "While we have had suggestions of such books [about Jewish displaced persons] before," noted Grayzel encouragingly, "this appears to be from an entirely different point of view."<sup>13</sup> While in the process of preparing the manuscript, Boder was contacted by JPS Executive-Vice President Maurice Jacobs, who was apparently unaware that Grayzel was corresponding with Boder and awaiting delivery. In any case, two major figures at the press were committed to giving "The DP Story" their attention. Boder sent it off in November; Jacobs acknowledged receiving it a week later and hoped to provide a report in a month, but, with the sense of an editor who sometimes promises more than he can deliver, asked Boder to please be patient.

The manuscript was actually under review for about four months, November 1948 to February 1949. In correspondence during that time, Boder on several occasions explained features of the manuscript and owned up to some of its shortcomings. Grayzel, for his part, eventually gave a substantial response to the manuscript, indicating some problems while not yet rendering a decision. Only in late February did he send Boder the enigmatic rejection: "I am sorry that I have to return your manuscript. It is not at all due to the fact that our readers do not think well of it. The fact is merely that we are afraid to go into something of this sort which is so radical a departure from the usual."<sup>14</sup>

Whatever factors shaped the society's fear of deviating from the usual, Boder's conception of the book did not make acceptance easy. The text he expected to publish was ultimately not for the general reader. This was in spite of the fact that he had worked hard to render it accessible to a popular audience. He had tried, for instance, to refrain "from interrupting of the text with too many explanatory notes."<sup>15</sup> For the most part, he accomplished this. Aiming to strike a balance between the academic and the popular, he opted to keep the interviews free from lengthy annotation: "The background of the material," he points out, "is concentrated in the prologue and in the extensive, although by far incomplete analysis of one story, the 'Tale of Anna Kovitzka' while the other seven wire-recordings, two from Non-Jewish interviewees, are given without comments."<sup>16</sup> These steps would clearly help make the narrative readable for a broader audience.

Yet Boder did not seem to comprehend the challenge presented by the discursive prologue and, especially, the "analysis" of the Kovitzka interview. He assumed that the nearly 100-page explication of Anna Kovitzka's interview was an essential part of the manuscript. But the inclusion of the analysis would have shifted the focus significantly from a collection of firsthand witness to a study of that act of witness.

Moreover, for all of its intimacy with the interview material and its fascinating phrase-by-phrase method of explication, the analysis ranged cavalierly from topic to topic, not all of which Boder addressed with equal

mastery. Indeed, Grayzel picked out one of a number of shortcomings: "Your discussion of the Jewish badge left a great deal to be desired (page 60 of your manuscript), but it would take me too long to point out the flaw in this."<sup>17</sup> Boder had speculated about the historical background of the "Jewish badge" in a way that seemed far too casual for historian Grayzel. "The wearing of this emblem," Boder wrote, "dates back centuries. It is possible to conjecture that in feudal times the Jews themselves may have chosen to wear emblems of identification which would save them from being taken for peasants who were then in a state of serfdom...which would assure them the enjoyment of certain privileges granted to the Jews but not accorded to the peasants-serfs."<sup>18</sup> Historians such as Heinreich Graetz and Grayzel himself had treated the Jewish badge as a mark of humiliation imposed upon the Jews by the medieval Church or Moslem rulers. "The Badge," wrote Grayzel in his 1947 JPS overview of Jewish history, "was to be a mark of shame, and drive them out of European society."<sup>19</sup> Boder's speculation transformed the badge from a negative to a positive emblem. Not only did this positive twist on the Jewish badge go against the grain of general historical interpretation, but it must have seemed sorely out of place in the general context of oppressive measures enacted by the Nazis, which had been the starting point of Boder's remarks left behind some pages earlier. It may be that Boder had thought that such a benign historical background for the Jewish badge would show up all the better the perversity of the Nazis' use of it. But he did not make the connection explicit. Since these comments on the Jewish badge were put forward as an essential component of Boder's manuscript, they were as much under review as were the mostly uninterrupted interviews.

A second challenge to publication was the language. Boder deliberately kept the English transcription ungrammatical, and took pains to justify such an unconventional step:

The manuscript has been read by a number of non-Jewish readers from the English Departments of the Illinois Institute of Technology and of the University of Chicago and the consensus of opinion is that the original recording should not be altered and that my verbatim translations, awkward as they may sound, greatly enhance the effect of the material—in this respect they differ apparently with the viewpoint of Mr. [Maurice] Samuel, who has so greatly Anglo-Saxonized the beautiful writings of Perez [i.e., I. L. Peretz].<sup>20</sup>

Boder knew what he was up against. His wish to keep the English awkward went against the society's prevailing standards, as epitomized most recently by Maurice Samuel's 1948 renderings of the great Yiddish writer I. L. Peretz.<sup>21</sup> Boder was thus keenly aware of the society's standard of translation and level of English "adequate for the purpose." And his awareness was probably on the mark. Indeed, the society's publishing mission was bound up with raising the level, intellectually and stylistically, of English-language writing about Jews. For Samuel to greatly

"Anglo-Saxonize" Peretz's Yiddish was thus not simply his viewpoint but rather was consonant with the society's view on the matter. For Boder then to plead for awkwardness—to plead for an English-language text that would revert back to a substandard level—must have been difficult to take to heart. It after all went against one of those things that the society stood for: an English adequate for the purpose.

But Boder also knew that he was dealing here with a different order of experience. His divergence from Samuel was not really a question of taste, as Boder made it out to be. The DP interviews were rather of a different genre, the events recounted of a more somber register, and the narrators' idiom shaped by a unique kind of hardship. In contrast to the Peretz stories, the standards were not beauty or eloquence.

In truth, Boder was not proposing a text teeming with mistakes and distortions. Truly fractured English in American Holocaust writing would surface only decades later.<sup>22</sup> In comparison with these, Boder's verbatim translations are quite mild. But Boder believed that misshapen language was crucial to the DPs' accounts. Awkward English, translation though it might be, came closer to reproducing the "evidence of trauma" that had shaped language in the concentration camps. To Boder's mind, moreover, there was no conflict between being true to the traumatic dimensions of the event and representing it to a reader. He was convinced that the awkward-sounding English would enhance the rhetorical effect. Indeed, he drew on the opinion of the most objective readers he could think of—non-Jewish English professors—to back up his own intuitions. Such support, however, was evidently not persuasive. Despite Boder's diplomatic correspondence, his intransigence on the English language issue may have been another reason for the Jewish Publication Society not to publish the book. When he eventually brought it out with University of Illinois Press, the Yiddishisms, as Boder refers to them, remain.

Having protractedly decided against Boder's manuscript, JPS does not seem to have found a more elegant alternative. *The Jews: Their History, Civilization, Culture*, a three-volume 1949 collection of essays edited by Louis Finkelstein, contained one essay that headed in this direction. Arieh Tartakower's "The Problem of European Jewry (1939–1945)" did comment at some length on the implications of the Holocaust for European Jewry and for world Jewry at large. This was surely a prestigious venue for such a reflection on current events. But the essay again skirted the Holocaust, examining instead its local aftereffects. While certainly a response to the recent catastrophe, Tartakower's essay could not be said to substitute for Boder's verbatim recordings.

JPS was thus cautious to the extreme when it came to publishing a book (or even an essay) that would confront the Holocaust head on. Yet their interest in Boder's project was anything but casual or slight. It was rather significant, extensive, and focused. When push came to shove, the tantalizing yet uneven manuscript made it difficult to pursue Boder's submission.

## THE HORRORS OF THOSE HUMAN DOCUMENTS: A BOOK OF VOICES

When hopes for a publisher that would reach a more than academic audience did not materialize, Boder opted for the University of Illinois, a university press close to home. Here, too, the book that Boder had envisioned was not the one that finally went to press. But the volume that came out in December 1949 was still very much recognizable as his transcriptions of verbatim recordings of DP interviews.

In truth, the book, outfitted with the haunting new title *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, presented a decidedly oblique perspective on Boder's overall project. For one thing, the majority of interviews took place in France; it was there that Boder invested the greatest amount of time and it was Paris that served as his base of operations. Yet the greatest number of the book's interviews (five out of eight) were conducted in Germany, where Boder spent only ten days at the conclusion of his two-month sojourn. To be sure, most DPs were at this time sheltered in Germany (an irony of fate intensely felt by the Jewish DPs); the book's sample is in this respect accurate. But it does not represent the overall contours of Boder's interview itinerary.

It was nevertheless in Germany that Boder had had the opportunity to interview a wider range of DPs, particularly non-Jews living in DP camps especially organized for them. While Boder had focused on the wartime suffering of Jews, he was determined to get a broader sample. This focus is reflected in the book's organization. Six chapters present interviews with Jews and two chapters (6 and 7) with non-Jews, one the Ukrainian Mennonite Julius Kluver ("Julius Braun"), the second an Estonian, Anna Paul ("Anna Prest").

Including the stories of non-Jews must have been in one sense an easy decision. They too, after all, were DPs. Yet there is more to it than that. As we have seen with Kluver and others, their wartime experience made them hard to classify, for they were neither clearly victims nor perpetrators but bystanders.<sup>23</sup> In this respect, their story inverts the one told by the Jews. The hardship they relate came by way of Soviet rather than Nazi oppression; they "took advantage" of the German invasion to escape Soviet restrictions. What was a catastrophe for others was for them liberation. Boder listens to their account but also tries to illuminate the gray area, to explore exactly their relation to the Germans, to tease out what they saw firsthand of the Jewish tragedy. Dedicated to giving a voice to Jewish victims, Boder was nevertheless intensely interested in how these particular bystanders, understandably if strangely sympathetic to the German cause, would recount their less bitter path to a temporary home in Germany.<sup>24</sup>

Boder conceived of *I Did Not Interview the Dead* to appeal to both popular and scientific audiences. Thus, in his original schema, the book's eight stories were to be complemented by several "Notes" (one on wire recordings, the other "for Psychologists and Anthropologists"),

a “chronological index of historical events from 1918–1948,” a glossary, and, most formidably, Boder’s interpretation of the interview with Anna Kovitzka. In the end, most of the scholarly apparatus went by the boards. Yet vestiges remained, including Boder’s “traumatic index,” which, condensed to twelve entries, appears at the end of his introduction. In its full-blown version, the index (or “traumatic inventory,” as it was later called) ran to eighteen pages, with a total of forty-six entries subsumed under eight headings.<sup>25</sup> It was here that Boder assessed the cost to the victims—what was lost, what damages occurred throughout the entire spectrum of cultured life. The book’s condensed traumatic index—beginning with “brutal and abrupt removal from environmental stimuli” and ending with “brutal punishment for trivial infringements of camp rules”—intimated how the combination of brutality and injustice formed the traumatic conditions of the interviewee’s wartime suffering.

The names of the interviewees as they appear in the book have their own history and context. The issue of whether to use interviewees’ actual names has shadowed publication and distribution of victim testimony. Strategies for dealing with names have varied. Some, concerned with maintaining privacy, have used initials, or first name and initial; others, concerned with the dignity a name bestows, have opted to include full names. Among recent testimony projects, Yale University’s Fortunoff Video Archive opts for first name and initial; the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum lists its interviewees by first and last names. The Shoah Foundation straddles the issue in a different way: the online testimony catalog contains first name and initial; the purchasable CD contains last names as well. The issue of names goes beyond interviews. A case in point is Nick Stargardt’s recent history of children during World War II, which opens with a special section, “The Right to a Name,” in which Stargardt lays out the complex factors that moved him to use pseudonyms for some of the wartime children to whom he refers.<sup>26</sup>

Stargardt’s hybrid strategy has much in common with that chosen by Boder over fifty years before. In his book, Boder, too, steered a middle course, sometimes changing a family name, other times a first name, but never, interestingly enough, both. Anna Kaletzka became Anna Kovitzka; Juergen Bassfreund became Jörn Gastfreund;<sup>27</sup> Fania Freilich became Fania Freich; Abraham Kimmelman became Abe Mohnblum; Fela Nichthauser became Fela Lichtheim; Julius Kluver became Julius Braun; Anna Paul became Anna Prest; and David Matzner became Jack Matzner. It was as if some part of the name had to remain to keep the tie to reality. By holding to a name (rather than an initial) to identify a narrator, he maintains the interviewees’ privacy but also does not compromise the dignity that a name bestows. Yet correspondence with his publisher reveals that Boder himself was up to the last minute left undecided about how to handle the issue. “I thought we had decided on all the names,” wrote editor Violet Wood at what she deemed the eleventh hour. “I paid no attention to the list of printed names which you supplied

later as I did not feel we had time to make further revision of the names, and I had the impression that you were satisfied with the changes made in names at our last conference.”<sup>28</sup> Boder may have been unsure exactly what genre the book fit under (documents? autobiography? tales?) and thus unsure whether he was entitled (or obliged) to give the interviewees names of his own creation.

It is worth noting that name changes occurred even prior to Boder’s editorial intervention. Some of the interviewees either would not give a name or gave pseudonyms, apparently afraid that the information could be used against them to return them to an Eastern European country in which their lives would be in danger. As Boder comments in the transcript of one interview:

I suspect that this is an assumed name. The so-called infiltrees, that is the individuals who were running away from Lithuania and Poland or other regions which we are accustomed now to call the “iron curtain” states were behaving rather cautiously. They would not give their right names and [did] not tell too much about how they managed to arrive in France, or for that matter in Switzerland or Italy.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, a number of interviewees, including Juergen Bassfreund (today known as Jack Bass), took on a new name when they settled in their new life and land. Behind the name issue is Boder’s own, which made him all too aware of what an alias can, or cannot, do.

Having transposed sound to print, Boder was nevertheless faithful in reproducing the interview format. Every page of *I Did Not Interview the Dead* is thus shaped by the give and take between Boder and the narrator, with Boder sometimes questioning, sometimes mirroring the narrator’s response, sometimes expanding on the interviewee’s narrative. The printed page thus replicates the oral exchange, with both interviewer and interviewee playing a pivotal role. Yet while the narrator’s name (or pseudonym) announces his contribution, Boder chose to list his own under the heading “Question.” So begins the first chapter’s interview:

QUESTION: Wiesbaden, Germany, September 26, 1946. It is three o’clock in the afternoon and I have before me a young woman by the name of Anna Kovitzka. She is going to talk in Yiddish. Now then, Mrs. Kovitzka, will you please tell us where you are from and where you were when the war started?

MRS. KOVITZKA: I am from Poland somewhere between...and... (Names are not clear).

QUESTION: And where were you when the Germans came to Poland?

MRS. KOVITZKA: In 1939, on September first, I was with my parents together in Kielce.

It was (and is) standard practice for interviewers to designate themselves not by name but by role. In so doing Boder was adhering to convention. Nevertheless, it puts him under another kind of alias, making him appear to be asking his questions not out of sympathetic interest (which he was)

but because his position obliged him to. Apparently Boder himself felt the nomenclature confining. When a year or so later he republished the interview in *Topical Autobiographies*, the marker "Question" becomes "Boder" and "Mrs. Kovitzka" becomes "Anna." He revised the other republished interviews in kind. The qualms of Robert Louis Stevenson's Mr. Utterson regarding the asking of questions were seemingly transposed into queasiness about the nomenclature of "Question" on the interview page.

For readers to step straight into the interview would have been disorienting. Boder introduces each chapter with a brief italicized overview of the DP: a few personal details (including a reference to physical appearance), a mention of the losses he or she suffered, and a reference to where the interview took place. In some cases, Boder's remarks go further, zeroing in on some feature of the interview or the person. In general, the introduction humanizes the DPs and helps the reader appreciate the recovery they have made in the months since the end of the war. The introduction is thus of a piece with Boder's agenda to show the DPs to be worthy people who deserve a home and whose readiness to contribute to society is undeniable.

The individual DP portraits, moreover, are worded to play off one another, often showing that there is no single DP response. Indeed, responses can be at opposite ends of the spectrum. For example, Jörn Gastfreund, a mere fortnight away from emigration to the United States and the start of a new life, is said to be "free from corrosive bitterness," whereas Fania Freich, living in a France that she believed betrayed the Jews, is "consumed by bitterness." Again, the DPs dealt in diametrically opposite ways with the powerful emotions summoned up by the interview. Fela Lichtheim showed a "rigid emotional control," an almost overbearing sense of self-possession. In contrast, Anna Kovitzka responded with "states of uncontrollable weeping," at times so overwhelming that the interview had to come to a halt.

The introductory vignettes also invoke some common traits. Both Mohnblum/Kimmelmann and Lichtheim/Nichthauser are in states of "bewilderment," a disorientation of basic values that was likely a result of their being teenagers during the war. Indeed, Mohnblum's portrait highlights his youth again and again, the "sheer bewilderment" inspired by his tender age serving as a way to account for his unsettling questions: "Abe Mohnblum is today eighteen years of age. Nearly one-fourth of his life has been spent in concentration camps.... At the age of thirteen Abe fell into the clutches of the Nazis. At fourteen this child was asking himself, out of bitter personal experience and sheer bewilderment, 'What is man?' As it turns out, Kimmelmann at the time of the interview was twenty rather than eighteen and thus not quite as young as Boder was led to think. Yet he was still the youngest of the book's interviewees, and the mature ideas flowing from such a young man presented to Boder a vexing combination.

For the two non-Jews, the portraits are shorter and, at least in the case of Anna Prest, act to caution the reader about what is left out:

"the failure to complete [the interview] was more probably her obvious reluctance to discuss the Nazi invasion of Estonia"—to discuss, in other words, the Estonian collaboration with the Nazis.<sup>30</sup> The ambiguity of the bystander finds its way into the profiles as well.

The sequence of chapters in *I Did Not Interview the Dead* also shows Boder's shaping hand. The Matzner and Kovitzka interviews were the last to be conducted in Germany, took place on the same day, and followed one right after the other. In the book, Boder splits the two apart, having them frame the collection (Kovitzka's is the first chapter and Matzner's the last). Boder clearly had a special affinity for the two interviews: Matzner's was the first to be published; Kovitzka's served as the basis for his model psychological analysis. Yet framing the collection with these two interviews also stresses the possibility of renewal: Kovitzka's interview begins by noting that it took place on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year; Matzner's concludes with his impassioned wish to rebuild his hometown Wiesbaden synagogue, "to rebuild it again as it was." Both time and place thus point to regeneration, to a declaration that Jewish life (and festivals and worship) continued in the aftermath of the Holocaust. This message is different from the sequence in Wiesbaden itself, where Boder, having conducted the two interviews in the aftermath of the Rosh Hashanah services, concludes with pointed questions about judgment. At the end of the book, Boder suspends such editorial questions. Indeed, he suspends questions altogether, opting instead for Matzner's resolute commemorative idiom. It was virtually the same ardent text that Boder saw fit to use for "Spool 169."

The shaping hand is also evident in the choice of stories for inclusion in the book. Although women comprise just over a third of Boder's interviewees, *I Did Not Interview the Dead* aims for balance, featuring interviews with four men and four women. The organization of the chapters preserves this balance in another way by alternating the chapters between women and men (chapters 1, 3, 5, and 7 are interviews with women; chapters 2, 4, 6, and 8 are interviews with men). This quest for organizational balance appears again in terms of the interviewees' age. Four of the chapters feature middle-aged interviewees who have been married and have (or, alas, had) children (Kovitzka, Freich, Braun, and Prest) and four present younger, unmarried DPs (Gastfreund, Mohnblum, Lichtheim, and Matzner). The scientist in Boder likely opted for this distribution to give fair representation to each category. Yet there is artistry involved as well. Purveying grim stories of devastating suffering told in an awkward idiom, Boder, who was a musician as well as a storyteller, saw symmetry and balance as the book's proper formal vehicle.

The addition of chapter titles helps give the book a literary stamp, lifting it beyond the mere assemblage of documents:

Chapter 1: I Am Alone—Anna Kovitzka

Chapter 2: Number 106477Δ—Jörn Gastfreund

- Chapter 3: We Have No Courage—Fania Freich
- Chapter 4: What Is Man—Abe Mohnblum
- Chapter 5: Words Hurt Too Much—Fela Lichtheim
- Chapter 6: Not a Single Night in Peace—Julius Braun
- Chapter 7: There Is So Much to Tell—Anna Prest
- Chapter 8: For Those Who Shall Not Return—Jack Matzner

The titles clearly hint at a thematic focus in each interview. But the themes also seem interchangeable: “I Am Alone,” the title of chapter 1, could just as well fit the situation of Bassfreund, Matzner, or Kimmelman as it could that of Kovitzka. More significantly, the titles are taken from the words of the interviewees. Boder clearly deliberated about the role of the book’s chapter titles. An earlier draft of the titles displays an even stronger thematic focus. But only some titles are actually drawn from the dialogue of the interview.<sup>31</sup> In the published version, in contrast, every title hails from the narrator’s words. Anna Kovitzka, for instance, stated forthrightly, “I am alone”; the others to whom these words also applied did not express it so nakedly. In another case, the title of chapter 2, “Number 106477Δ” appears when Jörn Gastfreund mentions the tattoo he received at Auschwitz:

GASTFREUND: And so when I was sent to the lager we had to register.

We were tattooed with the Auschwitz numbers. I was given the number 106477.

QUESTION: May I look at it?

GASTFREUND: 106477.

QUESTION: What does the triangle mean?

GASTFREUND: The triangle was added later and that means a Jew.

Boder often asked about the process of tattooing and its effect on the narrator. In this case, Gastfreund both describes and shows for Boder’s inspection his tattoo—the result of a notorious initiation procedure conducted at Auschwitz. From the outset, the title is ominous, turning a name into a number. Gastfreund’s explanation deciphers the number and insignia both for Boder and also for the reader. In this case, the printed title is especially significant because of its graphic dimension, reproducing the contents of the tattoo, triangle and all, on the printed page—a visual element that the recording did not convey. Yet Boder was careful to craft the title out of Gastfreund’s words: “I was given the number 106477.” It was not enough to set down simply what was seen but rather what he said. The chapter titles are thus meant to honor the words of the narrators; it is their words (albeit selected by Boder) that launch the chapter.

They also end it. In every chapter, the final words are those spoken by the interviewee. Sometimes they bring the DP’s life up to date (Kovitzka, Matzner); other times they reflect on some general point or issue (Gastfreund, Freich, Braun); still others tell of some incident at the time of liberation (Nichthauser). Only once, with Anna Prest,

were the narrator's words not the last on the page, followed in this case by parenthetical remarks explaining that the interview abruptly ended because "somebody entered and told Mrs. Prest that she was wanted in the barracks."<sup>32</sup> Clearly, since the interview broke off in midsentence, Boder felt obliged to explain why. Yet even here, where Boder believed there were other, more complex motivations for the interview breaking off when it did, he saves those comments for another place; the end of the interview belongs to the narrator. To close in this way was not all that difficult. As the recordings and transcripts demonstrate, the interviews actually did conclude with the narrator's words. In some cases, to be sure, Boder finished up by adding a short technical comment. But the interviews on the pages of *I Did Not Interview the Dead* reproduce (in English translation) the substance of the interview as it took place.

This makes all the more interesting the one instance where the conclusion of the interview's printed text was not the conclusion of the recorded interview. Indeed, Abraham Kimmelman's ("Abe Mohnblum's") interview went on for over an hour beyond the end of the chapter as it appears in the book. In this chapter there was no natural ending. Instead, Boder had to choose what the final words would be and who would speak them. True to the book's overall form, Kimmelman does speak the chapter's closing words. But to appreciate their significance we have to take note of the exchange that comes immediately before—clearly the most contentious of this particular interview and, for that matter, one of the most contentious of any.

In the broadest sense, the dispute between Boder and Kimmelman turns around the limits and capabilities of human nature. The argument erupted in response to Kimmelman's account of a concentration camp incident where he saw a boy eat ten liters of soup at one go. Boder was skeptical: "Do you really believe that a person can eat ten liters of soup?" Kimmelman assures him that he saw it and, moreover, that on occasion he himself ate close to this amount. Boder remains skeptical, whereupon Kimmelman changes course, questioning what is known about human nature and who has the authority to know it:

MOHNBLUM [KIMMELMANN]: (*Rather timidly*) Yes. I want to ask you a question. You are a professor of psychology?

QUESTION [BODER]: Yes. Please speak louder. (*He apparently tried to avoid the microphone.*)

MOHNBLUM: Are the psychologists so far advanced that they really know human nature so well? Do they really have a picture of man's various qualities? Do they really understand the human qualities so well?

QUESTION: Absolutely no.

MOHNBLUM: You are entirely right. I didn't ask you simply because I wanted to know, because I know this already. I just wanted to hear it from you. After all that I have seen, I know that we know nothing yet.

Kimmelmann has deftly turned Boder's skepticism around to say that all presumed knowledge should be treated skeptically. But Boder did not mean for his admission to be taken so far:

QUESTION: Oh, no. Never say that we know *nothing*. Some things are known, and some things are not yet explored. There is very much more left to be studied in the realm of human relations. But if you say that one knows *nothing*—that is a falsehood.

MOHNBLUM: (*Interrupting*) No, no, I don't mean to say that we don't know anything at all. That is out of the question.

QUESTION: You mean perhaps that we know very little?

The contention seems to have eased, with Kimmelmann backtracking from the position of absolute skepticism and Boder offering in return a milder statement. But this was the lull before the storm. Their positions actually become more radically opposed:

MOHNBLUM: The psychologists, well, they have said that they have ascertained something. But after this war it became apparent that they were very wrong.

QUESTION: Oh, no.

MOHNBLUM: They said that they had found out. But after this war it became apparent that they were greatly mistaken—

QUESTION: No—

MOHNBLUM:—that they are absolutely incapable of appraising what really can happen. And although this war has revealed *such* things we still cannot be sure that it may not come to much worse situations.

QUESTION: Excuse me, Abe. You are a very fine young man, but you should never argue about things you really don't know. The psychologists never claim that they have ascertained everything. The psychologists never said that. Scientifically trained psychologists have always been the first to admit that they know very little. How could a psychologist know what would happen under Hitler when such a situation never occurred before? Isn't that so?

Boder has tried to put Kimmelmann in his place and defend the honor of his profession. Kimmelmann, for his part, does not yield, but rather defers the outcome to a later stage:

MOHNBLUM: Well, we may still have an opportunity to discuss this when I shall talk about the time I was in Buchenwald.<sup>33</sup>

These are the chapter's closing words, leaving the argument between Boder and Kimmelmann behind even as it envisions a time when it could be picked up again. For all of its moderating force, Kimmelmann's statement is a strange way to finish things up. Clearly nothing is resolved. Boder believes his professional authority should be respected, whatever its limitations. Some things are known about "what is man"; the war does not overturn everything. Kimmelmann's experience has taught him otherwise; knowledge has to be tested against what he himself has witnessed and, when it is, it is found wanting. Neither man gives ground.

Moreover, the resolution of the dispute, if forthcoming, is projected to a part of the interview that is not included in the book—the time at Buchenwald, which came late in the war. Yet even in the segment that continued beyond the confines of the book, the interview never got that far. Kimmelman's internment at the Buchenwald concentration camp was on the docket for the follow-up interview that Boder had hoped to carry out but never did. So Kimmelman's closing words envisioned a possible ground for reconciliation, perhaps, but one that, unknown to him as he spoke, would never come to pass.

In contrast, Boder, as he edited the book, was well aware of the larger picture. Giving Kimmelman the closing words may have been simply a pragmatic gesture: these are the words that come at the end of the two recording spools (87 and 88) that form the basis for the chapter. That said, Kimmelman's closing words, unresolved as they certainly are, accomplish two things. First, they end the interview by confirming Kimmelman's authority. He is the protagonist of the diabolical drama set out in the interview and deserves to have the final say, whatever its implications. This is in spite of the fact that to leave open the matter of human nature and the authority by which it can or cannot be known surely does not help make Boder's case. In fashioning the text of his book, Boder was thus able to set aside the professional agenda that spurred him to argue his case so vociferously at the time of the interview itself.<sup>34</sup> And second, this chapter, far more than any other, ends with a lack of closure. In some respects, that should not come as a surprise. The text after all is a fragment, two spools of verbatim narrative excerpted from a total of seven. Boder was in this case (and perhaps this case alone) willing to let it stand unabashedly as a fragment. Yet the lack of closure at the end of the Kimmelman/Mohnblum chapter stands out because, in contrast to what eventually becomes a scholarly preference in dealing with the Holocaust to highlight lack of closure, Boder's 1949 book does not go out of its way to obtain it. Indeed, the closing chapter, in which Jack Matzner tells of the rededication of the Wiesbaden synagogue, ends the book on a note of resounding closure. Boder evidently believed that such an approach would not compromise the effect of the grim stories.

The lack of closure may also be fitting for the special nature of the interview with Abraham Kimmelman. Boder after all went to great lengths to complete the interview, only to give up the opportunity when he finally had the chance. He was clearly ambivalent about the way things turned out. Writing in his spool book after processing Kimmelman's interview six months after his return to the United States, Boder sounds a wistful note:

Too bad we were unable to finish. A liberation story from so good a narrator would have been a pearl.

Kimmelman's story was left unfinished, the pearl left unsaid. Kimmelman's chapter in *I Did Not Interview the Dead* thus remains

open ended in a manner that fits the unique history of this specific interview.

The book, including the distinctive contribution of the Kimmelmann interview, was shaped toward a purpose; the date of its publication and Boder's introduction to the collection help us to understand what that purpose was. When *I Did Not Interview the Dead* came out at the close of 1949 (four and a half years after the end of the war), thousands of DPs still remained in camps. Indeed, the last of the DP camps would not be closed until the mid-1950s. From the time of liberation onward, the DPs struggled to have their plight recognized for what it was. Instead, the fact that they had been imprisoned led a general public to think the worst of them, taking them for criminals.<sup>35</sup> Boder knew better. His book endeavored to redress this distorted view: the DP's, writes Boder in the introduction, "are not riffraff, not the scum of the earth, not the poor devils who suffer because they don't know their rights, not idlers who declaim that the world owes them a living. They are uprooted people."<sup>36</sup> Boder echoes the harsh terms in circulation at the time to counter them. In doing so, he dignifies the DPs with the title "uprooted people," nomenclature then increasingly in vogue to refer to migrants of all kinds. In this vein, Oscar Handlin, noted scholar of American history, published a few years later his bestseller *The Uprooted*, a tribute to the essential role played by immigrants in forging the special ethos of the United States. Boder's renaming performs a similar act of rehabilitation.<sup>37</sup>

In complement to this moral advocacy went a political one. In the aftermath of the war, the United States continued to be reluctant to admit DPs.<sup>38</sup> Boder believed his work could help make their case. Eager to lecture to audiences about his research, he linked such speaking engagements directly with political advocacy: "I should be glad to lecture to your group on the displaced people and demonstrate some of my wire recordings," Boder wrote in July 1947, to the sponsors of a potential speaking engagement in Michigan. "Of course, I should prefer that there be a group of at least fifty people ready to listen and *ready to do something substantial for the displaced people*."<sup>39</sup> The culmination of this advocacy came in Boder's 1948 appearance on a national radio program, "*Your Right to Say It*," where he took part in a debate on the subject: "Should We Close the Gates to Displaced Persons?" Boder, speaking in favor of an open-door policy, had his work cut out for him, for the debate pitted him against Congressman Ed Gossett, one of the most vociferous opponents of easing immigration restrictions.<sup>40</sup> Gossett's reputation was such that Leo J. Margolin, of the Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons, counseled Boder against going through with the debate, believing that, despite Boder's good intentions, the outcome would hurt the DPs' cause: "Debating with Mr. Gossett will do nothing," cautioned Margolin, "but confuse, inflame and generally becloud the displaced persons issue."<sup>41</sup> Yet Boder went ahead with the debate,

stating the DPs' case in unequivocal terms:

I feel it reasonable, just and urgent that the absorption of 400,000 [displaced persons] into our economy is compatible with sound self-interest and enlightened statesmanship, and is no threat to our security.<sup>42</sup>

Speaking to an audience that, for the most part, had little firsthand knowledge of the DPs' circumstances, Boder drew heavily on his European expedition as the basis for his authority:

During the summer of 1946 I practically lived with the displaced people in camps and shelterhouses of France, Switzerland, Italy and Germany. I listened to the rank and file of martyrs who have seen men and women marched into gas chambers, children burned in open fire pits, and youths killed at electrified fences in desperate bids for freedom.

Published only months later, *I Did Not Interview the Dead* took up where the radio debate left off, detailing how Boder "practically lived" with the people whose interviews he presented. It also put a human face on the DP masses, chronicled their fate in their own (translated) words, and, on a political level, showed through his introductory vignettes the recovery they had already made at the time of the 1946 interviews. These were uprooted people whose resilience could only be admired.

The book's dust jacket, which won a graphic arts award, curiously goes in the other direction: rather than a group of uprooted refugees eager to take on the task of rebuilding, it shows a phantomlike figure, still behind barbed wire.<sup>43</sup> The figure is faceless, alone, and marginal. The most prominent features are the barbed wire and the hand that, curving up in a show of strength, clutches it. Barbed wire was a common motif of Holocaust art from the postwar period;<sup>44</sup> whether it alludes here to the wartime concentration camps or postwar DP camps is left (perhaps purposely) unclear. The presentation of the title resembles cut-out newsprint, a kind of cubist montage giving the effect of fast-breaking headlines.<sup>45</sup> Much like the newsreel photographs of a few years before, the image seemingly aims, albeit on a more refined level, for an effect of shock and pity. Although Boder was proud of the book jacket's award, it seems he did not have a hand in its design and it only partly did justice to his conception. Half a century later, the covers of books on the DP period prefer photographs featuring groups of mothers whose hands clutch not barbed wire but the handles of baby carriages.<sup>46</sup>

Although it is difficult to gauge *I Did Not Interview the Dead*'s influence in the decade after it was published, the book was clearly admired for its novelty of approach and its personalized stories. "Nothing quite like this has ever been done," ventured literary critic Carl H. Grado, reviewing the book shortly after publication. "Interviews there had been but the actual record which can be played back as a phonograph is played giving these tragic stories in the living voices of their narrators constitutes something new in history."<sup>47</sup> Hearing tragic stories in the living voices was deemed to be pathbreaking—even if the voices had been transposed into a written

text. A second reviewer, John T. Winterich, also appreciated the verbatim quality: "These are the stories, taken down word for word by wire-recording, of four men and four women." But for Winterich the case history is what matters most: "They are stories with which we all are (or were) familiar in the mass; here the mass is refined down to heartbroken and heartbreaking units." This refining down to the individual story may well have a brutal effect upon the reader: "Dr. Boder's technical concern is the traumatic scars left by these experiences. The reader is likewise to emerge from his [reading] experiences with a few traumatic scars of his own."<sup>48</sup>

Aimed largely at a lay readership, the book nevertheless was received approvingly by numerous colleagues. Karl Dallenbach, editor of the *American Journal of Psychology*, was precisely the kind of reader Boder was after:

Because I am so busy and so far behind in my work, I thought merely to turn through it and put it aside for future reading. I chanced to open it on p. 71 and read that page. It move[d] me to turn to the beginning of that story and to read it.—Well, the long and short of it is, I did not put the book down until I had read it in its entirety. The horrors of those human documents were repelling and yet they forced one to read on to see how the subjects escaped them. I knew the subjects had, for they were telling the story, but how could mortal flesh endure the horrors related?<sup>49</sup>

Giving a portrait of catastrophe by means of the human document, the book was cited in the literature on displaced persons and concentration camps as well as psychology, sociology, and political science.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, a decade or so after publication it was still being read by some important readers, including pioneering American sociologist Erving Goffman. Goffman's 1961 book, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, deals with the Holocaust only as it pertains to Goffman's broader inquiry into "the social situation of mental patients and other inmates."<sup>51</sup> *Asylums* nonetheless draws on examples from concentration camps to document its case, but limits its sources to three books: Eugen Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell*; Elie Cohen, *Human Behavior in the Concentration Camp*; and Boder, *I Did Not Interview the Dead*. Boder is here in distinguished company. Kogon and Cohen's books are regarded as classics, both of them being systematic studies of concentration camps penned by social scientists who were also prisoners.<sup>52</sup> It is thus no surprise that Goffman should single them out. Inclusion of *I Did Not Interview the Dead* with these two suggests that, in 1961, Boder's interview collection, a different kind of book from the others, was held in high regard for what it too could convey through victims' voices.

The arresting title of this collection, *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, was chosen instead of the more prosaic working title, "The DP Story."<sup>53</sup> 'Boder likely himself made the change, for in the course of his writings, he several times invoked the phrase, "I did not interview the dead." Indeed, it serves as the introduction's final words, working thereby to recall the dead just as the reader prepares to read the words of those

who remained alive: "The verbatim records presented in this book make uneasy reading. And yet they are not the grimdest stories that could be told—I did not interview the dead."<sup>54</sup> This haunting formulation ends a straightforward introduction with unnerving irony. Indeed, the irony implies that these are the grimdest stories that could be told; no one other than those he did interview came closer to the events and survived to recount them.

The phrase also appears several times in Boder's extensive analysis of Anna Kovitzka's interview, an essay that, though a model of the kind of interpretation Boder hoped the transcripts would be given, remains in manuscript to this day.<sup>55</sup> One example occurs in a discussion of the fate of children—a discussion prompted by Anna's terrible recounting of hiding her baby with a Christian friend, a gesture that nonetheless turned out not to save the child:

MRS. KOVITZKA: Once my [husband] said, "I can't make peace with them. Our child must be saved even if we two shall die. We have nobody any more. You look like a Christian. Get out with the child. Put it next to a Christian orphanage." ... I went over the wires [of the ghetto] in the second attempt, and my man handed me the child, and I carried her away.

QUESTION: How did you get over the wires?

MRS. KOVITZKA: My man set up a chair for me. He raised one wire and I crawled through.

QUESTION: Weren't those electric wires?

MRS. KOVITZKA: No, then they had no electric wires. He handed me the child. And I went out in the street. I removed the yellow patch, and I went down the street. It was eight o'clock. At nine o'clock it was curfew hour. I did not know where to go.

All at once I remembered a Christian woman whom I happened to know, and I went to her and said, "This is all that I have got. Take the child and carry it to an orphanage. Say you have found her in the street. I am returning to my man, and we shall perish together."

She started to wring her hands, a Christian woman whom I had possibly seen only twice before. The Poles were threatened with death for such things.

And she said, "I am afraid. Put her in the street. I will come out of the house with a neighbor woman. We shall come out as if by accident. I will pick up the child and take her tomorrow to the orphanage, but you go away immediately." And so she has taken my child.

I went with her down to the door, and there I stood across the street, hidden in the gate, and I saw how my child was lying on the snow. And here, I could not pick her up! The child that I had brought into the world! I knew that that will save her life. That is what I hoped.

In a few minutes she [the Christian woman/D.B./] came out of the house and picked up the child. I ran away through the streets of Grodno, and I didn't think of the curfew—that I might be caught—and I didn't know how to get back to the ghetto, as it was such a late hour.

There was another Christian woman in the city, with whom I had once worked during the time of the Soviets. I stepped into her house, and a girl friend of mine was hiding there. I entered the house, and I said, "Panuvka, I don't have my child any more. How light my hands feel!"

Then she said, "Twenty-six hours you have suffered to bring her into the world, and now you will suffer as long as you live."<sup>56</sup>

In his commentary on this passage, Boder reviews the kind of risk run by mothers with babies, and relates that in concentration camps a mother was often advised to give up her child to save herself. He then dramatizes another predicament where the mother heeded the advice:

[There were] tales of children belonging to women who were standing awaiting inspection, the child calling "Mother, Mother," and the woman pushing him away screaming in panic: "I don't know you, you are not my child, get away from me, get away."<sup>57</sup>

Having imagined the horrible scenario of a mother rejecting a beseeching child, Boder invokes the telltale phrase:

How many of the six million murdered were women who would sooner die than surrender their children will never be ascertained; such records even the meticulous Germans did not keep, and I—as I emphasize so often—have not interviewed the dead.<sup>58</sup>

Not having access to the stories only the dead could tell here balances the brutal tales told by the living. The phrase as invoked here brings a form of justice to those who cannot speak on their own behalf. Mothers are accused of the most heartless actions, driven to such extremity, to be sure, by the conditions imposed in the camps. Yet the abnormality of the circumstances does not make the actions less ugly. The underlying premise for such tales is that the camp life orchestrated by the perpetrators necessarily perverted normal relationships among the victims. Yet Boder's conjecture of women who would rather die than surrender their children offers a competing premise, one that projects on the part of the victims a continuity of normal human bonds even (or perhaps especially) when facing the prospect of certain death. If the dead are to be invoked, as Boder conceives it, they should at least have their voice.

Nothing throws the significance of Boder's title into sharper relief than Donald Niewyk's title for his 1998 abridged collection of the Boder interviews: *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival*. For Niewyk, a noted historian of twentieth-century anti-Semitism, the emphasis is on survival; the "narratives" are valuable because they emanate from those who lived through—that is, both experienced and came out on the other side of—the dreadful events. Because they survived, they can testify to what happened. Most of the interviews, however, narrate not survival but loss; they tell of those who never came back. Indeed, given Boder's narrow focus on the war years, it could not but be that loss and death would overshadow escape and survival. Hence, Boder's title, keeping the

dead in the foreground, anticipates more clearly than Niewyk's exactly what one reads within.<sup>59</sup>

Invoking the dead as touchstone points historically both backward and forward. In the aftermath of World War I, a vast cultural response to the unprecedented number of deaths was, according to Jay Winter, to conjure the "return of the dead." In film and literature, in monuments and memorials, even in the séances of the spiritualist movements, the "army of the dead" returned to communicate with bereaved family and friends.<sup>60</sup> Seen in this context, Boder's "I have not interviewed the dead" posits the shocking unavailability of those who had died. On the other side of the equation, Boder's phrase points forward to the aftermath of the Eichmann trial. Elie Wiesel's 1964 essay, "A Plea for the Dead," argues that attempts to "interview the dead" are painfully misguided:

Those millions of [dead], whom so-called civilized society had abandoned to despair and to agonize in silence and then in oblivion, suddenly are all brought back up to the surface to be drowned in a flood of words.... The role of ghost is imposed upon them and they are bombarded with questions: "Well, now, what was it really like? How did you feel in Minsk and in Kiev and in Kolomea, when the earth, opening up before your eyes, swallowed up your sons and your prayers?... Tell us, speak up, we want to know."<sup>61</sup>

The indiscretion on the part of those who "bombard" the dead from a vantage point that gives them no authority to do so is figured by Wiesel precisely as the interview with the dead that Boder was insistent to renounce.

#### A SELF-PUBLISHED LIBRARY OF CATASTROPHE

Boder produced no other book after *I Did Not Interview the Dead*. But in light of the constraints that he had faced when putting out a book of unconventional material, he hit upon the idea of publishing the narratives in an alternative format. Rather than going through a publisher, he himself took over the production of the printed narratives. From 1950 (a year after the publication of the book) through 1957 Boder brought out five "series" of self-published transcriptions. Each series comprised one to six individual volumes, and together they presented a total of seventy interviews, including those contained in *I Did Not Interview the Dead*. The pace of publication was steady if irregular, and the size and scope could be varied from series to series to meet the needs of the moment. The flexibility of self-publication allowed Boder to make the printed page an essential dimension of the project.

This was the historical moment to initiate such a move. Indeed, the early 1950s was the period of what later became known as the "mimeo revolution"—the change in publishing ushered in by the refinement of

the mimeograph machine. Manuscript duplication became cheaper, quicker, and more accessible. The mimeo revolution had broad cultural implications, perhaps, as some have argued, even altering the course of American literary history.<sup>62</sup> Already keenly aware of how advances in technology could further his cause when it came to the audio side of his project, Boder saw self-publishing via the mimeograph as a way to get into print material the future of which was uncertain.<sup>63</sup>

The process of transposing the interviews from sound to print went through a number of laborious steps. Boder's recorded translation was first set down in handwritten copy. It was thereafter typed, proofread, typed onto a mimeograph stencil, again proofread, mimeographed, and finally bound into a softcover notebook. Once ready, Boder sent the bound notebooks to between forty and fifty libraries, most of which were in the United States, a few in Europe and beyond. He charged a nominal fee for processing and mailing. In 1957, as Boder's detailed records note, it cost him \$2.77 to ship the two boxes containing the transcriptions from Los Angeles to Berkeley, \$5.63 to Chicago, \$9.57 to Israel, and \$10.34 to Singapore. Some copies went to individuals who had worked with Boder on the project; some went to interested relatives. When I visited Boder's great-niece, Isabella Davidoff, in Silver Spring, Maryland in fall 2004, she kept the boxes of her copy of mimeographed transcriptions presented to her by Boder in the late 1950s in a back room closet.

The name that he gave to the self-published transcriptions was *Topical Autobiographies of Displaced People*—a far less gripping title than that he gave to the book. Yet it was a name that had distinct connotations from the period of the 1940s and 1950s. In contrast to “comprehensive” autobiographies, which aspired to tell the subject’s life story from beginning to end, “topical” autobiographies told only of experiences that illuminated a specific topic or event, in this case the suffering undergone during World War II.<sup>64</sup>

As in the book, each transcribed interview was numbered as a chapter. The interview with Dimitri Odinetz, for example, was designated chapter 14. But in any given series, there were almost always too many chapters to join together in a single volume. So the chapters themselves were parceled out among separately bound volumes, each of which was made up of two to five—consecutive chapters, totaling 150–250 pages. Several volumes made up a series. To take again the example of the Odinetz interview: chapter 14 was grouped together with four other chapters (12–16), which then constituted volume 4. Hence each volume was a small book in its own right, largely filled with grim stories of places and people about which Americans knew very little.

The interview with Odinetz, Boder's colleague from St. Petersburg, was the final one of the expedition. Yet in *Topical Autobiographies* it was included in the first series, volume 4, chapter 14. As in *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, Boder did not organize the transcriptions chronologically. But, again as in the preceding book, there is a structuring principle that guides

the evolution of the publication. The following table, while revealing little at this point about the strategies that lie behind the organization of the volumes, gives a quick overview of their massive contents:

Publication Year	Pages	Chapters	Volumes
1950	1–731	1–16	1–4
1953	732–1079	17–24	5–6
1955	1080–1703	25–35	7–9
1956	1704–2948	36–63	10–15
1957	2949–3104	64–70	16

The table sets forth an evolution of publication filled with drama and change. To start with, the first series of *Topical Autobiographies*, made up of sixteen chapters, brought out the sixteen-chapter version of *I Did Not Interview the Dead* that Boder was not able to publish with University of Illinois Press. Indeed, publication of the first series followed close on the heels of the book, appearing no more than a year later. The self-publishing venture was a direct extension of the book. While Boder was pleased to have the book in circulation, he had had to compromise considerably, cutting back on the number of interviews and on the academic apparatus. He thus had material he had prepared for the original book manuscript at the ready: selected, transcribed, and edited. The eight interviews that made up the book were now accompanied by eight others (the scholarly apparatus was still absent; some of it would surface many years later at the end of the final volume). The added interviews shared with the original ones the fact that they, too, included both Jews and non-Jews and were also drawn mainly from the later interviews conducted in Germany. *Topical Autobiographies*, then, rather than being an independent publication that simply followed close behind the appearance of the book, actually enabled an act of restoration.

But the first series also differed from the book in conception and organization. For instance, Boder changed the chapter sequence, replacing the book's opening chapter containing the Kovitzka interview with one of his other favorites, that of Abraham Kimmelman, now presented in its full version. This was a stunning gesture with which to announce the new form of publishing the project. Kimmelman's was clearly a pivotal interview; to have to abridge it in *I Did Not Interview the Dead* meant leaving out much of what had led Boder to give Kimmelman more than double the interview time of anyone else. In the new venue, not only was the interview presented in full, it also opened the entire corpus. Boder could now place what he wanted where he wanted it—and at whatever length was necessary. Perhaps nothing else demonstrates the act of restoration as powerfully as this.

The second series appeared three years later in 1953. The gap of time between the first and the second installments was probably due to several factors, most significantly Boder's move from Chicago (where the first series was produced) to Los Angeles (whence came all subsequent ones).<sup>65</sup> There was also the diversion of the 1951 trip to flood-drenched Kansas City and the attendant labors that followed upon it. The demands of travel and relocation may also account for why the second series is half the size of the first (two rather than four volumes; eight rather than sixteen chapters; 347 rather than 731 pages). The change in size has its counterpart in the change of interview sites providing the material. Where the first series drew mainly on the later interviews in Germany, the second contains only a single interview from this period. The focus instead shifts to earlier sites, including the first three Paris-based interviews (with Leon Shachnovski, Polia Bisenhaus, and Raisel Roset). Having been in the grip of the later interviews after his return to the United States and through the publication of the book, the next phrase saw Boder return to the expedition's starting point.

It also saw him modify, in at least one crucial way, the diversity of the interviewees: the second series contains interviews only with Jews. Gone is the breadth of DPs that came especially from the visit to Germany. Gone is the counterpoint between the tales told by the victim and those told by the bystander, between, as Boder was soon to call them, the KZ (concentration camp inmate) and the FER (friendly Eastern refugee). Both the book and the first series alternate between the two groups. In sharp contrast, the second series ushers in a new uniformity. Finally, the recent move to Los Angeles leaves its mark on the concluding interview with Raisel Roset, where Bernard Wolf is first listed as having assisted in the translation. What was previously largely a one-man operation in terms of rendering the interviews into English now shows another hand at work.

The third series, the first produced entirely in Los Angeles, issued in 1955, follows along the lines of the second: it too contains interviews exclusively with Jews. In complement to the first and second, it draws its material mainly from the middle interviews (August 17–31). Of these, two locations predominate: three Grand Hotel background interviews (with Julian Weinberg, Jacob Oleiski, and Jacob Wilf) and four from the American Joint Distribution Committee shelter in Paris—which Boder referred to as the site of some of his most instructive interviews. Translator Bernard Wolf is again on the scene, but his assistance with two of the interviews is less than one might have expected.

The fourth series, published in 1956, marked a great surge in the number of processed interviews, netting nearly twice as many chapters as any previous volume. And, given that the previous series came out in 1955, this surge in production occurred in a single year. Two factors likely heightened production. First, Boder had a sense that time was

growing short as funding was soon coming to an end. Just how soon was uncertain, as Boder expressed in a letter to a friend in March:

It is possible that my project may come to an end by October 1, at least this particular project dealing with the recordings of displaced people. Whether I shall have to turn to private practice, which I maintain at present in a pilot fashion, or shall be able to obtain funds for another piece of research, is still problematic.<sup>66</sup>

As it turned out, the project did not end as early as Boder had feared. But he increasingly felt under pressure and knew it was necessary to process as many interviews as he could in the time he had left. Second, what enabled him to accomplish so much was the presence of translator Wolf. If Wolf's previous contributions were modest, they now were huge: twenty-four of the twenty-eight interviews were his doing. And though perhaps less experienced than Boder, Wolf's method of translation—transcribing directly from the wire spools to paper—was probably quicker than his supervisor's two-step approach. On top of that, Wolf knew intimately the specialized vocabulary of the ghettos, camps, and the Jewish DPs in general, a knowledge that presumably allowed him to proceed more fluently than Boder. Making the younger Wolf a central figure in processing the recordings moved things forward at an unprecedented pace.<sup>67</sup>

Like the two previous series, this one included interviews exclusively with Jews. By 1956, uniformity had almost become a rule of thumb. But in this case Boder achieved diversity by other means. The 1956 volumes were culled from the broadest range of sites; only the Grand Hotel background interviews, having already seen the light of day in earlier series, were not represented. Notable also was a cluster of interviews with Lena Kuechler and two of her charges, plus her assistant Joseph Ferber. Raisel Meltzak, Boder's youngest interviewee, would for some reason not appear here but in the final series a year later.

Indeed, in the fifth and final series, which appeared in 1957, Meltzak, a young Polish Jew, is the odd one out. Like the first series, this one contained both Jews and non-Jews. Different voices sound again, giving the view of the bystander in all of its ambiguity. Again, like the first series, most of the fifth series' interviews were conducted in Germany, the source of the most variegated DP population. The fifth series' dimensions were also more compact: it consists of a single volume of just over 150 pages containing seven interviews. Of all that had come before, the final volume most nearly resembled the book that had initiated the full-scale publishing project eight years earlier: the voices of Jewish victims again alternate with those of Christian bystanders, presenting a portrait of the 1946 DPs in their broadest configuration.

*Topical Autobiographies* is thus structured as an epic, where the end mirrors the beginning, the diversity of narrator and alternating narration returning in the concluding series. These mirroring sections enclose the

uniformity of Jewish experience, which stretches for over 2,200 pages. The long middle section is really the heart of darkness, the place where the accounts of ghettos and camps receive their uninterrupted airing. In this light, the first series cushions the reader's entry, giving an inkling of what will be in the center before actually arriving there. The final volume in turn eases the reader out of the darkness, while also affirming that order and form shapes even this brutal world. It is also tempting to see this structure as setting forth two different approaches to the DP narratives, one universal and one particular, the first seeing the DPs, whatever their experience and background, as giving equally significant accounts of wartime suffering, the second viewing the Jews' plight as the benchmark for knowledge of such suffering.

Huge in scope, the sixteen volumes of the five series did not include all of the transcriptions. Between seven and seventeen other interviews were translated or transcribed, in whole or in part.<sup>68</sup> Many of these derive from the interviews conducted in Germany (with Billi, Kalnetkis, Bogoslav, Zeplit, Ingmar, and Janis); two of the others were in English (Precker and Deutsch) and thus required transcription but not translation.

Why were these not included in the sixteen volumes or brought out subsequently? Pragmatic concerns explain it to a degree: some transcriptions were lost; others remained unfinished.<sup>69</sup> But, that said, at least seven were listed as having the "final typing completed." Perhaps these were completed only once the fifth series was already bound, and the interviews contained therein were capped off by an appendix. To bring out another series would have undermined the hard-wrought closure that came with adding these final materials. Comparing the texts of the omitted interviews with the published ones might offer some leads. But, alas, the unpublished transcribed interviews have not turned up in any archive, or elsewhere. It is as if once the fifth installment of *Topical Autobiographies* appeared, everything that remained no longer had a place to be filed.

The missing transcriptions, like the several missing spools and the missing set of original wire recordings, complicate the picture of Boder's project. For those who are aware of Boder's interviews and transcriptions, the picture presented is usually much neater: Boder transcribed seventy recordings; the rest have never been put on paper. The unpublished transcriptions frustrate this schema.

These complications can lead us to think differently about Boder's work and about the work still to be done to obtain a view of the project in its full dimensions. His work went on longer, it seems; he completed more than we thought; he had interview materials that were at a stage of production equal to those that were published.

Boder's production of *Topical Autobiographies* was anchored in a print revolution. Yet from another angle, Boder sought and found in this kind of revolutionary format a correlative for his project: a new mode of literature (verbatim recorded narratives) occasioned a new type of book.

Indeed, *Topical Autobiographies* can be seen as a counterbook, among other things putting into print the edition of *I Did Not Interview the Dead* that he was not able to publish in a conventional format. It was, moreover, a book that was not meant to be sold. What was important was to make it available to readers, even if Boder had to pay for it himself. To get such copious volumes into libraries worldwide was itself no mean feat. Boder reckoned with the fact of size, however, and circumvented it by offering a microcard or microfiche format for each series. Once the printed interviews were no longer bound to a book, he could enlarge or diminish the print to suit the circumstances.

For all of his stress on the aural dimension and his ingenuity in carrying out the interview recordings, Boder ended up spending considerably more time and effort on getting the interviews into print. Indeed, the ratio is something like ten to one—ten years of translation and transcription versus the year he spent procuring the equipment, recording the interviews, and eventually duplicating them. And his time was well spent. His efforts at transcribing were so successful that the recordings could take a back seat. This assessment runs contrary to the common view, which emphasizes the fact that he did not complete even the English-language interview transcriptions. This view misses the point. He did not have to wait until he completed the project; his serial publication allowed for an incremental placement of Holocaust testimony in the four corners of the globe. In Boder's hands, the printed word was the vehicle that let sound travel.

# Chapter 5

## *The Wonder of Their Voices*

### TESTIMONY, TECHNOLOGY, AND WIRE RECORDED NARRATIVES

Holocaust testimony has become synonymous with video testimony. The evidence for this judgment is so conspicuous that at most times it is simply taken for granted. Yet Boder's interview project, special in many respects but particularly in its library of audio recordings, does not conform to this framework. This could be seen as simply a matter of historical change. Boder took advantage of the technological innovations of his time; his use of an audio recording device has since been superseded by video. But this straightforward picture of the march of history is brought up short by a focus on Boder's audio project. If video testimony holds sway, where does Boder's fit in? Should it simply yield ground and interest us as a mode of testimony in general, valuable because of its early postwar status, its ethnographic resourcefulness, its linguistic diversity, and the novelty of Boder's enterprise? Or, as I will argue, does the fact and history of its being an audio archive open up a set of questions that are usually sidestepped?<sup>1</sup>

As a pathway to these issues, it is useful to survey some of the evidence for video testimony's dominance. Yad Vashem, under whose auspices 12,000 survivor interviews have been conducted, and where interviews continue at a pace of ten per week, decided in 2001 no longer to use audio recording.<sup>2</sup> The new Visual Center at Yad Vashem, a state-of-the-art facility for viewing video testimony and other Holocaust-related visual materials, has no station at which one can listen to Yad Vashem's collection of thousands of audio interviews.<sup>3</sup> Listen one can at Yad Vashem, but only at the much less prominent site of the archives, where it is necessary to hunt up a tape recorder.<sup>4</sup>

Yad Vashem's approach is a reflection of the times, the tone of which was set by the success of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation. Begun in the early 1990s, the foundation has more or less completed its work after conducting over 52,000 videotaped interviews worldwide. Set in motion by film director Steven Spielberg, the project's decision to videotape the interviews proceeded out of a belief in the educational merits of visual media.<sup>5</sup> The numbers of interviews certainly

seem massive. But it is not so much the numbers that make the crucial difference (as we will see, the quantity of interviews decades earlier was also impressive). It is rather the taken-for-grantedness of the visual medium as the exclusive domain of Holocaust testimony.<sup>6</sup>

In this respect, the accepted supremacy of videotaping recapitulates the prominence of the visual in the immediate postwar period, when movie theater newsreels depicted to sizable audiences the Holocaust's terrible consequences. This newsreel footage, showing among other material concentration camp liberation scenes with mounds of corpses and starved survivors, was often the way that those not on the scene of the events came to know something of them.<sup>7</sup> Graphic though they were, these "images of witness" were thought by some, including David Boder, to have inherent limitations in conveying knowledge of what took place. "The present writer," Boder set forth in his 1945 memorandum, "could not help observing the enormous discrepancy between the abundance of visual material collected on subjects of the war and the meagerness of first-hand auditory material available on the same subject."<sup>8</sup> Boder's effort to rectify this discrepancy was what led to his recorded interviews, a kind of imageless testimony that sought to augment—and, perhaps, to challenge—the camera's work.

#### EARLY RECORDING OF SURVIVOR INTERVIEWS

Indeed, Boder's recordings presaged a period, dating from the mid-1950s through the 1980s, when audio recording came into fashion and, eventually, accompanied almost every interview. Yad Vashem's evolution in regard to audio testimony presents a useful example, especially because the institution, which received its mandate in 1953, was from the beginning committed to interviews with Holocaust victims. According to the director of testimony, Rachel Auerbach, the first decade produced some 3,000 testimonies, 600 of which were recorded.<sup>9</sup> The next decade netted a comparable number. But it is in the 1980s that audio recording becomes indispensable to survivor interviews: virtually all of the 2,000-plus interviews from that decade were recorded. Consequently, the 1980s, a time when video recording in Israel was just catching on, marked the heyday of audio.

The recording of survivor testimony has followed a more or less similar course in other parts of the world.<sup>10</sup> And these audio recordings have clearly left an imprint, spawning tape archives, verbatim transcriptions, and a number of books.<sup>11</sup> Yet the advent of video recording has come to overshadow audio's contribution to the history of victim testimony. As audio has been almost thoroughly phased out, the situation now stands as Boder found it sixty years ago.

Scholarly interpretation of testimony has likewise been dominated by video. In this case, not the *Survivors of the Shoah Visual*

History Foundation but Yale's Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, housing over 4,000 video testimonies, has provided the material. Basing his study on the Fortunoff materials, Lawrence Langer has authored what is perhaps the most sustained interpretative study of video testimony.<sup>12</sup> In terms of testimonial media, Langer is most concerned about showing the virtues of video over written testimony, arguing that the former is free of constricting conventions that skew even the finest of Holocaust memoirs. Yet Langer never refers to audio recorded testimony. It simply falls outside of his purview. To be sure, his argument regarding the special nature of oral testimony would equally mesh with audio testimony as it does with video (even though he occasionally invokes the camera's movements and the participants' body language as factors to weigh in interpreting testimony). And his critical terms can be generalized to offer an interpretive vocabulary that extends to audio interviews. But here as elsewhere the archives of audio testimony are eclipsed.<sup>13</sup>

This is not the case with literary scholar Geoffrey Hartman, who has kept audio recording in general and Boder's project in particular in the testimonial repertoire. Yet here too audio weighs in at a disadvantage:

Every recording device is partial and defective. Questionnaires are coldly informative and rarely convey the feeling of the life actually lived. Audiotape does better, but the voice it transmits is strangely disembodied, and audio tape collections tend to become inert unless transcribed. Most of Boder's interviews, for example, are still not available. His book, published in 1949, contains eight selected interviews.<sup>14</sup>

The ascription of "strangely disembodied" to audio recorded testimony and the voices that it conveys has them lose exactly what Boder had hoped they would gain. This is true in two senses: (1) Boder thought the recorded voice would be able to do something that visual images could not; and (2) "their own voices"—recorded sound, language, words, grammar, and syntax—was the means by which the victims could best transmit experience. For Boder, their recorded voice was the best way to embody their experience.

Hartman used the term "*disembodied*" to evaluate the relative merits of different media. But James Young took it up to point out audio's essential incapacities: "audio testimony alone [without the complement of video?] tends not to embody witness so much as to disembody it, to separate the speaker from his voice. Like the literary witness, the speaker in audio tends to be displaced by the words themselves."<sup>15</sup> Displacement here underscores disembodiment, and the very capacity to bear witness suffers in the bargain. The term "*disembodied*" means that audio comes off second best and, by implication, that the audio recordings archives of victim testimony would, by definition, not yield important material.

Not every interview project has abandoned audio and dismissed its viability. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Oral History

Department, for instance, in some interviews will follow up a three- or four-hour video on the prewar and war years with an audio interview of the postwar years. Behind this unusual format lies a respect for audio's power in the interview and on the audience. "Most interesting," comments former director Joan Ringelheim,

is that many of the people seem to be able to be more open with the medium of audio. There is a greater intimacy to the conversation than is typically developed in the video interview. It may also be that the audience's concentration will be different as well when listening to these tapes. Is it possible that we hear more by not seeing—at least sometimes? Needless to say, video is still important, especially for educational purposes, given the prevalence of video in the lives of students. Still, one can wonder about the effects of the different media.<sup>16</sup>

Ringelheim's reflections challenge the general (if often unvoiced) skepticism concerning audio. Yet even here, in spite of the wondering appreciation for audio's resourcefulness, audio plays a secondary role to video, a follow-up to elaborate or fill in gaps.

The disparagement of audio recorded testimony may well derive from a more general skepticism regarding what is referred to as "sound culture," the name given to the audible as opposed to the visual ways of understanding the world. The term refers to the aural quality of music but also to the evolution of sound production and reproduction in radio, film, telephone, and magnetic recording devices. Yet with these aural topics as with audio recorded testimony there is a sense of existing in the shadow of the visual. As Michele Hilmes argues, sound itself is

constantly subjugated to the primacy of the visual, associated with emotion and subjectivity as against the objectivity and rationality of vision, seen as somehow more "natural" and less constructed as a mode of communication—in essence, [sound is] fundamentally secondary to our relationship to the world and to dominant ways of understanding it.<sup>17</sup>

Slighting the importance of audio as compared to video testimony may thus be part of a larger cultural reflex. This would account for the tendency to shortchange audio testimony in spite of the fact that it came on the scene earlier and produced thousands of recorded interviews, which should presumably form an essential scholarly resource.

Boder himself, as we will come to see, was not an iconoclast. He understood that the visual had a role to play. Yet it was in sound, not image, that the "war sufferers'" story needed to be told and the personal document created.

#### WIRED FOR SOUND

Boder's earliest overview of the 1946 European journey, "The Displaced People of Europe," was originally published in 1947 but was reprinted

by Boder shortly thereafter.<sup>18</sup> The reprint's back cover is completely given over to a lavish ad for the Peirce [sic] Magnetic Wire Recorder, "the new better way to record sound for all dictation and educational purposes." The full-page ad displays a photograph of a wire recorder, illustrates in black-and-white sketches four settings in which the wire recorder can profitably be used (dictation, transcription, classroom, and "staff meetings"), lists seven "unequaled" technical features, and explains why such an ad appears on the back of Boder's article. The wire recorder's

value as research implements [sic] is well documented by the fact that Dr. David P. Boder, who recorded on wire 120 hours of interview [sic] with displaced persons in Europe, now uses two Peirce Wire Recorders for purposes of transcription of the material he collected.

Boder's use of the recorder in the field and at the desk made him a perfect authority to invoke. The advertisement accurately represents his work as tied to the new technology and uses the occasion of his article as a dramatic example of what the recording machine can do. But conspicuous though Boder's association was at the time, histories of the wire recorder have overlooked his work, arguably the most important example of wire recording to have been preserved.<sup>19</sup>

The wire recorder's origins date from the invention of magnetic recording in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Between the turn of the twentieth century and 1940, both European and American companies produced magnetic recorders that had limited success. The wire recorder came on the scene in America in the 1940s, conceived by Marvin Camras, a twenty-two-year-old graduate of the Illinois Institute of Technology. This new recording machine had many features that went beyond previous models, including portability, enhanced length of recording time, and the capacity to rerecord over what had been previously recorded. Its magnetic steel wire was thought to be the best material to receive and preserve the imprint of sound.

The wire recorder was quickly mobilized by the American army for strategic purposes of an astonishing variety. At the Normandy landing, for instance, it was deployed to produce decoy sounds to divert the enemy. In another application, soldiers' at the scenes of fighting recorded accounts moments after a battle had ended, accounts which were then edited into propaganda booklets for consumption on the home front. The ready availability of recording machines in this era comes through in Boder's correspondence with military officials, who do not wish to financially support Boder's effort because they have their own interviewers equipped with recorders already on site.<sup>20</sup> In the postwar period, the wire recorder was marketed in the tens of thousands and put to use in business (primarily for dictation), classrooms (often for language and linguistics courses), and scholarship (Columbia University historian Alan Nevins's initial forays into oral history).

The talk of the town for a brief span of years, the wire recorder was soon outclassed by the tape recorder and faded into technological oblivion. Many today have likely never heard of it, much less seen one in action. Yet the wire recorder was at this historical period America's premier recording device.

In contrast, Europe had already refined tape recorder technology by the mid-1930s. Remarkably, it was only when the American army occupied Germany, sampled what looked to be enticing technological equipment, brought it to America, and demonstrated its capacities before the scientific community that the United States gained the know-how to produce state-of-the-art tape recorders.<sup>21</sup> These postwar adaptations of German technological excellence, capable of greater fidelity in sound reproduction, made the wire recorder for the most part obsolete.

Recording in the second half of the 1940s was thus a familiar if not standard enterprise, a technology whose time had arrived to perform work in the field and office as well as to entertain the family at home. Yet nobody else thought to take such a machine to Europe to record the DPs. Boder's association with IIT and Marvin Camras must have played a role in moving Boder to undertake what others did not. Camras's work on the wire recorder had been sponsored by the Armour Research Foundation—a foundation that specialized in applied engineering work to increase revenue for the Armour Institute of Technology. The Armour Institute was the school that eventually merged with the Lewis Institute, Boder's academic home, to form the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Camras was dedicated to the wire recorder almost to the point of failure.<sup>22</sup> He was aware early on of European tape recording machines. But he believed that the strength of wire would outperform the flimsiness of tape. His judgment, in sync with the military needs of the war years, faltered in the postwar years when tape recording was on the ascendancy. Indeed, toward the late 1940s, Camras, under competitive pressure, finally shifted his own efforts to tape. Had he done so at an earlier stage, Boder might have taken a tape rather than wire recorder to Europe—and thereby changed the subsequent course of the afterlife of the DP interviews.

#### SOUND AND UNSOUND REPRODUCTION: THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Boder went the route of recording because social scientists already viewed the technique as valid. Indeed, studies on recording for research purposes preceded Boder's European expedition and gave him material to draw on. In particular, prominent psychologists were experimenting with audio recording for a variety of purposes. Gordon Allport's full-length study of the personal document validated audio recording by describing it as being a "true personal document." In the best possible circumstances, audio recording, noted Allport, offered "a new and

exceptionally promising technique, not only for study of language, but for the investigation of any expressive activity that can be recorded.”<sup>23</sup>

Eminent psychologist Carl Rogers also referred appreciatively to “phonographic recordings” in both his pathbreaking 1942 book arguing the virtues of nondirective psychotherapy and his 1945 article demonstrating the application of the nondirective interview to social science research.<sup>24</sup> Yet it was Rogers’s student, Bernard Covner, who systematically studied recording as an aid to psychology, first in a dissertation directed by Rogers and then in a series of professional articles.<sup>25</sup> Covner’s four publications from 1942 to 1944 in highly regarded psychological journals attest to the interest that recording sparked in his colleagues. His focus on the phonograph as the recording device of choice and rejection of the wire recorder shows in turn the rapid changes occurring in these years.

Indeed, the first of the articles begins by surveying the available recording equipment: sound on film, magnetic tape recorder, dictaphone, and conference recorder. All are rejected “for reasons of prohibitive cost, lack of flexibility, or poor quality of recording.” The magnetic tape recorder in particular fell under the heading of “lack of flexibility”: while it produced “very fine recordings,” they were “limited to about fifty seconds in length and [were] obliterated as soon as another recording [was] made.” Such recordings would clearly not serve to investigate the dynamics of an interview. The only option that remained was phonograph recording, preferable because of low cost (\$50 as opposed to the sound on film approach at \$750) and its ability to be played back on an ordinary phonograph. After reviewing the use of the microphone, the setup of the interview room, the “styli and discs,” policies and operating schedules, Covner turns to “results and applications” of recorded interviews. These included the evaluation of interviewing techniques and use of recording as a teaching aid with fledgling counselors.<sup>26</sup>

Typescripts (the name that Covner uses for transcripts) were also desirable since they are “considerably more valid and more complete than the reports which would otherwise be written up from memory.” But there was no machine that would enable fluid transcription until Covner himself rigged up such a device, the building and operation of which, aided by sets of diagrams, is the subject of Covner’s second article of the series. The third and fourth articles exploit the completeness of verbatim recorded interviews to contrast the partial and subjective reports that counselors make of these interviews. The first and second articles, in other words, lay the mechanical groundwork for the research that Covner undertakes in the last two—an approach that dramatizes the novelty of research based on recordings.

Clearly a stride forward, Covner’s studies nonetheless highlight the uncertainty of the recording process. Out of 100 interviews, Covner had to eliminate nearly half for reasons of “apparatus breakdown,” “defective cutting styli,” and lack of being audibly “intelligible.” The strides forward had to be balanced against the era’s unreliable recording techniques. One

can imagine that Boder would have found Covner's review both inspiring and sobering.

Increasingly popular among social scientists, the use of recording and studies of its utility were in Boder's day still in an early phase. Not until the mid-1950s did there appear a comprehensive study that evaluated the contribution of recording to social science research. Published in two complementary articles in the summer of 1956, this study, like Boder's, was based on interviews conducted with disaster victims, this time under the auspices of the Disaster Research Project of the National Opinion Research Center.<sup>27</sup> And this 1950–1954 study also spent substantial ink on issues of transcription, weighing the significant costs of time and expense against equally significant gains. Though Boder did initiate contact with the Disaster Research Project, and though the project shares key features with Boder's, his DP interviews (the European interviews or the later 1951 interviews with Kansas City flood victims) are curiously not referred to.

#### THE WONDER OF THEIR OWN VOICES: THE DPs' RESPONSE

However readily available in America by the time Boder's journey was underway, the wire recorder (or, indeed, any portable recording apparatus) was a novelty for many DPs. As Boder recalls,

I would [first] meet a colony of DP's [sic] in a particular shelter house for lunch or dinner. After the meal I would ask them to sing and, with their knowledge, I recorded the songs. When I played these back, the wonder of hearing their own voices recorded was boundless.<sup>28</sup>

In the DP centers in the summer of 1946, portable machines that could reproduce sound were still mainly a thing of the future. In this light, Boder's interviewees today remember little about their 1946 interviews, but they do recall the recorder, which was the first they ever saw.<sup>29</sup> Yet Boder attributes the wonder as coming from hearing their own voices—a sense perhaps not only of hearing recorded voices in general (and in this case the music that they made) but also hearing "their own voices"—a kind of recognition that, after what they went through, they indeed continued to have a voice.

Strikingly, Boder's example of playing back the recorded voice refers to song (and to what was likely group singing at that) rather than speech. This group singing may have been a way to avoid the common discomfort of first hearing one's voice and not recognizing it as one's own.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the brief snatches of song may have been the only playback heard. Boder may not have played back any portion of the interviews for the DPs while he was based at the shelters. And, unlike today's interview projects that provide the interviewee with a copy of his or her interview,

neither Boder nor the interviewees presumed that the DPs would receive a copy. Indeed, it would have made no sense for Boder to make the offer, for the interviewee would almost certainly not have the means to play it back. Despite the DPs' boundless wonder, the recordings were foremost meant to edify an American audience who, as Boder conveyed to the DPs, knew very little "about the things that happened to you in concentration camps."<sup>31</sup>

This anonymous American audience at times took on a specific identity, for in some cases Boder, learning that a DP's relatives lived either in Chicago or not far away, would promise to visit them and play back the interview for them to hear. The DPs were in turn moved by the prospect of speaking by way of the wire recorder to family members long unseen or spoken to. Max Feuer, for instance, can hardly contain himself when he hears that Boder plans to bring the spool and recorder to his brother in Gary, Indiana:

FEUER: I have two brothers in the States. I am going to my brothers.

BODER: Where are your two brothers?

FEUER: One of my brothers is in Erie, in Pennsylvania.

BODER: Yes.

FEUER: Five hundred, no 23-30 East Avenue.

BODER: Erie, Pennsylvania?

FEUER: Yes.

BODER: And the other?

FEUER: The other one is in Gary, 320...

BODER: Gary, Indiana?

FEUER: Yes.

BODER: Well that's near to me. You want me to call him up?

FEUER: Of course I want you to call him up.

BODER: Sure.

FEUER: Three hundred twenty two... Oh really? He might listen to this.

BODER: Yes.

FEUER: He might hear this?

BODER: Yes.

FEUER: /In ecstasy/ Tell him, he is a little bit ill /??/... tell him I love him very much, and tell him he shall...he shall...here, here /he apparently points to a part of the body/ sick, you know, I want him to be, I want him to be healthy...

BODER: /Both are talking/ Is he married?

FEUER: He is married, he has two children. I did not yet see the children.

BODER: You know what I promise you to do?

FEUER: Ja.

BODER: I take this machine into my car.

FEUER: Ja.

BODER: And I drive out to Gary and /word not clear/ /interviewer is apparently deeply moved/

FEUER: Oh that would be wonderful. Tuen sie es for sure.

verstanden [sic], gut, and Lucy, Doris and Peter this is Onkel Otto.

You do not yet know me, but once you will know me.

BODER: All right, what is the address in Gary?

FEUER: I give you the address: 322 Gary, Ind. Honduras /??/ Street / repetition not clear/

BODER: Vanburen Street? /spool is apparently at an end/ All right that concludes the interview with Mr. Feuer. It is the continuation of spool...spool 64, it was very informal, especially, to give the interviewer a general picture, and Mr. Feuer was very helpful in getting other interviewees. I hope he will be there soon but I think I will call up.../blank on the wire/ in Gary and we will have a good time together. I let them listen to this.../End of spool./<sup>32</sup>

The American audience, foreign, distant, and unknowing, has been given a face. More than that is the possibility of being listened to by those about whom one cares most deeply. As Primo Levi has movingly written, every prisoner in Auschwitz had a reoccurring nightmare that when he had returned to normal life and wished to tell those he loved of the dreadful life endured in the camp, he regrettably would find that no one would listen and, further, that they would even turn away. For Feuer, then, the promise that his family members would indeed listen would have overcome whatever doubts, dream-inspired or otherwise, that might linger.

#### AN ASSORTMENT OF CONVERTERS AND TRANSFORMERS

Boder knew that taking a wire recorder to Europe would in turn mean taking a small recording studio: "My scientific equipment consisted of a model 50 wire recorder, 200 spools of wire, and an assortment of converters and transformers."<sup>33</sup> He must have known as well that ferrying this array of equipment so far from the home country of the manufacturer would leave him vulnerable to breakdown. And sure enough, breakdowns caused delays. A letter dated August 12 from a colleague at the Armour Research Foundation speaks of "working on getting you fuses for your wire recorder" which will be sent "as soon as possible."<sup>34</sup> Indeed, the problem with fuses might explain why Boder had only one day of interviews between August 10 and August 15. Even when the machinery worked well, he still had to plan his schedule around it:

Considering that the recorder, a one-day supply of spools, and necessary accessories amounted to a load of about sixty pounds, my urgent dependence upon transportation by automobile becomes obvious.<sup>35</sup>

Yet whatever the specific difficulties he faced in using the wire recorder in the field, he persisted in making the machine an essential part of his work when he returned. Moreover, Boder doubled his repertoire of wire

recorders in order to carry out the transcription process in the way he thought fitting:

A technique of translation was developed to keep me constantly aware of the moods and emotions of the narrator. The original stories were not transcribed on paper and then translated in the silence of the study. By the use of two Peirce Wire Recorders with stop and start controls I listened on one machine to the original, sentence by sentence, and then dictated the English translations on the other machine. Typists then transcribed the material from the translated recordings.<sup>36</sup>

As Covner was moved to technological innovation to facilitate transcription, so Boder saw the wire recorder's untapped potential when two were used in tandem. Yet the reason he cites for developing this procedure put a psychological spin on the process, that is, the ability to closely monitor "moods and emotions"—the stuff of psychological inquiry. How the second machine facilitates such awareness is not clear; perhaps Boder himself could better reproduce the interview's emotional drama by speaking into a recorder rather than writing it down. If so, such a process testifies to Boder's histrionic powers, reproducing on the second recorder not only his own interview questions and the responses to them, but also the interview's emotional texture. He clearly did not need to go to these lengths. His collaborator in the translation and transcription process, Bernard Wolf, used one machine, listening to the interview in its original tongue and then writing out the English translation. But Boder apparently desired to push the art of transcription to a more refined level.

At some stage, the wire recorder became essential. The 1951 Kansas City interviews with flood victims dramatize Boder's devotion. In this case, Boder and his assistant, Vin Rosenthal, conducted the forty-seven interviews at the Red Cross shelter using a tape recorder, which by 1951 had superseded the wire recorder as America's preferred recording device. Yet having recorded the original interviews on tape, Boder afterward transferred them to wire. Boder's preference for wire may have evolved simply because it was the medium that he knew best and, having invested substantial money in wire recorder equipment, he felt committed to using the machinery he had assembled. Yet Boder may have also believed that wire was more durable than tape, a belief some still subscribed to in the early 1950s.<sup>37</sup>

The importance of the wire recorder's mediating role is further confirmed by two points. First, on the table of contents page of Boder's *Topical Autobiographies*, it is the wire recorder spool number that tracks the sequence of interviews. Not the date but technology displays the progress of Boder's enterprise. Second, as noted previously, Boder first published an interview excerpt under the unassuming title "Spool 169," because the wire recorder spool number apparently best identified the excerpt's significance. The wire recorder clearly held a prominent position in Boder's mind as well as that of his audience.

## BODER'S ORIGINAL WIRE RECORDER SPOOLS

The interview recordings available today derive from the duplicate set that Boder sent to Washington. But the original recordings remained with Boder, at least until his last years. Exactly what happened to the original spools—what Boder did with them, what happened to the spools after his death, whether they exist today, and, if so, where (and in what condition) remains a mystery. But there are clues.

One of these leads to Israel. In the fall of 1958, Boder sought to transfer his project—both the materials he had collected and his plan to complete what had been left unfinished—to Israel, under the auspices of Hebrew University. He and his wife, Dora, who aided him in the project, envisioned at least three months in Jerusalem, overseeing the project's operation in its new surroundings and training the personnel.

The Israel proposal, dated October 16, 1958, is worth summarizing in detail. Under the heading "The Present Proposal," Boder spells out the essential technological components and their destination:

1. Transfer of 200 masterspools of the original interviews to Hebrew University (or jointly with Yad Vashem).
2. Transfer of "200 duplicate spools on stainless steel wire, more suitable for actual transcription work."
3. "Transfer, on conditions of 'indefinite loan,' of two Peirce wire recorders with accessories and attachments necessary for transcription and duplication work."

Under the subsequent heading "Ways and Means," Boder adumbrates his role in helping to make the technology effective:

1. "To supervise the mechanical and magnetic handling of the equipment."
2. "To instruct a sufficient number of individuals (3 to 5 persons) in the technical procedures of transcription and duplication of the recordings."

Finally, under the last subheading, "Financial Arrangement," Boder specifies what it will take to get the equipment to Israel:

3. "Cost of shipment of the equipment, freight and insurance for about 500 lbs."

The daunting "500 lbs." apparently referred not only to the equipment but also to the Boders' personal effects for the three months they planned to spend in Israel. Be that as it may, the poundage shows what Boder had to contend with in terms of handling the equipment. To venture to postwar Europe with a single machine and a set of wire spools was one thing; although not simple, it was manageable, even for a fifty-nine-year-old college professor. To assemble over ten years later

the technology to carry out transcription and duplication was a far more taxing enterprise.

Boder had had previous contact with Israel concerning the interviews. Yad Vashem and the National Library at Hebrew University had already been among the fifty world sites to receive copies of the transcriptions.<sup>38</sup> But establishing Israel as a base of operations would have been a move of a completely different order.

Boder's initiative came at a personal and historical crossroads. America had surely provided him with a comfortable home, funding, affiliation, advocacy, students, and coworkers. All of this helped Boder get as far with the project as he had. But the main source of support, the grants from the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), had, after nearly a decade, come to an end.<sup>39</sup> To be based in Israel would not only enable him to complete the project. It would also allow him to carry out the remaining work according to his original mandate, including transcribing the interviews in their original languages.<sup>40</sup> Having settled for a translator's English to carry the weight of multiple languages, Boder envisioned companion volumes of transcribed testimony that would document "the evidence of trauma" with the nuance and subtlety that he had hoped for.

Being in Israel would also more fully reveal his project's Jewish cast: as Boder wrote to the then-president of the state, Yitzhak ben-Zvi, the interviews comprised "a body of material representing an important heritage of our People." Finding a home it had previously lacked, *Topical Autobiographies* would nevertheless, as Boder took pains to make clear, retain its claim upon "mankind." The particularity of Jewish heritage would not compromise the universality of significance. To locate the project in Israel "in no way implies," he spells out in the proposal, the material's "exclusive or specific significance solely for the Jewish people." The interviews should be—and here he quotes Gordon Allport's approbation—"the required reading of mankind."<sup>41</sup>

Boder had sent the proposal to six addresses and heard back from at least three.<sup>42</sup> Each response forthrightly spoke to the importance of Boder's work. It was agreed that Yad Vashem was the place to house the materials. The responses were sent out from Israel between November and January, the last being Hebrew University president Benjamin Mazar's letter posted the first week in January. It was here that Boder was told explicitly that Hebrew University would be glad to provide assistance, but that "the task should be entrusted to Yad Vashem."<sup>43</sup> The (unnamed) chairman of Yad Vashem would be in touch with Boder to let him know "directly their decision."

In the weeks that followed, Boder must have been anxiously awaiting the direct correspondence from Yad Vashem that had been promised. The letters from the Hebrew University contacts had been positive and hopeful. But switching the address to Yad Vashem, though clearly

appropriate in terms of a repository for his project, put him in the domain of an institution where he had no personal connections and where he was unclear regarding his own academic standing. He had contemplated Hebrew University as a base of operations because he could there continue to carry on the work of an academic psychologist while at the same time supervising his project. The case however was clearly not closed. To give Yad Vashem the primary role still left the possibility that Hebrew University might serve in a secondary capacity as a partner, offering the academic base and credential he desired.

The response from Yad Vashem, penned by the director general of the institution, Dutch historian Joseph Melkman, came some two months later in March 1959.<sup>44</sup> Having been alerted to Boder's wish to send the materials to Israel, Melkman states unequivocally just how important such a collection is:

Our institution is very interested in the original interviews, which are regarded by all experts as one of the most important contributions to the history of the Nazi persecutions.

Melkman's generous appraisal may have been one of the strongest affirmations of the project's significance that Boder had ever received. His wording left no doubt that the material over which Boder had labored was held in the highest respect by those who mattered. For this judgment to be rendered nearly fifteen years after the end of the war, when study of the period had already developed far beyond what it was when he undertook his trip to Europe, gave an even sharper sense of vindication. This estimation of importance, moreover, came from the director of the institution that was best able to weigh the nature of such a contribution. This was exactly the shot in the arm that Boder had sought when he conceived the idea of moving the project abroad.

Yet as the letter went on, it was clear that, despite the prize that Boder was willing to place at their disposal, Yad Vashem could actually do little of what Boder asked. For one thing, Yad Vashem was (at that time) not a teaching institution, so that it had no rubric under which it could offer the courses Boder had proposed. This may well have been why Boder had turned to Hebrew University in the first place and had envisioned a partnership between the two institutions. But the letter shut that door as well, relaying that the psychology department at Hebrew University had in fact been consulted and was unable to come through because it was "young and limited in its means." There was therefore no real academic appointment to be had. But closing off this option was probably not such a blow. Boder had after all formally retired from a teaching position seven years previously and, in a research position, had used the opportunity to devote himself to preparing the transcriptions and carrying out the analysis of them. To be sure, he had pursued this course within the environs of a university and

had drawn on its students to help him. But the prospect of having to make do solely with a research position would not have been so hard for him to bear.

Yet the offer of even a research position was not forthcoming, the director explaining to Boder that Yad Vashem, like Hebrew University, suffered from limited means:

Unfortunately, we are handicapped by financial limitations, and we cannot afford to invite you and your wife and to pay the four month's [sic] compensation you asked for.

What Boder had proposed could not be materially supported, at least not in the fashion he had envisioned. Boder had turned to the Israeli institutions as the natural setting for the project's fulfillment, which would necessarily take place under his practiced eye. The proposal was in that sense a package deal, combining a transfer of a precious commodity together with the skill required to have it perform at full capacity. But the terms he set out could not be met.

Melkman was himself aware that rejecting part of the proposal might jeopardize the whole. "I don't know," wrote Melkman a few lines before he got down to telling Boder that no financial support was available, "if in these circumstances you will be prepared to hand over material to our institution." The news was not good and the wholesale rejection of Boder's proposal could likely have put a damper on the association. And yet even after having been the bearer of unglad tidings, Melkman was willing, in the concluding sentence of the letter, to bring up the possibility that the recordings (with the likely inclusion of the original spools) might without Boder's escort find their way to Yad Vashem: "it is needless to say that our institution would be glad to receive the interviews."

In a way, this letter was probably as hard for Melkman to write as it was for Boder to read. It was difficult on his part to know how aware Boder was of Israel's financial hardship. Whatever Boder's awareness of the limitations, Melkman was in any case still asking him to change the proposal's essential conditions, framing the deposit of the interviews at Yad Vashem in terms of a gift rather than a collaborative venture.

A year and a half later, however, Boder had not given up on Israel and was still intent on sending the material. He had moreover sought to ship to Israel the equipment—the Peirce wire recorders—that he had used in transcribing the interviews. Working on Boder's behalf, P. S. Shurrager, chair of the Psychology Department at IIT, posted a memorandum on June 15, 1961, to the institution's president under the subject heading "Disposition of Obsolete Peirce Wire Recorders."<sup>45</sup> He explains, "Dr. Boder asks that we transfer to him for shipment to Israel two or three of the Peirce Wire Recorders that he used while he was here at IIT." Shurrager summarizes the nature of Boder's project and states that Boder "plans to send the carbon wire originals to either the [Hebrew] University or [the Yad Vashem] Archives of Israel, to be preserved and

transcribed there." Shurrager was partially correct in his synopsis: Boder had indeed planned to send the original spools to "be preserved" in an Israeli venue. But the original spools would not, however, be used in the transcription process. As Boder had detailed in his proposal, the carbon wire originals were not viable for transcription work, for they "would not be able to withstand the rugged treatment required by the repeated back and forth running involved in the translation and editorial work." Boder had hence many years before duplicated the recordings onto harder stainless steel wire recording spools, the spools that would presumably be used for the transcription of the original interview language materials. Shurrager's error was only one in terms of process and procedure; the original spools were clearly meant to be included in the shipment.

Shurrager made the case open and shut. The recorders were obsolete, were apparently not any longer in use, and had been superseded in the department repertoire by an Ampex tape recorder. The gesture would cost IIT "nothing" and gain on its behalf "a small contribution toward preserving for history important records which, without Dr. Boder's work, would have been lost." The spirit of preservation that Boder himself had appealed to at the time of the interviews and that the NIMH had promoted in its recommendations regarding the priorities of the project appears again in Shurrager's heartfelt petition.

According to a second memorandum, his argument was convincing, his recommendation was quickly acted on, and Boder was "presented" with the equipment. An IIT Psychology Department annual report for the 1960–1961 academic year notes the event:

At the request of Dr. David Boder, Professor Emeritus of IIT and Research Associate in Psychology at the University of California in Berkeley, and with the permission of President Rettaliata, five Peirce wire recorders carried on the inventory of the Psychology Department were presented to Dr. Boder, to be transmitted by him to some appropriate institution in Israel. They are to be used in transcribing and translating the stories of displaced persons which Dr. Boder recorded verbatim in Europe in 1946.<sup>46</sup>

The report is more cut and dried than was Shurrager's historically grounded petition. It mistakes Boder's current affiliation (Berkeley rather than UCLA), and it leads one to wonder about the logical sequence of "transcribing and translating." But the gist of the note is in sync with Shurrager's request.

Obtaining the necessary clearance to receive the recorders that had launched his transcription work, Boder was ostensibly in a position to carry out his wishes and ship the machinery to Israel. Yet this is where the trail nearly ends. Despite the authorization, it is not known what happened to the equipment, both the obsolete recorders that were to have been sent to Boder and the original wire recorder spools that he had hoped would end up in Israel. Boder's death late in 1961 may have meant that he never sent the equipment to Israel after all.

Yet the fate of spools and recorders is anything but clear. In the early 1970s, Boder's translator, Bernard Wolf, visited Yad Vashem, and, when he spoke of his association with Boder, was asked to show Yad Vashem personnel how to operate wire recorders that they had supposedly received from Boder.<sup>47</sup> Yad Vashem, however, has no record of receiving the equipment nor do its archives today hold either the wire recorders or the spools. There has been speculation that one or another of the archives that house Boder's papers possesses the original carbon wire recordings, but this in fact does not seem to be the case. The single set of spools that survives was a copy sent by Boder in late 1950 to the NIMH library. There was, however, no library to receive the eight boxes of spools and, in the first of many misadventures, they were diverted to the Library of Congress. The saga of this errant yet precious set of recordings deserves its own telling.

#### BY DEFAULT: THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library of Congress (LOC) has played a crucial, if circuitous, role in the preservation of Boder's interviews, serving as the sole repository for Boder's wire recordings. Indeed, it is because the LOC received, stored, and eventually transferred the wire recordings to tape that they can be listened to today at several locations, including the LOC.<sup>48</sup> Yet the LOC's leading role was played by default. It had never solicited the recordings, nor was it meant to receive them. Once the recordings arrived, they apparently remained sealed in their boxes. For many years, the wires, as they were called, were an unknown quantity. When it became recognized that they might contain unusual and valuable material, decades passed before that material—the DPs' audio testimony—could be rendered accessible. What took Boder a little over two months to record took nearly thirty-five years to be played back.

The story begins with the National Advisory Mental Health Council's (NAMHC) June 1948 recommendation that Boder include duplication of the original wire recordings as a facet of his project. Boder had applied in 1948 to receive a grant to process the wire recordings. Judging the application, the council felt it to be valuable but also decided that a piece was missing. Lawrence Kolb, research projects director of the Mental Health Division of the Public Health Institute, wrote to Boder that the council

Wished to know whether you would be willing to modify your project to the extent that you make copies of the unedited wire recordings, as well as microfilm copies of the translations in order that these copies be deposited with the Public Health Service and preserved in the library of the soon to be constructed National Institute of Mental Health for the use of other research workers.<sup>49</sup>

Recognizing that copying the wire recorder spools would entail a substantial expense, the council offered \$1,500 to cover the additional equipment and labor.

Although the NAMHC's recommendation proposed only a minor modification, it created an afterlife for Boder's project, envisioning a future community interested and capable of "using" the material. Kolb's wording of the council's recommendation is important to note. Explicitly requesting copies of the unedited recordings emphasizes the desire for raw material, as if such explication was necessary in the wake of previous projects where the material was quickly and irrevocably edited. The council wanted what came straight from the trenches. The council's request also underscores the value of Boder's interviewing in its own right: the interviews themselves, without any tampering or commentary, were worth investing in. Furthermore, to conceive of copying as a crucial element of the project casts Boder into the role of a midwife, one who transforms the private collection of interviews into that which belongs to the public domain.

Boder responded to Kolb on June 16 and declared his emphatic approval of duplication: "I wish to state that I am completely in accord with the proposal."<sup>50</sup> To demonstrate just how much in accord he was, Boder urged speed: "I think it highly important that a set of duplicates of the original wire recordings be made as soon as possible." He goes on to speak of ways to "expedite the duplicating task," proposing to redistribute the grant money to purchase another wire recorder. In hindsight, the council's recommendation made him realize both the extraordinary value and utter fragility of what he had thus far accomplished. The seemingly pedestrian task of duplication would be the next step toward the project's true realization. Boder, moreover, takes even further than the council itself the essential relation between duplication, preservation, and a future community of researchers. Reiterating the council's desire to have the material preserved for later use, Boder bends their recommendation to fit his original intention: "It was the primary purpose of my original expedition [to the DP camps], to first of all collect and preserve the material for future use of any scientist." Having carried out the project thus far mainly as an individual, Boder clarifies that he had always envisioned it as a community endeavor.

Yet even this declaration receives further emphasis: "It is obvious (and I have stated so in the original proposal) that the interpretation of these interviews is not the job of one man." However obvious it might have been, Boder felt called upon to make his individual ownership of the interviews and especially of their significance provisional. Indeed, Boder may have taken the council's call for duplication as a challenge to his ownership of them. If so, he may have been right. Yet the nature of the project—its size, diversity, and interdisciplinarity—obviously shows that it could not fall under the domain of any one scholar.

Within the next two years, Boder fulfilled his commitment, sending eight boxes of duplicated wire recorder spools on December 5, 1950, to the NIMH Library.<sup>51</sup> This was the destination that Laurence Kolb had specified in his letter; Boder followed his instructions to a tee. The initial problem arose because the newly created NIMH still had no facility in existence to house the spools. Updated information proposing an alternative venue evidently never reached Boder. In any case, with no NIMH library at hand, the spools were shunted to a site that, at least on the surface, did not exactly seem the most appropriate: the Music Division of the "M/B/RS Division" (Motion Picture, Broadcasting, Radio and Sound) of the Library of Congress.

Beneath the surface, however, there was some rhyme and reason. Though it did not feature material entirely similar to Boder's, the Music Division was not an absurd collection in which to, at least temporarily, store the spools. In addition to the music collection, the division archived other recorded sound, including World War II wire recorder interviews, some of which went under the title, "Marine Corps Combat Recordings." Recorded on site at Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima, the Marines who were interviewed recount the battles they have just taken part in.<sup>52</sup> These interviews were of course different in kind and spirit from Boder's; the interviewees were American and the recordings were made to help the war effort. Yet, at least for archival purposes, the similarities outweighed the differences.

At some point Boder was made aware that the spools had not ended up where he thought they would. But he would likely not have been disturbed that it was the LOC that had taken them in. He had sent the LOC copies of his transcriptions as they came out from 1950 onward both in bound hard copies and in microfiche cards. Ideally, the recording would complement the other materials. Yet it is not clear that the nomadic wire spools were ever used by the other researchers that Boder and the council had wished. And, most crucially, the interview transcription and the recordings seem to have gone their separate ways.

#### UNLIKE ANY I HAD SEEN

Yet the recordings were eventually brought into circulation. The key figure in carrying out this task is John Howell, who for nearly a half century served as a technical projects engineer and preservation specialist at the LOC. It is he who had the technical expertise, curiosity, and sense of responsibility to see the project through. It is also his June 1995 written account of the process (there is, ironically, no oral history interview with John Howell) that fills some of the gaps and engenders some of its own.<sup>53</sup>

Howell dates his awareness of the recordings to about a decade after the spools arrived at the LOC: "In the early 1960s," begins Howell's memorandum, "I had noticed these wire recordings in the collections

of the Music Division. These 4" wires were unlike any I had seen." The fact that they were wire recordings did not faze him, likely because the division's holdings included many other wire recordings and because wire recordings, although no longer the preferred magnetic recording medium, continued to be a normal sight, at least at sound archives. What did bother Howell was that these particular spools were "unlike any I had seen." He set about acquiring a "playback machine" that could accommodate the unusual wire spools. Howell's memo hints at but does not spell out that the Music Division was well stocked with wire recorders in the 1950s and likely into the 1960s. Indeed, the stock was plentiful enough that the division fielded regular requests to loan the equipment to other institutions, including the Smithsonian, universities, and archives.<sup>54</sup> Howell's search for playback equipment came rather because the wire recorder spools he noticed—Boder's interviews—were too "unlike" to be used on the machines available.

This search for the suitable machine has an irony of its own in terms of Boder's project. Boder's proximity to state-of-the-art equipment had made it (almost) natural to think of bringing the wire recorder to Europe—something that, however natural it seemed, no one else accomplished in the same manner. But Boder's work with the Peirce Model 50 machines also took him out of the loop of recording equipment that remained in common use.<sup>55</sup>

The search apparently went on forever: "Finally," notes Howell, "about 20 years later, I located the correct equipment." It is not clear why it took twenty years. This gap of time would date the acquisition of the proper equipment to the early 1980s. It is most likely that the process of transferring the wires did not begin until well into the 1990s.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps the twenty years referred not to a period in which Howell actively searched for the "correct equipment," but rather to a stretch of time consumed with other demands that made it impossible for him to pursue a task the outcome of which was so vague. While we have no reason to doubt Howell's account, the chronology seems strangely counterintuitive: finding the equipment would grow not less but more difficult as time went on and the wire recorders became yet more antiquated. Once Howell had found the equipment, he had to "recondition" it, a technical achievement that took him "some 300 hours." His "Interim Report," as he called the memorandum, goes on to speak of funding, technical assistance, and the content of "the Wires," and concludes with "Recommendations"—a section addressing the "halfway juncture" of transferring the wire spools to tape and outlining what would need to be done to complete the process. Except for the beginning and ending dates and the twenty-year period that elapses in search of equipment, the report does not mark time. The nearly thirty-five years from Howell's crucial discovery of the spools until the halfway juncture lacks a calendar.

Several other points in and about the report illuminate aspects of the recovery process. When he first came upon the wires, "unlike any [he]

had seen," Howell went to a colleague for help in trying to determine what he had found:

In seeking more information I queried Mr. Edward N. Waters, then Assistant Chief of the Music Division. Mr. Waters said he believed these were "recordings of displaced people of World War Two who had psychological problems."

Howell's record of the conversation conveys a fairly reliable tradition passed down as to what the spools contained, even though the information was sketchy. Indeed, what came to the LOC along with the content of the spools was a remnant of the history of Boder's original shipment, destined for NIMH and labeled as such on the shipping envelopes. From the spools' NIMH destination to Waters's attribution of "psychological problems" to the displaced people was not a big step. Waters' diagnostic words were authoritative enough to have them quoted. But Howell did not rely on them: "I gradually became convinced," he writes, "these [spools] were recordings of prison camp survivors, and I had the wires transferred to the Recording Laboratory."

Howell does not spell out what caused him over time to deviate from Waters's assessment. The report nevertheless presumes a difference in significance between Waters's and Howell's terminology, between "displaced people" and "prison camp survivors." By this time, the term "displaced people" had apparently lost its novelty or urgency; in contrast, "prison camp survivors" had something of both. In this light, Howell's redefining of the spools' contents led him to take the step of moving them to a place where they could be worked with. Whatever the importance of the "prison camp survivors" for galvanizing Howell's interest, the title of his account—"Interim Report on World War Two Wire Recording Project"—maintains a strangely neutral air, faithful neither to Waters's phrasing nor to his own.

Howell's title is important in another way. Neutral to a point of overgenerality, the title makes no reference to David Boder. More noteworthy is the fact that Boder's name appears nowhere in the report proper, where he is referred to simply as "the interviewer": "At some point," notes Howell in the section "Additional Information and Project Adjustment," "the interviewer mentioned he was forced to use the 50 cycle current at the recording site (U.S. current is 60 cycle) and he intended to rerecord the spools when he returned (to the U.S.)."

Boder is explicitly named as the "investigator/interviewer" only at the top of Howell's three-page sample transcription of the Nelly Bundy interview that he appended to his report.<sup>57</sup> The transcription has but this single reference to Boder. Even Boder's questions to Bundy are deleted in favor of a narrative in Bundy's voice or third-person narration. More surprising, perhaps, is the fact that Howell felt obliged to make a transcription of his own: "I have transcribed one of the English interviews (Spool NO. 9-60—Mrs. Bondy)," notes Howell responsibly,

"in order to provide an example of the type of information contained on the recordings."

That Howell labored over his own transcription shows him to be unaware that Boder had already transcribed it and dozens of others. Yet this is in the spirit of Howell's memorandum, which implied that Boder's role was incidental to the interviews and to the collection as a whole. This estimation might explain why neither Howell nor his colleagues thought to cross-check Boder's name in the LOC catalog, under which they would have found his 1949 book, the microfiche cards of interview transcriptions, and even the mimeographed sixteen-volume transcription collection itself.<sup>58</sup> Both the microfiche and mimeograph versions contained, in volume 9 of series 3, Boder's verbatim transcription of Nelly Bundy's interview. Unaware that the LOC housed such complementary materials under the same roof, the cadre of Motion Picture and Sound Division workers responsible for making the recordings viable never saw any of Boder's voluminous written materials. For them, the only thing that mattered was to free the voices trapped within (not behind) coils of wire.

#### BODER'S FILMS

Having conceived of his wire recordings as redressing the lack of an aural chronicle of the DPs (to make up for the "meagerness of first-hand auditory material"), Boder did not neglect the visual. Two reels of film footage from the 1946 European expedition, shot with a 16 mm home movie camera, are archived among Boder's materials and complement his recordings.

There are two segments. The first leads off with a group of children dancing, led by young women in a circle. The name "Henonville" then appears on a sign; it is the only site that the film identifies. Henonville was the DP center outside of Paris inhabited by a Hasidic community, which was also sharing the site with the remnants of a Lithuanian yeshiva. Apropos of such a setting, Boder's camera focuses on a religious Jewish man, perhaps thirty-five, dressed in black with a black hat, holding a religious book, surrounded by young men in their late teens or twenties who are wearing caps.

The second reel begins with the most evocative shot: an Israeli flag hovers above and in front of what appears to be a church steeple, as if the camera shares the young DPs' hope to leave behind Europe (as represented here by the steeple) and move on to a Jewish homeland (as represented by the Israeli flag). The camera then cuts to young people on parklike grounds dotted with trees surrounding older chateau-like buildings. While most of this segment, like the first, is dedicated to the expression of life found in the DP centers (dance, learning, conviviality, and above all children), the latter part of the second reel

shows shot after shot of flooded streets and destroyed buildings, scenes that remind one of the Europe that still lay in ruins outside the DP centers.

Yet the scenes of cities laid waste are not what one would think. Uncannily, they are not Europe but rather, as the English-language signs alert one, America. Strangely juxtaposed to 1946 footage of DP centers is 1951 footage of Kansas City overwhelmed by floodwaters. These latter scenes must have been taken when Boder traveled to Kansas City to interview residents displaced from their homes by the massive flood. The film segments dramatize how vast was the destruction of property and how thoroughly immobilized the city was. But alongside this the film presents Boder's two major postwar projects, taking place five years apart on different continents, as a single celluloid unit. In truth, this continuity between the two kinds of DPs, the first European, the second American, was not far from the comparative analysis between victims of "man-made disaster" and victims of "natural disaster" that Boder hoped to carry out but never seemingly got under way. As it stands, the film performs a sleight of hand, collapsing the temporal and spatial boundaries between the two kinds of disaster and creating the illusion that they are one. In this way, Boder's visual legacy runs counter to the analytic distinctions he wished to emphasize.

In contrast to his active deployment of the recordings and transcriptions, Boder appears not to have made use of the film that he took during his 1946 journey. Perhaps the silent footage was in essence too much like the "abundance of visual material"—the newsreels circulating in the movie theaters—that Boder was trying to supplement. Or perhaps his work on the audio was simply too consuming to think about how the visual documents might play a role in the overall project.

#### FILTERED FROM DOCUMENTS: THE WIRE RECORDER AND JOHN HERSEY'S *THE WALL*

In spite of the brevity of the wire recorder's career, it figured centrally in another early postwar Holocaust project: the epic novel *The Wall*, written by the eminent man of letters John Hersey. Like Boder, Hersey used the wire recorder to test and stretch the boundaries of language. Yet if for Boder the wire recorder aided in a quest for verisimilitude, in the case of Hersey it helped to liberate him from it.

Hersey had already made a name for himself as a novelist and journalist by the late 1940s. Based in Moscow at the end of the war, Hersey had in the spring of 1945 visited several sites of concentration camps and the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto (which he later referred to as "a Sahara of downcast bricks"). Having decided to write a book on the ghetto, Hersey was eager to proceed but nonetheless daunted by the question of languages: "Soon I found that there was a tremendous amount of material

about Warsaw and other ghettos written in Polish and Yiddish [...]—all sorts of testimony. None of this had been published in English, and it appeared that little of it would be.”<sup>59</sup>

Faced with this impasse, Hersey took some unusual steps. First, he hired two researchers—Lucy Dawidowicz, who would later become a noted historian, and Marc Nowogrodski, Polish Jewish survivor—who, in addition to their skill in dealing with historical materials, could translate Yiddish and Polish into English.<sup>60</sup> But this was only the beginning. Hersey hit upon the idea of having Dawidowicz and Nowogrodski dictate their translation into a wire recorder—the same kind of machine that gave Boder the inspiration to record the testimony of the DPs and that he used to dictate his translation of their accounts. For Hersey, however, the wire recordings were not meant to result in verbatim transcription in the original languages; it was not exact reproduction that he was after. This is how Hersey recollected the process a few years later:

In the end we [Hersey and his translators] stumbled on a wire-recorder, and found that both the translators were so deftly bi-lingual that they could read directly from the foreign text onto the machine in rapid—and, I can tell you, intensely moving—English.<sup>61</sup>

To be sure, it is because the translators are between linguistic worlds—are “so ‘deftly bi-lingual’”—that such a project can be carried out. But, as Hersey emphasizes, it is also the effect of their wire recorder reading—their dramatization of the texts—that proves most helpful to the project of translation. The dramatization renders the “foreign text” into an idiom that can be listened to. This recording and listening process, as Hersey explains, goes a long way toward telling the story that he himself wants to:

For weeks, for months on end, I heard those two people tell me about the ghetto. And because they skipped, and summarized, and retold, and dropped in interjections, what they told me was filtered away from the documents. They were the storytellers. It cost me very little in the way of fantasy to seem to experience the astounding story they passed on.<sup>62</sup>

For Hersey, documents are inert, unyielding. The dramatized reading that he listens to overcomes the inertia of the document. Strikingly, listening to Dawidowicz and Nowogrodski serves, in Hersey’s evocative phrase, as a “filter,” a device that takes away whatever it is in the document that blocks apprehension. Hence, together with translating the material into English, the medium of sound recording translates the Warsaw Ghetto events into something truly accessible. Translation is not only the rendering of something from one language into another (if it is ever only that); translation is dramatization, the capacity to imagine, the ability to compose a narrative, and, fundamentally, the movement from eye to ear.

Why was this technique fortunate? When it came time for me to absorb the material, I did not see it as documentary matter, which I would have retained by visual memories; instead, I heard it as felt experience.<sup>63</sup>

In a formulation reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's, Hersey positions himself as one who receives a story steeped in experience. To be sure, Hersey always maintains a sense of what he is doing as tertiary, as being at a remove. But what began as a problem of access—"none of this had been published in English"—becomes a "fortunate" (and crucial) step to storytelling.

The technique may have shaped what became the final version of Hersey's novel. After writing over a thousand pages of handwritten text told from the point of view of a third-person narrator, Hersey jettisoned the manuscript and began again, this time featuring a first-person dramatic narrator who "listened" to what he was told by friends and acquaintances in the ghetto and thereafter set down these remarks in a journal, which in turn became the text of *The Wall*. A story worth reading, in other words, is one that is first listened to, whether by Hersey or by his narrator.

Yet Hersey and Boder's use of the wire recorder to chronicle the Holocaust represents two diametrically opposite approaches. Boder's turn to the wire recorder suggests an understandable craving for facticity, for eclipsing the distance between those who were there and those who were not, for acting as if there is no difference between Europe and America. Hersey's stumbling onto the wire recorder, in contrast, implies the danger of being immobilized by facts, of being overwhelmed by documents of carnage. His approach posits a need for distance, for leverage, for the listening ear to gain release for the bewildered eye, for imaginative freedom to have its day.

One is tempted to see in this recourse to the wire recorder a parable for early Holocaust writing and American life. The most common problem reported by those using the machine was that the spool containing the wire would fall to floor and unravel, leaving the wire a tangled mess. Frequently it was impossible to disentangle it. In such cases, the recorded material was lost. Boder and Hersey, whatever their differences, shared the fact that the wire recorder, doomed to a brief career and technological obsolescence, became the means to untangle the stories that they felt worth recounting, especially in America.

Although never explicit in Boder's work, there is poetic justice in having the wire recorder be the means of preserving the story of those whose recent past was spent behind barbed wire. The resonance between one kind of wire and another becomes stronger when we recall that the recording spools were referred to as "the wires."<sup>64</sup> The echo in Boder's work comes most forcefully in the dust jacket of *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, which features the curved hand of a prisoner clutching the barbed wire criss-crossing the page. The motif of the wire also continues beneath the surface; my own copy of Boder's book, lacking the dust jacket, has its gray

hard cover imprinted with strands of black barbed wire, which serve as the cover's only design. Boder's book typified a period when the motif of barbed wire was one of the most popular to symbolize the concentration camps' evil. But in Boder's work the motif had an added dimension. Through the technology of the wire recorder, evil is turned against itself.

That Boder's wire recorder project was so bound to state-of-the-art technology was its blessing and its curse. The wire recorder clearly equipped him to carry out and preserve the interviews. And yet the rapid transformation of recording technology soon made it difficult to accommodate his work. The fate of Boder's recordings is thus symptomatic of the fate of audio recording of testimony in general. But the history of Boder's project presents another complicating twist. Though the turn to video generally eclipsed audio interviews, it also stimulated an interest that, in Boder's case, led to their recovery. The historic value of Boder's recordings gave them an unusual opportunity for a second life.

Recovery was, however, selective. Boder's written work lived a life separate from the recordings that gave birth to them. Chronicling the history of the Boder materials dramatizes how archival divisions splintered unified work into discrete components. Scholarship has likewise followed the shifting winds of technology; what is current is what defines the field. The case of the Boder interviews argues the need to retain a knowledge of origins and of evolution as a means to define what is significant. Otherwise, the wonder of their voices may never be heard.

# Chapter 6

## *Making a Study of These Things*

### BODER'S INTERVIEWS IN THE CONTEXT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Boder's students have said that he was a walking history of psychology.<sup>1</sup> He had, after all, studied with those, including Wundt and Bekhterev, whom the psychology textbooks wrote about.<sup>2</sup> But more than that, Boder had embraced psychology as a vocation. It was thus naturally from the discipline of psychology that Boder took the categories that he used to approach the interview project.

This is clear from his professional writing in the aftermath of the European expedition. His major published study to draw on the interviews, "The Impact of Catastrophe," used terms and methods that only a trained psychologist could decipher. His second major study of the interviews, the unpublished essay "The Tale of Anna Kovitzka: A Logico-Systematic Analysis or an Essay in Experimental Reading," was also unabashedly psychological in its orientation, even though in a way hugely different from that of the published study. Indeed, Boder's postinterview writing brought current psychological concerns to bear on the material he had gathered.

There are some facets of his relation to psychology that, though intriguing, carry little overall significance. For instance, he relates that, as is "customary in psychological interviews," he sat "behind the person" during the interview—a statement that has been challenged both in the reminiscences of interviewees and by scholars.<sup>3</sup> There are other facets of the project—the "nondirective" interview method, for instance—that have been taken in a casual rather technical sense and thereby miss the historically charged debate that was occurring at exactly the time Boder journeyed to Europe. Such a term reveals much about Boder's relation to the psychological interview strategy provocatively current at the time. American psychologist Carl Rogers, who had used phonograph recording in his pathbreaking studies and written affirmatively of the results, had also in the early 1940s introduced the term *nondirective* to revise the directive technique of previous psychological interviews.<sup>4</sup> In the directive approach, the interviewer defines the issue at hand, supplies information, does a substantial amount of talking, and takes ultimate responsibility for the direction the interview takes. However, this approach, according

to Rogers, introduces bias, can make the interviewee defensive, and limits the accuracy and depth of explanation. The nondirective interviewer endeavors to do the reverse, intervening as little as possible and interposing “none of [the interviewer’s] own opinions, diagnoses, evaluations, or suggestions.” By simply clarifying and mirroring the attitudes expressed by the interviewee, the interviewer withholds bias, creates a feeling of real understanding, and obtains “a far more reliable account of the motivating attitudes and dynamics of behavior.”<sup>5</sup> Rogers believed nondirective interviewing could serve especially well psychological research into personality and anthropological fieldwork—the two areas that overlapped in Boder’s DP interview project.

Boder clearly saw himself as drawing on Rogers’s protocol, even if Boder’s interview style often seems pointedly directive.<sup>6</sup> The terms “directive” and “nondirective,” moreover, help chart the evolution of Boder’s approach toward the interviews over the course of the summer of 1946. As we know, he did not conduct the interviews according to a fixed protocol but rather “experimented” with a variety of approaches. Boder was explicit about the evolution of technique:

I want to state that since spool about #100 we have replaced the “absolutely” non-directive interview by slightly directive /methods/. That is, we are suggesting that they are talking /should talk/ about the high points of their experiences. This is, of course, not exactly the best method because it has shown that if one gives them perfectly free reign, the...certain experiences come out very freely. It is kind of a mixture /of methods/, and we are experimenting with it.<sup>7</sup>

Boder eventually characterized this hybrid form of interviewing as “semi-non-directive”—a term that maintains his allegiance to Rogers’s technique while taking account of Boder’s regular (and, at times, forceful) directive interventions.<sup>8</sup>

Four other aspects of Boder’s interview project, I believe, can especially illuminate its relation to then-current psychological contexts, and thus deserve fuller consideration: the support of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH); the investigation of trauma; the use and abandonment of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT); and the notion of the “personal document.”

The importance of psychology to the interview project (and of the interview project to psychology) was tangibly appreciated at the time. Boder’s research was funded by an institution established in the postwar years, NIMH, that reshaped American psychology. Boder turned to this new institution to solicit support for processing the interviews and for nine years was furthered in his work by NIMH grants. The emerging context of “mental health” research not only supported but molded the nature of Boder’s work. This mental health context needs to be spelled out.

In the last two decades, trauma has emerged as the concept thought best to reflect Holocaust victims’ devastating experience. The notion of

trauma particularly attempts to account for ongoing psychopathology in the aftermath of the war, a syndrome often experienced many years later and sometimes believed to be transmitted to succeeding generations. Boder was among the earliest to apply the notion of trauma to Holocaust victims and to civilian victims of World War II more generally. Indeed, the term became increasingly important to him as he tried to grapple with how to characterize with scientific rigor what he heard about in the DP interviews. Earlier study of trauma in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century had been dominated by psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. Boder's view of trauma is strikingly different from both as well as from the one that has come to the fore in recent years.

Boder dealt with trauma in relation to the Holocaust on several levels: as a way to codify the entire range and intensity of victimization; as a means to include suffering experienced both directly and indirectly; and, most provocatively, as a standard by which to differentiate between the kinds of suffering inflicted upon various groups, particularly Jews and non-Jews. As we will see, the term also served as another path by which to negotiate the troubling status of the bystander. Finally, it is in relation to trauma that Boder developed the term he believed most suitable for characterizing the vast psychological implications of the Holocaust: "deculturation."

Another psychological technique, the TAT, offers a multileveled view of Boder's adaptation of clinical practices. Boder used the TAT consistently in many early interviews, only to abandon it a week into the trip. Again, to take account of Boder's flirtation with the TAT works several ways in a study such as mine. Boder's insertion of the TAT images into the DP interviews most conspicuously demonstrated his role as a psychologist; it was not for nothing that he had to explain to the DPs whom he interviewed why he was showing them cards with pictures. Yet his abandonment of the TAT and his later comments regarding it are useful for grasping Boder's evolving idea of the interview project, weaning us once more from a notion that it was a static enterprise and further dramatizing Boder's shifting notion of the proper protocol. Curtailed though its use was, the TAT, as we shall see, elicited from the DPs a range of evocative responses that, despite Boder's seeming dissatisfaction, deserve careful appreciation.

Finally, there are conceptual underpinnings to his project. The notion of the "personal document"—the report of an individual on his or her own experience—is basic to the time and place of Boder's life and work. Indeed, from the 1920s on, Chicago was a center for the study of the personal document in the social sciences. As we will see, Boder regularly made explicit his debt to this movement in connection with the interview project. Indeed, the debt was immense. If not for the notion of the personal document, Boder might never have launched his expedition. Yet Boder in turn repaid the debt. His interview project presents the history of the personal document in America in a new light. In his

hands, the personal document reaches beyond itself to assume the form of testimony. It is to these conceptual underpinnings that we first turn to gain an appreciation of the interviews in the context of psychology.

### USING PERSONAL DOCUMENTS

Boder situated his project in a direct line of personal document studies, what he called "the high points in the history of the biographical approach to the understanding of behavior within the frame work of scientific research."<sup>9</sup> First on his "high points" list was Thomas and Znanieki's massive study, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. Published in 1918–1920, its influence was still felt in the American social sciences decades after. Researched and written at a time when Eastern European immigration to America continued at a feverish pace, *The Polish Peasant* examined the upheaval of traditional peasant values brought about by immigration to the New World: "I decided to study an immigrant group in Europe and America," wrote Thomas, "to determine as far as possible what relation their home mores and norms had to their adjustment and maladjustment in America."<sup>10</sup> Certainly the issues of adjustment and maladjustment were germane to Boder's enterprise of interviewing displaced people. But more crucial was the choice to use personal documents, or what Thomas called "undesigned records." For Thomas, these were mainly written records, letters and autobiography (indeed, he was apparently suspicious of interviews, believing them to be manipulative). The value of such records was to retrieve the individual actor from the mass of data:

We must put [ourselves] in the position of the subject who tries to find his way in the world, and we must remember, first of all, that the environment by which he is influenced and to which he adapts himself is his world, not the objective world of science—is nature and society as he sees them, not as the scientist sees them.<sup>11</sup>

Though Thomas was a sociologist by training, various researchers who followed his lead sought to adapt the use of personal documents to their respective disciplines. John Dollard, for example, whose *Criteria of Life History* was the second of Boder's "high points," set out to test their importance in psychology.<sup>12</sup> Dollard had co-led a 1931–1932 Yale University faculty-level seminar made up of many prestigious participants, who not only studied autobiography but were asked to contribute autobiographical materials of their own. The reverberations of the seminar were felt in many quarters, among others serving as an inspiration for the YIVO/Jewish Scientific Institute's autobiographical contests under Max Weinreich's direction.<sup>13</sup> Dollard's 1935 book took six examples of "life history" and analyzed the principles guiding each. The book was particularly important to Boder in two respects. First, the life history

examples followed by Dollard's commentary modeled for Boder how to ideally treat the interviews. Though he himself never spelled out at length the relationship of his approach to that of Dollard, Boder's students produced theses that devoted a section to a review of Dollard's study in relation to analysis of the interviews. Second, Dollard's notion of acculturation, which holds that every individual is acculturated into a network of social relations, provided Boder with a foil for the experience undergone in the ghettos and concentration camps. This experience Boder termed "deculturation," about which more is said below in connection with the notion of trauma.

Discussed periodically throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the significance of the personal document was taken up directly during the war years. In this period, three of the books that Boder cites in his "high points" lecture were sponsored by the Committee on Appraisal of Research under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council. The SSRC was established in the early 1920s and drew its membership from the fields of anthropology, economics, history, political science, psychology, and sociology. The personal document came under scrutiny in all three SSRC books, explicitly front and center in the last two: Gordon Allport's *The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science* (1942), and *The Use of Personal Documents in History, Anthropology, and Sociology* (1945), with contributions by Louis Gottschalk, Clyde Kluckhohn, and Robert Angell. The continuing influence of the *Polish Peasant* was the driving force: "The Polish Peasant," writes anthropologist Robert Redfield in the foreword to the 1945 volume, "was recognized as a turning point in the history of sociology in large part because of the use therein made of letters, autobiographies and other personal documents."<sup>14</sup> But unclarity persisted regarding the exact significance of these documents. They "lacked probative value" but did, according to Redfield, strengthen the hypothesis. The volumes set out to clarify their ambiguous status:

Questions were asked about the personal document and its use: Since the writing of the *Polish Peasant*, what developments have occurred in the use of this class of materials? Have better ways been found to create such materials? To analyze them?...and what can the research workers of one discipline learn from those in another about human documents in social science?<sup>15</sup>

Though Redfield does not mention the connection, the years of the Second World War became the occasion when scholars systematically analyzed the use of the personal document. This may have been due to the upsurge in quantitative studies in psychology during this period. Indeed, the war is often pointed to as a turning point in American psychology's embrace of quantitative over qualitative methods.<sup>16</sup> The SSRC's focus on the personal document could well have been a response to this trend, an entrenchment by those who remained convinced of the value

of qualitative research (and specifically the personal document), even as most social scientists were turning from it.

A firm believer in the use of personal documents was psychologist Gordon Allport, author of one of the three SSRC books devoted to the subject. Allport, a towering figure in American psychology during this period, had multiple ties to Boder's project.<sup>17</sup> More than any other, he set the conceptual stage for Boder's overall approach. He also supported Boder directly. Though best known today for his work on the psychological nature of prejudice and his pioneering study of personality, Allport's 1942 volume, *The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science*, judiciously evaluates the past history and future role of the personal document—which already, in Allport's analysis, subsumes the type of production that would come to be known as testimony.<sup>18</sup> It thus presented Boder with the conceptual breadth and rigor necessary to envision recorded interviews as full-fledged psychological material.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, Boder frames his study using Allport's terms. Boder draws the title for his magnum opus, *Topical Autobiographies*, from a concept reviewed by Allport in *The Use of Personal Documents*. The topical autobiography is "short and specialized in content," represents "an excision from the [overall] life," and "focus[es] upon the effects of one social event" upon a group of people.<sup>20</sup> Psychological scientists employed this "favorite class of material," according to Allport, in the study of psychosis, of prohibition, of "anger and fear," of religious experience, of "episodes related to the mental hygiene problems of students," of the motivation of teachers, and of the "radical-conservative tendencies in 100 lives."<sup>21</sup>

Allport contrasts the topical autobiography with the "comprehensive autobiography," which is "long and many-sided," and which deals "with a relatively large number of lines of experience, giving a picture of variety, roundness and interrelatedness in the life."<sup>22</sup> The difference between the two helps us appreciate how Boder construed his task. Boder was not in search of a picture of a life in its own right. He asked relatively little about early years or life before the war. He began the interview by saying, "Tell where you were when the war started and what has happened to you since." His interest was topical through and through, charting the "effects of one social event." From this vantage point, he assembled a significant number of life histories to chronicle the war that displaced millions of people. Boder's use of "topical autobiography" thus has behind it the contrast between the two approaches to autobiography and, along with it, a set of scholarly conventions delineated by Allport a few years before.

Highlighting an event rather than a life, topical autobiographies do not usually stand on their own. They are companion pieces, illuminated and illuminating by contrast with others of their kind. The nature of the genre, writes Allport, is to "exist in collections gathered with a view to comparative study and inductive use" (Allport's emphasis).<sup>23</sup> Each autobiography can thus help fill out the picture of the "topic"—the effects of one social event—that it addresses.

Boder's anthology of seventy transcribed interviews is thus a consummate example of the collectability of topical autobiographies, different from others only perhaps in the huge dimensions that Boder's project assumed. Each oral memoir was one piece of the pie. Although every interview had the disruption caused by the war at its center, the story told within had numerous variations. Yoked together, they would allow the researcher the leverage he sought to compare and contrast. Allport's emphasis on the collection would have put Boder in mind of this feature as he set out to conduct the interviews and later as he readied them for publication and dissemination.

Allport also linked the personal document to new developments in technology. Indeed, he refers explicitly to verbatim recording and authorizes it as a form of "true personal document." The progress of recording technology made regular use feasible: "Verbatim recording is rapidly increasing in use, owing, in part, to the invention of efficient and invisible sound-recording devices."<sup>24</sup> Allport may have been thinking more of the lab than the field; Boder's equipment, even though four years further along than when Allport published his assessment, was neither all that efficient nor invisible. But the advent of new technology was opening up the possibility of new procedures.

Producing "true" documents, verbatim recordings nevertheless had their own set of problems, one of which was the massive amount of unedited material. Such material threatened to confuse and overwhelm. In one case, Allport evaluates "a prolonged recorded interview" and notes that "its dimensions are staggering." Without editing or deletion the reader is

confronted with all the patient's wanderings, false starts, repetitions, lacerations of syntax and grammar—the total effect being so confusing that one may ask whether the loss in meaning and structure does not offset the gain [obtained in using recorded material].<sup>25</sup>

These cautionary reflections would seem to run counter to Boder's approach. Boder was hardly draconian in his editing, preferring to publish the whole interview and, on top of that, to transcribe every word verbatim. Further, Boder's interviews often contain the very traits that ostensibly lead to confusion: the "wanderings, false starts, repetitions, lacerations of syntax and grammar." And in the final analysis, Boder did not simply overlook such aberrations. He rather went to considerable lengths to include them.

Yet Allport, in spite of his admonitions, also makes a powerful case for editorial restraint when circumstances warrant it. Editing, he writes, may at times be out of place:

when style of expression, forms of speech, level of education, fantasies, dreams, and subtleties of experience are in question, the original material must be published unedited, and if possible, unshortened.<sup>26</sup>

This bold statement clearly reverses the call for editing personal documents. And it could well have given Boder justification for the restraint that he exercised. Indeed, the first two exceptions—"style of expression" and "forms of speech"—nearly parallel Boder's concern with the DPs' "language habits." In such cases, unedited recordings can best lay bare such habitual forms of expression. To be sure, it is a thin line between Allport's first example and his second—between "lacerations of syntax and grammar," on the one hand, and "forms of speech," on the other. Yet Boder clearly understood his project as falling under Allport's second rubric. One can imagine a version of *Topical Autobiographies* bearing beneath the title "unedited and unshortened." Indeed, the distance was not great between these directives and the cover page of each Boder transcription, where he adjures the reader to be aware of the unedited nature of the interview. And even in the case of *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, where Boder was required to condense almost 500 pages of material into 220 pages of print, he managed to include "unshortened" interviews in seven chapters out of eight.<sup>27</sup>

Further justification for editorial restraint could also have come from the second of Allport's two examples, a study focusing on "the detailed analysis of the individual differences in the use of language." If the first study of a recorded interview was slighted by Allport because of "the total effect being so confusing," the second citation holds exceptional promise:

These spontaneous personal documents not only yielded measurable differences, but enabled the investigator to represent in all their complexity the patterns of style and symbolism peculiar to individual speakers. In this study we have suggestions of a new and exceptionally promising technique, not only for study of language, but for the investigation of any expressive activity that can be recorded.<sup>28</sup>

In this case, Allport links the potential contribution of verbatim recording to "language" and "expressive activity." This reads as a general statement of Boder's mission. For him, recorded language became the means to represent the DPs in all their postwar complexity. Hence, Boder saw in verbatim recording a potential similar to that remarked on by Allport, brought out the latent possibilities that Allport had touched on, and promoted the newness that verbatim recording ushered in. Indeed, Boder elaborated what Allport had suggested. Whereas Allport spoke of verbatim recording as "technique," as a method applied to the material at hand, Boder extended the term to the product itself: verbatim recording heralded a new world literature in the making.

#### THE PERSONAL DOCUMENT AND GERMANY'S VICTIMS

Allport's monograph showed the power and possibility of the personal document. But it was in a different venue that Allport highlighted the

personal document as a key to understanding personality under siege. To do this, Allport himself gave the topical autobiography center stage. And perhaps most crucial for Boder's project was the fact that the personal documents' authors were themselves victims of the Nazis.

The venue was an article that Allport coauthored (with Jerome Bruner and E. Jandorf), "Personality under Social Catastrophe: Ninety Life-Histories of the Nazi Revolution" which appeared in 1941 in the journal *Character and Personality*.<sup>29</sup> Allport analyzed ninety (of some two hundred received) "life histories on the subject 'My Life in Germany Before and After January 30, 1933,'"—the pivotal date referring of course to the fateful day on which Hitler was appointed Germany's chancellor. The accounts were submitted to a Harvard University-sponsored contest for which the prizes totaled \$1,000.<sup>30</sup> The contributors had fled Germany and Austria and wrote from their place of exile life histories that averaged 100 pages. From these memoirs, Allport tabulated data and drew conclusions regarding how catastrophe affected personality.

This analysis guided Boder's approach and conception of the DP interviews. First, he referred to his study in terms of "personality under unprecedeted stress," a description indebted to Allport's formulation.<sup>31</sup> Second, Boder's major published study of the interviews, "The Impact of Catastrophe," takes its title and focus from the wording of one of Allport's principal questions: "How do political attitudes change under the impact of catastrophe?"<sup>32</sup> Third, Allport elevated the personal document to an instrument that could reveal significant truths concerning the psychological cost to the victim of Nazi persecution. The collection of such personal documents became the means to a less idiosyncratic assessment of the fate of the individual. Indeed, one of the reasons Allport's essay was later included in Kluckhohn and Murray's important anthology of interdisciplinary approaches to personality was to demonstrate the method of the personal document to "students of personality."<sup>33</sup>

The merger between personality, personal document, and catastrophe was essential. Allport had already helped bring the concept of personality into prominence for American psychology. Coming of age like Boder in an era when the notion of character presided, Allport believed that the notion of personality could better suit the sophistication of post-World War I psychology.<sup>34</sup> The evil of Nazi Germany would seem to have presented a new challenge. Yet Allport argued that in times of crisis, catastrophe tests personality but does not uproot it. The stability of personality had both negative and positive features. On the negative side, personality's drive toward stability kept it from recognizing "revolution" and responding to new (and, in this case, threatening) dimensions of impending catastrophe. On the positive side, personality displayed an "enduring consistency" that remained impervious to society's disruptions. Personality did not, in other words, mirror culture.

Allport's revolution was Boder's Holocaust. Like Allport, Boder wanted a significant number of participants for his study. Indeed, he

originally had in mind to interview 200 DPs, a number perhaps directly inspired by the full number of Allport's life histories.<sup>35</sup> At the center of the Harvard essay contest was the chronicle "my life," a story that could be told only by the one who lived it. Instructions to potential contributors were explicit: "The Judges are not interested in philosophical reflections about the past but in a record of personal experiences."<sup>36</sup> This record of personal experience was also what Boder was after, insisting that the narrator tell not what he heard but about his own life and that of his family. At the other end of the spectrum, Boder at times even followed Allport in his attention to the persecutor. In the midst of stories of extraordinary brutality, both Allport and Boder distilled from overbearing tales of cruel acts of kindness on the part of the enemy.<sup>37</sup>

Allport conducted his study in the late 1930s and early 1940s; Boder conducted his after the war had come to an end and in the wake of "unprecedented" reports of carnage. Thus he could not slavishly follow Allport. Whereas Allport, for instance, gathered his reports from refugees scattered throughout the globe, Boder traveled to the sites where the DPs were themselves gathered. This difference prompted another: while Allport had studied written documents, Boder opted for oral. The choice of the oral was not obvious. Contemporary testimonies of DPs were often written, in response either to a questionnaire or to a less rigid set of guidelines. Boder could have proceeded in kind. The fact that Allport's model relied on written documents must have had some leverage. But Boder's overriding concern with language, his facility with recording technology, and his desire to complement already existing visual material with unexploited aural media steered him toward oral testimony. This was why it was so important for him to be on the scene.

Oral rather than written media also enabled interviews with a younger population whose formal education had been interrupted. Allport had dealt with only adult respondents; no one under twenty years old authored an essay and 90 percent of those who did were thirty years old or over. In contrast, thirty-three Boder interviewees were twenty-five or under and at least sixteen were under twenty. Hence, a good 30 percent were still teenagers during the war. In this way, Boder's effort overlapped with the aims of oral historians to include voices of those unlikely to write.

The two also differed in terms of the relation of their scholarship to the catastrophe they describe. Allport wrote in *medias res*, his article appearing as the persecution from which his contributors escaped continued to grow in power and to persecute its citizens and those of the countries it had occupied by 1941. The article alludes to its interventionist position, speaking in 1941 of America's "present national emergency" and calling for "constant efforts to awaken realization of imminent danger."<sup>38</sup> The "before and after" invoked in the article's title ("My Life in Germany Before and After January 30, 1933") have their own connotations, marking a divide in history. Indeed, the "after" that Allport refers to designates a time still in the midst of disruption and danger.

In contrast, the premise of Boder's project was a different kind of "after": his journey to Europe and interviewing of victims were made possible because the conditions of danger that had encompassed them were no longer present. At least on the surface, there was nothing for Boder to do but get the story. His project and the work that grew out of it were hence elegiac, concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and its transmission to an unknowing audience. Whereas the information Allport gathered could be used to do something ("to awaken realization of imminent danger"), that which Boder assembled was primarily designed to help other audiences know something.

As a respected figure in American intellectual life, Allport also supported Boder's project directly. In 1945, as Boder scrambled to obtain a sponsor for the European expedition, Allport lobbied influential parties on his behalf, but to no avail.<sup>39</sup> His help with publication of the interviews some years later was more successful. He read Boder's book manuscript and wrote a commendatory letter in response.<sup>40</sup> Boder thought that Allport's advocacy (likely in the form of a copy of his letter) "helped tip the scale" in the University of Illinois Press's decision to publish the book.<sup>41</sup> The letter ended up doing triple duty. One of the book's dust jacket blurbs was excerpted from it: the book features material, observed Allport, "that mankind should have wide access to—and ought to be the required reading of mankind until the problems so vividly laid before the reader are solved."<sup>42</sup> So the circle was complete. Allport's work had shaped the thrust of Boder's project; his personal interest in it helped bring it before a readership; his endorsement made public his appreciation. The personal document that Allport had theorized about and analyzed in depth became in Boder's hands the material for America's deeper knowledge of the Holocaust's evil.

#### LYRICAL WITNESS: BODER'S USE OF THE TAT

In the eyes of the DPs, Boder was most conspicuously a psychologist when he included formal psychological testing as an interview technique. The particular test of choice was the TAT, the Thematic Apperception Test, which Boder used in at least eight interviews. The TAT was one of two projective tests then in vogue. The other was the more renowned Rorschach test, developed in the early 1920s. The TAT was created by Harvard psychologist Henry Murray about a decade later.<sup>43</sup> Like the Rorschach, the TAT presents pictures on cards with the goal of soliciting associative responses. The respondent projects his idea of what is taking place in the picture, thereby revealing otherwise occluded dimensions of self.<sup>44</sup> In contrast to the nonrepresentational inkblot images of the Rorschach, the TAT uses representational drawings and asks the viewer to make up a dramatic story about the events they depict.<sup>45</sup> Boder's appreciation for storytelling may have induced him to opt for the TAT

instead of the Rorschach, and may have prompted him to use the TAT in the first place. Yet instead of well-developed stories, Boder's queries to the interviewees solicited (and, for the most part, received) only brief responses.

Boder began to use the TAT in the second interview on July 30 with Polia Bisenhaus. He continued to use it through interview 9 on July 31, left off for two interviews, and then returned to it one last time in an interview with Israel Unikowski on August 2. In terms of format, Boder invariably presented the TAT cards only toward the end of the interview; indeed, some transcripts include the TAT as a separate addendum to the interview itself. Similar to many other psychologists, Boder selected a number of cards from the larger set of twenty and would try (but not always succeed) to record the card's number.<sup>46</sup>

Boder had had many years of experience with manifold forms of psychological testing, dating back at least to the 1920s and perhaps to his days in Russia. Indeed, he has been credited with introducing psychometric tests into Mexico during his sojourn there in the early 1920s.<sup>47</sup> His test arsenal included vocational tests, personnel tests, tests of mental abilities, and personality inventory tests. Testing was assuredly a regular feature of his vocation. Yet Boder had written nothing previously about the TAT; it does not seem to have had particular significance for him. It is hence surprising that Boder, weighted down by supplies and equipment, would bring the cards along.

Counter to standard procedure, Boder instructed the interviewee only briefly about how to respond; he did not use the full-blown request and explanation for a story that is recommended by Murray.<sup>48</sup> "This is a picture by a prominent artist," he begins with Polia Bisenhaus. "From the last three years of your experiences, what do you think does this picture mean?" Some of the interviewees were able to submit to the test with this kind of light prompting. At other times, Boder went to greater lengths to justify the technique:

BODER: Will you do me a favor... I am a professor, and I am making a study of these things.... you see this picture? What do you think it is, what is it about?

ROSET: What it is? /not clear/

BODER: Yes, what does it mean? What do you think it is, or could it be?

ROSET: Possibly a mother who has lost her children.

Being a "professor" (though not here explicitly a professor of psychology) and "making a study" set the stage for changing the format of the interview from the usual question-answer technique to the less familiar TAT format. Boder rarely was so explicitly professorial, relying instead on a brief set of cues to let the interviewee know what he wanted. In certain cases, he did present increasingly detailed instructions:

BODER: I wonder if you would do me a small favor... Tell me, what does this picture remind you of? What would you think of this picture?

What memories does it evoke in you? /Pause./ Were you to compose a story from this picture, what would you say it was?

KRAKOWSKI: A child...

BODER: Yes?

KRAKOWSKI: ...perhaps an artist, playing the violin...

Although general enough in his request, Boder seemingly wanted a story that would shed light on the wartime events. In some cases, he explicitly encouraged the connection between the content of the pictures and what happened during the war. Indeed, in the first TAT he instructed Polia Bisenhaus to respond according to the "last three years of her experience." Yet even when Boder did not frame the response so narrowly, the responses generally reflected this period. Yet in some instances, as in the case of Samuel Isakovitch, Boder wanted to be more rather than less directive:

BODER: Mr. Isakovitch, I have here a few pictures, and I want that you should tell me which of your experience of the last few years, do these pictures remind you of. /Aside:/ This is #8. Hold it. Nu? What is this picture about? What does it remind you of?

ISAKOVITCH: That is...

BODER: Make some kind of story out of it.

ISAKOVITCH: This one...one of the women—prisoners who...they look like the women-prisoners who were in the lagers, who were ragged, in tatters...they are famished...they are emaciated...they have no...they are thinking when the liberation will come.

The setting could not have been more immersed in the recent past. Isakovitch's "story" takes account of how those in the lagers looked, the hunger they felt, and the freedom they yearned for. Felt deeply and envisioned vividly, the stories projected were told in a manner sometimes impersonal, other times radically personal. Like Isakovitch, Israel Unikowski tells the story as a third-person narrator:

BODER: Anything that comes to your mind. What does it remind you of? /Pause./ Nu? /Pause./

UNIKOWSKI: I'll tell you something...

BODER: Yes?

UNIKOWSKI: I am not much of an expert in these things.

BODER: But, only the story. What story does it remind you of?

UNIKOWSKI: From this picture?

BODER: Yes.

UNIKOWSKI: To me it would look like it is a summer home...

BODER: Yes?

UNIKOWSKI:...and one made a nice sport...

BODER: Yes?

UNIKOWSKI:...and this girl or a beloved one or a sister is fearing for his life.

BODER: Feared what?

UNIKOWSKI: For his life.

BODER: Oh.

UNIKOWSKI: Another /?/?

BODER: Yes. /Aside:/ This is 12.M. What is this?

UNIKOWSKI: This looks like a sick person ...

BODER: Yes?

UNIKOWSKI: ...is having a vision.

BODER: Hm.

UNIKOWSKI: He thinks in his dream or awake ... a very sick person ... that someone comes to take his soul away.

Starting out with a pleasant vignette of a country idyll, the mood quickly changes to fear for one's life. At the end, every part of the self is at risk, as if nothing is secure. Yet the narrative remains that which occurs to someone else. For Jurek Kestenberg, the lines of narration become blurred; what begins as a story told about others comes to include him as well:

BODER: Hm. And what is this? This is number 19F. What is this? Hold it. Hold it in your hand.

KESTENBERG: Oh, this reminds me of a panic...

BODER: Hm.

KESTENBERG: ...that arose in the lager when the Germans ... when ... when we would see a lot of Germans coming. When we ... not only /in/ a lager, even in the Ghetto. When we saw Germans passing by, people ran away with such wide open eyes ... with such ... with such ...

BODER: Hm. Yes.

KESTENBERG: ...terrified eyes. Thus people were running. This woman, for instance...

Prompted by the picture to recall "a panic," Kestenberg fills in the picture with an episode from the ghetto. Yet others as much as he are part of the scene: he tells about the time "when we would see," "when we saw" the special "terrified eyes." Starting out with abstract events, the stories behind the pictures recoil back on him, taking on a form similar to the narrative account of his experience.

If Kestenberg steers a middle ground, shifting between impersonal narration and dramatic narrator, Mendel Herskovitz stays entirely with the latter. Indeed, every story he projects is his own:

BODER: And what does this picture remind you of? /Aside:/ This is #18.

HERSKOVITZ: /Pause./ The moment when we stood up to the knees in snow, shivering from the cold. We could stand like this for five /?/ hours, on an appell until the block elder would decide to let us inside.

BODER: And ...

HERSKOVITZ: And not [only] one /[but] many/ perished at such an appell. About /?/ women too ...

BODER: /Not clear./ Yes?

HERSKOVITZ: ...because no women were with us in the lager. But I can only imagine, according to what I see here. I can imagine how

I was running with a pair of ghostly eyes and stared in front of me...until I was saved /?/ by the liberation.

Benign though the pictures may be, they lead Herskovitz to recall tortuous ordeals in the ghetto and camp.<sup>49</sup> They move him, moreover, to recount what happened by means of bifurcating his experience: in the second instance ("running with a pair of ghostly eyes") he is both actor and observer, the chronicler of his own story and the witness to it. Relating the pictures to life episodes continues when the stories predate the war:

BODER: And what is this?

HERSKOVITZ: Here I can only remind myself of childhood years. How I sat at our own table.

BODER: What?

HERSKOVITZ: The childhood years. How I sat at our own table.

BODER: /Aside:/ Number one. And what is this?

HERSKOVITZ: Country place at home where we often went.

The tranquil domestic scenes contrast profoundly with the "ghostly" camp episodes, sharpening the brutality even while offering relief from it. But whether camp or home scenes, wartime or prewar, Herskovitz personalizes every one.

Lyrical and oblique though TAT responses generally were, they on occasion gave Boder new or more complete information. This comes through clearly with allusion to the term "*mussulman*"—a term that in midsummer of 1946 was still fresh for Boder:

BODER: And what kind of a story does this picture represent?

KRAKOWSKI: A corpse, a mussulman.

BODER: What?

KRAKOWSKI: A mussulman, a sick one.

BODER: A sick one?

KRAKOWSKI: Yes.

BODER: What is a mussulman?

KRAKOWSKI: A mussulman is a man who is already so weak that he cannot walk by himself.

BODER: Where does this word come from?

KRAKOWSKI: The Germans originated that word yet.

BODER: What is the word?

KRAKOWSKI: Mussulman.

BODER: How do you spell is? M U S...

KRAKOWSKI: S U L M A N.

BODER: And that means what?

KRAKOWSKI: That means weak people who cannot walk anymore. Sick people.

The exotic term is indeed so fresh for Boder that he is not satisfied with a definition or even characterization. Recognizing that it doesn't fit the terminology he knows or expects, he asks to have it literally spelled out. When later that day Shmuel Isakovitch also invokes the "Mussulman," Boder's response is instructive:

And what do you think is this? /Aside: #15./ Yes?

ISAKOVITCH: It is also a prisoner... a "Mussulman," who... simply a "Mussulman," He can't walk any more to work...

BODER: What is a "Mussulman"?

ISAKOVITCH: A "Mussulman"... who is quite emaciated and he can't walk, he can't talk... he is completely emaciated... worked out, used up, who can't do anything any more. Then he becomes emaciated. Then he is a finished "Mussulman."

Again hearing the term, Boder poses a question about what it means, as if the conversation with Krakowski had never taken place. Good scientist that he was, Boder could well have repeated the exchange in order to verify what he had heard in the earlier interview. He also however could have pursued this line of questioning with Isakovitch, not to obtain information but rather to observe how it was spoken about. A third possibility is that Boder, with an eye toward his unknowing American audience, crafted each interview as an independent unit. He did not therefore assume that the audience would have been familiar with any term that came up in a prior interview. Asking Isakovitch anew, "What is a 'Mussulman'" would start from point one.

Whatever he had heard from Krakowski did not in any case satisfy everything that Boder (or his presumed audience) would want to know:

BODER: What was done with the Mussulmen?

ISAKOVITCH: The Mussulmen were taken and sent to Birkenau.

BODER: And there?

ISAKOVITCH: In Birkenau they were taken into the gas-chambers.  
Gassed.

At this stage, Boder moves from definition to result, following through the description of the term that both men have given to its dire consequences. He thus uses the occasion of the TAT to explore to its limit—"And there?"—what would be the fate of the victim for whom the term was coined.

Coming at or toward the interview's end, the final TAT responses often addressed a future. A card showing workers in a field elicited four pastoral responses. Two interviewees, Isakovitch and Kestenberg, simply comment on the work being done:

BODER: [Say] Whatever comes to your mind. And what is this? What is this?

KESTENBERG: This is a... the work on the field. For instance, the husband is working, and the wife stands and watches, and...

BODER: Well, this concludes the interview with Jurek Kestenberg, seventeen years old, from Warsaw.

Two others go a step further. One, Polia Bisenhaus, associates labor in the fields specifically with Palestine; the other, Raisel Roset, with a place of "dreams":

BODER: Hm....and this?

ROSET: /In a solemn tone/ People are running away from somewhere.

BODER: Hm....

ROSET: People are running away from somewhere. /Unfortunately the number of the card has not been recorded/.

BODER: So....and this?

ROSET: That is possibly the land of dreams. /Note: There is some noise and the interview is abruptly concluded. Such things happened unfortunately often—The room was needed, the interviewee had to return to work, etc./

Boder's remarks explain why the interview is simply broken off rather than brought to an end. Yet the poetry of Roset's closing words—"that is possibly the land of dreams"—nonetheless makes for a fitting conclusion. She who is left with no one looks at a picture and construes it to be a land of dreams. What else remains for her if not such a land? The reference clearly parallels her earlier-voiced aspiration to go to Palestine—for many Jews, the land of dreams. Her individually projected dream thus blends with a communal one. But if this indeed lies behind her phrasing, it does not soften the sense that a land of dreams continues to exist and to be projected—both onto the picture that Boder asks her to interpret and into the future that lies before her.

Not every TAT concluded by opening a door to a pastoral future:

BODER: /Aside:/ Number one. And what is this?

HERSKOVITZ: Country place at home where we often went.

BODER: That was number two. Yes, one moment. Now number three, BM.

HERSKOVITZ: /Pause./ A sick prisoner and a hungry one, without hope.

Indeed, Herskovitz's response, articulating a reduced world "without hope," is almost counterpastoral, the vision of a future closed off. Adam Krakowski's response is much more concrete:

BODER: Hm, and what is this?

KRAKOWSKI: Freedom.

BODER: Hm, and what is this?

KRAKOWSKI: Work.

BODER: Tell me more.

KRAKOWSKI: This is our future.

BODER: Hm. Now, what do you think of the future? Do you think we shall have war again?

KRAKOWSKI: I shall not go to a lager again.

BODER: What?

KRAKOWSKI: I shall not go to a lager again.

BODER: What would you do?

KRAKOWSKI: Anything, but not that.

BODER: Yes, but it does not...it did not depend on you whether to go to a lager.

KRAKOWSKI: Now it shall already depend on me.

BODER: What will you do then?

KRAKOWSKI: Anything, but not to go to a lager again.

In the final picture Krakowski sees not dreams as a path toward the future (à la Raisel Roset) but the future itself ("This is our future"). Boder uses the picture as a departure point for the interviewee to elaborate such a future. Yet the categories that Boder sets forth—the prospect of another war—are not the ones meaningful for Krakowski. For him, the future is immediately defined by the circumstances of being or not being in a concentration camp. "Anything, but not that"—"that" is the word that here encapsulates the camp. What is understated in his chronicle gains intensity through his decisive phrasing. For on the surface, Krakowski's insistence does not make sense. It was not his choice to have been incarcerated. Boder is rightly perplexed: "Yes, but it does not...it did not depend on you whether to go to a lager."<sup>50</sup> Krakowski nevertheless maintains that the choice is his: "Now it shall already [always] depend on me." Indeed, Krakowski defines the future by claiming the choice is his.

Two final responses conceive the future not in terms of a place but in terms of a way of life. These are responses to a picture of a boy playing a violin. Having interpreted most pictures directly in relation to concentration camp life, Marko Moskovitz interprets Boder's final picture of the TAT outside of that context:

BODER: Hm. /A long pause./ All right. And what is this?

MOSKOVITZ: This is a child. Looks at the violin and thinks he can go on playing, because he [...]

BODER: What had he been?

MOSKOVITZ: He had been good and he can go on playing.

Here life returns to a domestic setting, where the rules that govern relations between parents and children—because he had been good—are at the fore. In contrast to the recent past, behaving well ensures that one can continue; no one is at the ready to make one stop. Boder does not ask if Moskovitz actually played the violin; perhaps Boder assumes it. In any case, the TAT ends here with music and continuity—he can go on playing. For Israel Unikowski, it is not how he plays (or that he plays at all) but what he plays:

UNIKOWSKI: He played on a mandolin...

BODER: Yes?

UNIKOWSKI:...and was moved by his own melody.

BODER: Yes?

UNIKOWSKI: He had...

BODER: Yes?

UNIKOWSKI: He played his own melody .../Abrupt end of spool and interview./

Here, too, the interview ends outside the war context, indeed outside of any discernible context. But what matters is the playing of "his own melody," as if the capacity to create and express was understood to be a significant achievement. The "melody" may well allude to the interview itself, a story clearly Unikowski's "own." Moreover, it may be that he

too, like the mandolinist, was moved by his own story. The interview allowed him to recognize what he had lived through and what was still his own.

Meaningful today for the poetry it evoked, the TAT did not do for Boder what he had wanted. What exactly that was, however, remains unclear. He instituted the TAT almost from the beginning and continued with it through two interview sites in France (ORT/Paris and Chateau Boucicaut). He gave it up at the end of the Chateau Boucicaut interviews and neglected to carry it forward the next day when he began interviewing at Rue de Patin. He had perhaps in the intervening night reviewed what he had so far accomplished and changed his mind about what should be given priority in the days ahead.

Years later, in the process of transcribing the interviews, he felt compelled to account for having “[given] it up”; the use of the TAT in some interviews and its absence in others could not be passed over in silence. He thus inserted comments in a number of the transcriptions explaining why he had dropped the TAT, pointing to limited time and “extraneous to his purpose” as key reasons. In the most drastic formulation, he strikingly underestimates the number of “subjects” with whom he used the technique: “I attempted to give this test to about three subjects then gave it up as time consuming and extraneous to the main purpose of the project.”<sup>51</sup> Boder’s estimation of “three subjects” is considerably fewer than the eight tests he actually administered. He made this calculation while transcribing Mendel Herskovitz’s interview some time between 1953 and 1955, a period of seven to nine—years after he completed the interviews. As Boder well knew, time could affect memory.

Although he never said so explicitly, his understanding of the project almost certainly underwent a change. Prepared to administer the test from the word go, Boder clearly identified the DP interview project under the rubric of psychology. This justified his use of special professional techniques. Most specifically, administering the TAT was to give access to aspects of “personality” that the narrators would prefer not to, or could not, articulate. For the listener or reader, the test continues to work in this fashion, shifting the basis of the interview from factual to symbolic and from objective account to subjective association.

When Boder gave up the technique with the fourteenth interview he must have already altered his conception. Yet the transformation could not have been so immediate or clear, for Boder stopped using the TAT in interview 12 (with Kalman Eisenberg), but returned to it in number 14 (with Israel Unikowski), as if its absence left a clinical hole. But the TAT with Unikowski turned out to have been its last hurrah.

Reasons for this checkered history again are not easy to find. The interviews were becoming progressively longer; it may be that as Boder came to know more, he also knew that there was more to ask about. He

perhaps did not want to hand over the time at his disposal to a technique that would highlight mental life at the expense of documenting the episodes lived through. To be sure, he often stated he was not, when it came to facts, in quest of exactitude; he was not a historian aiming to establish precise details nor a prosecuting attorney preparing to use the material to convict (or at least make known) perpetrators accused of horrendous crimes. Other interview projects had these goals in mind. But Boder's task was documenting the plight of the DPs for an American audience that had heard little about what the victims had suffered. All in all, the TAT may have produced too oblique and lyrical a document for a postwar audience in need of straightforward testimony. For Boder's audience today, however, the oblique has its own rewards.

Boder's effort has a historical parallel that is both mirror and refraction. Polish sociologist Tadeusz Grygier, a former Gulag prisoner based in the postwar years in London, spent ten weeks in 1946 in DP camps in Germany studying the "impact of oppression on the human and culture." To this end, he interviewed DPs and used projective tests, including the TAT, to gauge the "impact" and its consequences. At least in retrospect, the TAT played a much more visible role for Grygier than for Boder. The treatise that grew out of his study gives a detailed summary of the TAT's history, describes his use of it, provides several examples of the DPs' responses, offers his interpretations, and sets forth his conclusions.<sup>52</sup> His time in Germany—April 26–July 11, 1946—nearly coincided with that of Boder. While Boder came to be in Europe in the weeks following the terrible Kielce pogrom on July 4–5, Grygier was at that time drawing close to the end of his DP camp sojourn. He does not refer to the pogrom.

Committed to the TAT, Grygier too had his problems, but of a different sort than Boder's. Grygier had intended to include Jewish DPs in his study. But his intention went largely unrealized; it was, as he terms it, an "experiment that failed." He could not develop the necessary rapport with the Jewish DPs, who were apparently suspicious of his being a Pole: "In [the DP camps in] Germany my Polish nationality, as well as the fact, that I came from London [symbol of England's blockade of Palestine], proved a handicap in my relations with the Jewish population in U.N.R.A.A. camps."<sup>53</sup> Even when the TAT was administered by someone else—an UNRRA psychologist—it "had to be abandoned for lack of the necessary rapport," as if the TAT could not avoid the shadow cast by Grygier's "nationality." Spurned by one of the DP camps' key population groups, Grygier nonetheless understands the Jewish DPs' antipathy and argues against interpreting it as proof of antisocial behavior. For both Boder and Grygier the TAT helps elicit poignant stories of the war period. Yet for both it fails to perform according to expectation and is aborted—a step that itself reveals something significant about the conditions in the war's aftermath.

## INDEXING TRAUMA: METHODS OF INJURY MORE PAINFUL THAN DEATH

It is likely that trauma was not part of Boder's working vocabulary when he planned and executed the expedition.<sup>54</sup> A lecture delivered a little over a year after his return has all the trappings of the later work on trauma but does not refer to it explicitly. Indeed, in a "far from complete inventory," Boder enumerates twenty-eight categories of "psychologically what has happened to these people, first in the ghetto and then in concentration camps."<sup>55</sup> Though the term *trauma* itself is absent, Boder here and elsewhere invokes a complementary term, deculturation. The following year, an abridged version of this inventory appears in the introduction to *I Did Not Interview the Dead* and is called outright "The Traumatic Index." From here on out the term trauma sticks. Cataloguing the war's unprecedented cruelties, this term was nonetheless supple enough that it could encompass aspects of everyday life in America: the index "may prove useful," notes Boder, "not only in the case of the DP's [sic] but also in the exploration of the personality of any adult or child who has come into conflict with life and social institutions."<sup>56</sup>

It takes more than four years, however, until trauma comes to the fore in Boder's 1954 essay, "The Impact of Catastrophe." If strikingly absent from the essay's title, trauma was nonetheless its most frequently invoked analytic term. The essay's final pages codify categories and themes of trauma. In this case, "trauma" and "inventory" are wedded together to produce "The Traumatic Inventory," a total of forty-six themes distributed under eight overarching categories. Nevertheless, this too was a penultimate step toward the full-blown "Traumatic Inventory" that was appended to the final 1957 volume of *Topical Autobiographies*. This version of the inventory included an alphabetical roster of eight pages and 377 items.

The "Impact of Catastrophe" essay investigates trauma by way of a "content analysis," which amounts to turning units of language into numbers.<sup>57</sup> The method was inaugurated in the 1920s and 1930s, and became yet more popular in the 1940s. The first textbook, Bernard Berelson's *Content Analysis in Communication Research*, appeared in 1952, not long before Boder published his article. The convergence of topic and method at this point in time was important, for Boder perceived a close tie between the notion of trauma he sets forth and the method he uses to flesh it out:

One must remember that the categories as well as the Traumatic Inventory were not *a priori* structures. They are a result of content analysis of spontaneously presented narratives by a methodology designated by Bain as Logic-Systematic analysis (Blumer, 5) or what we would call, following Robert Penn Warren, *a method of experimental reading*. (italics in original)<sup>58</sup>

Boder thus drew on an up-and-coming social science method, harnessed it to the personal document, and guided it by means of an inventory

of categories—the word “*inventory*” a telling one for taking stock of trauma.

Almost hidden amid the numbers and terms that quantify the DPs’ suffering is a striking premise: their suffering can be felt by others who have not gone through what the victims themselves did. Empathy is thus the driving force behind the method: “This is,” as Boder articulated it to the students and others who collaborated with him, “an experiment in empathy—that means a study of peoples’ [sic] ability to put themselves in the other person’s place. You are to arrange the cards in eight piles according to the severity of the traumata *as you feel they would affect you.*”<sup>59</sup> Trauma endured under abnormal conditions does not, in Boder’s eyes, seal one off from the rest of humanity. On the contrary, the very premise of the experiment was that normal people could imagine themselves as having been in the traumatized person’s shoes.

This premise is striking in its own right. It’s even more so, however, when the essay’s other premise, diametrically opposite to this one, is taken account of: the experience of some groups of DPs was radically different from others. Indeed, Boder distributes the DPs into two groups: friendly Eastern refugees (FERs) and concentration camp inmates (KZs). The first group consisted of Christians who

enjoyed reasonable freedom of movement and relatively tolerable conditions of existence. At no time was there any prohibition of the use of money or segregation of the sexes, nor were they restrained from mingling with the general German population.<sup>60</sup>

The second group was Jewish, had suffered civic and legal disfranchisement, and, for most, had spent time in concentration camps. To be sure, both groups suffered; to his credit, Boder never shortchanged forms of inflicted suffering. The sweep of categories listed in the traumatic inventory takes note of all kinds of indecency. But the results show that the KZs suffered worst. Indeed, the KZ who suffered the least trauma still suffered more than the FER who suffered the most.

In *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, the abridged set of traumatic categories applied equally to all DPs, no matter where they came from or what group they belonged to. “Each [interview] narrative may be assessed,” wrote Boder in introducing the index, “as to the category and number of experiences bound to have a traumatizing effect upon the victim.”<sup>61</sup> This does not mean that he was insensitive to the different forms of persecution directed at different groups, particularly at the Jews, whose individual fate he summarizes. But when it comes to the rubric of trauma, he makes no distinction. All DPs are blended together.

In contrast, “The Impact of Catastrophe” pries them apart. Its method and analysis has the split between these groups at the core. Why does the split come precisely at the point at which trauma comes to the fore in Boder’s work? One might think that by 1952–1954, the period leading up to the essay’s publication, Boder had accumulated more data and thereby

could see the differences between the groups more plainly. But the interviews he used to provide the data for "The Impact of Catastrophe" had been available at least since 1950 and more likely had been transcribed already several years earlier.<sup>62</sup>

The answer may rather be that underlying Boder's concern with trauma is the notion of the bystander. His conceptual approach distinguishes between two forms of trauma: "personal" ("the narrator was personally the target of the trauma") and "milieu" ("the traumata in which 'other' specified persons or groups were the target").<sup>63</sup> Trauma wounds in two ways: through direct injury and through witnessing others being injured. To witness during the Holocaust is itself a form of trauma. This said, trauma nevertheless operates on two levels of severity. The second variety, in which the trauma is not personally directed at the narrator, points to a concept of the bystander—a concept which, by and large, became important to discussion about the Holocaust several decades later.<sup>64</sup> Yet Boder had assuredly expressed his interest in collecting "the personal experience stories" of, among others, "the bystander."<sup>65</sup>

The split of the DPs into two groups and the division of trauma into two forms hints at how Boder sought to make the bystander an integral part of the equation. The two-pronged concept enables the stories related by bystanders to have value while at the same time insisting on a distinction between those who suffer directly and those who suffer vicariously. As one might expect, the two groups of DPs epitomize the two different forms of trauma: the KZ, personal; the FER, milieu. The KZs experience trauma directly, the FERs vicariously. The two-sided notion of trauma thus reinforces the primary division of the DPs into two groups; the division into the two DP groups demonstrates the aptness of a notion of trauma experienced directly or situationally. From both is born an implied notion of the bystander, in this case a victim of a different stripe.

### CODIFYING TRAUMA

The "traumatic inventory," as the larger, later version was called, ran to eighteen pages and was divided into eight headings: socioeconomic and geographical; cultural-affective; medical; labor; direct bodily violence; appearance, cleanliness, and dress; transportation; and food. These were in turn divided into forty-six subthemes. It was here that Boder assessed the cost to the victims—what was lost, what damages occurred throughout the entire spectrum of cultured life. He codified extensively to ensure that nothing would be left out, nothing would remain hidden. Touching on virtually every arena of life, the voluminous code detailed "the gradual cutting down of a human being to fit into concentration and annihilation camps."<sup>66</sup> As Boder's words make clear, there was of course

no "fit"; the inventory catalogued acts of dismemberment, the cutting down, or off, of life's civilized routines.<sup>67</sup>

Boder saw the category of trauma as the one that could best do justice to the monumental range of suffering.<sup>68</sup> His scholarly emphasis on trauma shows him at his most prescient. Only in the last fifteen years has trauma become a "pervasive explanatory model for the Holocaust."<sup>69</sup> Yet this recent notion of trauma differs from that of Boder. Trauma in its newer guise refers not only to an injury suffered but also to the victim's difficulty in making sense of his or her experience because of a breakdown of consciousness and memory during the episode. Hence traumatic experience cannot be fully known or assimilated but rather belatedly invades the victim's life by means of flashbacks and nightmares. Boder was not investigating the dynamics of memory repression but was eager to expose what he called the "abolition of traditions of dignity and decency."<sup>70</sup> He is thus closer to Primo Levi, who, nearly forty years later, speaks about trauma as "a deep wound inflicted on human dignity."<sup>71</sup>

#### DECULTURATION AND TRAUMA

Trauma eventually comes to the fore in Boder's writing to codify the many wounds inflicted in the ghettos, camps, and elsewhere. But from the outset another term has precedence: deculturation.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, Boder coined the term (or at least this inflection of it) to reflect the specific conditions endured during the war:

Many of our recordings give precisely this picture of [the] gradual absorption of a human being into the swamps of concentration and extermination camps. To describe this process, we, of course, have to coin the antonym to Dr. Dollard's term—we have to speak of deculturation of personality.<sup>73</sup>

The antonymic force of the term is clearly important. John Dollard, Yale-based psychologist and proponent of the personal document, spoke of "acculturation," of "how a new person is added to the group" by means of the knowledge and skills that culture provides. Dollard was investigating the nature of personality under normal conditions.<sup>74</sup> In Boder's inversion, the camps removed the acquired culture, leaving the personality "deculturated." In its most developed expression, deculturation applied both to personality and to environment. The camps not only acted to remove the rudiments of culture, but they themselves were "deculturated environments," writes Boder, "bound to evoke manifestations of subcultural behavior in [their] victims."<sup>75</sup>

Both the coinage and the antonymic force of the term were vital for Boder. Unprecedented conditions demanded new terms. In this respect, the fact that deculturation had been used before, particularly in cultural anthropology, did not faze Boder. It was not the term itself but the

way he was using it that was new. And a crucial aspect of that newness was its inversion of Dollard's original term. If Dollard's "acculturation" referred to what happened normally, Boder's "deculturation" conveyed what happened abnormally. In the wake of what he heard from the DPs, Boder felt it necessary to revise Dollard's model. But it was nevertheless a model of personality close to his own. Hence, by modifying Dollard's term slightly, Boder could show the special demands catastrophe made. With brutal economy, the shift of a prefix—from "ac" to "de"—evoked the downward turn of civilization.<sup>76</sup>

#### OF TIME AND MONEY: THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH

Guided by concepts at the forefront of American psychology, Boder turned to and was supported by major government grants. Yet current scholarly and popular commentary alike has it that Boder did not get the funding that he deserved and that his project was prematurely terminated, the result being that it languished forgotten and unknown.<sup>77</sup> This alleged indifference to the value of Boder's work goes hand in hand with the portrait of America during the late 1940s and 1950s as indifferent to the legacy of the Holocaust overall, or at least to serious reckoning with it.

But, as has been recently argued, America was not indifferent in this period to the legacy of the Holocaust.<sup>78</sup> Nor was it so in Boder's case. He was in fact well, if not lavishly, supported. His subsidy came, moreover, from a mainstream source for psychological research. That is to say that Boder's interviews were deemed valuable from the word go. The significance of this support can be better appreciated by looking at what he received, when, and under what circumstances.

Boder's transcriptions were funded by the then recently established NIMH. The institute had its origins in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal policies, where it was deemed that the U.S. government, along with the sponsorship of other aggressive social programs, should play an active role in promoting the health of U.S. citizens. One avenue toward this goal was establishing a series of research and training institutions.<sup>79</sup> In 1937, the first such center, the National Cancer Institute, was established. In Truman's postwar administration several other institutes would follow: the National Heart Institute, the National Institute for Dental Sciences, the National Institute for Neurological Diseases and Blindness, and the NIMH, all of which subsisted under the umbrella of the National Institutes of Health.

For both Boder and the NIMH, the war was pivotal. Part of a general government movement to invest in health research and training facilities, the concern with mental health had a specific link to World War II. First, the need to muster a massive army to fight the war brought significant

attention to the problem of mental health: the Selective Service rejected two million men on account of psychiatric problems. Of those who were recruited, half a million were discharged from the armed services for psychological reasons. When the war finally concluded, 60 percent of Veterans Administration beds were filled with veterans suffering from mental health problems. These statistics dramatized the issue; the numbers of postwar sufferers alerted the government that there was not enough professional help to deal with the mental health problem and that bolder steps needed to be taken to secure it.

Hence, on July 3, 1946, when Truman signed into law the National Mental Health Act, he was attempting to address the problem highlighted by both those rejected from fighting in the war and those who had suffered while taking part in combat. Yet there was a second side to the war's fallout: the specter of atomic war. The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the cold war struggle that came in their wake spurred anxiety over looming disaster. As Wade Pickren notes, "Popular literature after the war is filled with articles that raise the question of human survival."<sup>80</sup> This preoccupation with survival translated into increasing needs for research and therapy.

From 1946 to 1949, the mental health act was channeled through the Division of Mental Hygiene under the rubric of the U.S. Public Health Service. The NIMH was itself formally established by law in 1946 but began to be funded only in 1948. Boder got in on the ground floor, having applied for support in 1948 and having corresponded with the administration of the program while it was still under the Mental Hygiene Division.<sup>81</sup>

Boder's funding varied only slightly over the years, with a drop in the second and third years and a modest increase in the latter stages:

1949–50	\$9,400
1950–51	\$6,912
1951–52	\$6,000
1952–53	\$7,776
1953–54	\$7,776
1954–55	\$10,000
1955–56	\$10,649 <sup>82</sup>

That Boder ended up not having enough funds to complete the transcriptions has distorted the views of the NIMH's role, leaving an impression that, because Boder's funding came to term with many interviews still not fully transcribed, the NIMH did not appreciate the significance of his work and was parsimonious toward that which deserved better.<sup>83</sup> This estimation seems far from the truth.

Boder's funding from the NIMH was substantial in several respects.<sup>84</sup> To begin with, he received continuous funding during the NIMH's first nine years. Few of Boder's colleagues who were funded by the NIMH in these formative years, even those from premier research universities, were funded continuously for a comparable span of time. Moreover, even once the NIMH was an established institution boasting a substantially more robust budget, few colleagues were funded for as many years. And if Boder's actual grant allocation was far lower than the amount supplied to the most prestigious names in American academia, the \$70,000 was nevertheless greater than that given to the majority of those funded.<sup>85</sup>

To be sure, the funds turned out to be less than were needed to complete the transcriptions (though Boder transcribed more interviews than has been presumed). Yet Boder blamed himself for falling short. He felt he had not been able to foresee the extraordinary labor that the project would require and thus had been too modest in his requests.<sup>86</sup> In other words, he got what he asked for—which, in the long run, simply was not enough. But the duration of the funding was exceptional and the amount respectable.

Noteworthy when compared to the grantees at large, Boder's success looks even better when taking stock of who did not receive funding during this period. Included in this group is one of the preeminent psychologists of the late 1940s, Carl Rogers—cited earlier as the originator of the nondirective interview technique that Boder adopted. Professor at the University of Chicago and president of the American Psychological Association, Rogers was nevertheless turned down in numerous bids to receive NIMH grants. Only when he was able to put together the right constellation of supporters was he successful.<sup>87</sup> Funding was thus not at all a foregone conclusion, especially in the NIMH's early years. The institution's ongoing commitment to Boder's project conveys its belief that Boder's work would make a difference in American life. It was understood that Boder had collected a wealth of primary sources that needed to be preserved and rendered accessible.

Boder's training as a psychologist led him to see the DP interviews as having the highest priority. He knew he was on the cutting edge of social science methodology, carrying on with personal documents where W. I. Thomas and John Dollard had left off and following closely in the wake of Allport's pathbreaking studies. Boder was a researcher buoyed up by the idiom of his day even as he sought to coin new descriptive phrases for unprecedented experience. Once on the scene, he came to discover that some psychological tools, like the TAT, were too clumsy to use. But even these were not given up easily. Eventually, Boder would weave together quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide an inventory of trauma, whereby the DPs would speak again, this time in the language of numbers. It fell to him to be the scientific interpreter of the DPs' voices, in whatever language they spoke.

# Chapter 7

## *In Divergent Tongues and Dialects*

### MULTILINGUAL INTERVIEWS AND LITERARY EXPERIMENTS

The language in which a Holocaust survivor testifies carries its own memory.<sup>1</sup> The choice of language can thus forge a link to the past, or break with it. The latter has for some its clear attractions. Yaffa Eliach has speculated, for instance, that “writing in a new language” can buffer the survivor/writer from the trauma: “Those who were there,” “and who held the white hot iron in their hands, their pain is still felt in everything they write.”<sup>2</sup> Implied in Eliach’s remarks is the proposition that language, too, carries with it the “white hot iron,” that perceptions and memory channeled through the language in which the pain was experienced sharpens the pain. Some survivors, it has been argued, would not be able to testify at all were it not for the amnesia or neutrality provided by an adopted tongue. The “new language,” moreover, may not only buffer pain but offer prestige, a sense of accomplishment, or a changed identity.

But the risks of attenuation are also great: to be compelled to tell one’s tragic story in a foreign tongue may compromise immeasurably the story being told. Eloquence could suffer because of poor vocabulary or unrecognizable syntax; the result could be, in Boder’s experienced judgment, “curtailment, straining, and oversimplification of content.”<sup>3</sup> Moreover, in the convulsive postwar milieu, where displaced persons rarely had continuity of place or family, a mother tongue could offer an extraordinary measure of familiarity and comfort.

Most of the time, Boder presumed that giving the interviewee a choice was paramount. The nine languages in which he interviewed reflect this concern; among the early testimony projects, this linguistic diversity was rare. To some degree, Boder’s language skills—inheritance of a Courland Jew, a scholarly career, and a hardworking refugee—enabled such scope. But they do not tell the whole story. For one thing, he occasionally interviewed in languages that he himself knew only passively. Moreover, he was willing to allow the interviewee to shift languages midstream. Indeed, he saw these shifts from one tongue to another as grist for his scholarly mill. He was aware that language choices were not neutral, that

the topic at hand might be best served by one language (or two, or three) rather than another.

Then again, his interest was not neutral. Boder had conducted language studies earlier in his career and he viewed the DP interviews as an opportunity to take up this sort of analysis again. Having the DPs speak in the language most comfortable for them offered “evidence,” in Boder’s view, of their wartime experience. It was not only what they said but how they said it that could best attest to the privations they had recently suffered. From another, almost diametrically opposite angle, the audience had to play a role. Interview languages were at times calibrated so that the message would be sure to get through. The seemingly same message could be restated in a different language, as we will see, with extraordinary results. And finally, in a momentous gesture of reversal, for the transcriptions Boder funneled the great linguistic diversity of the interviews into a single tongue. He could most faithfully do this, however, by collaborating with a translator whose contributions were a wartime testament in their own right.

From his earliest formulations of the project, Boder highlighted interviews “not only in [the DPs’] own language but in their own voices.”<sup>4</sup> Joining language to voice argued for the wire recorder technique, which would honor the individuality of the DPs’ accounts and faithfully preserve them for posterity. The combination of language and voice, moreover, would enable full expression: “records in foreign [i.e., non-English] languages,” notes Boder in one of his 1945 solicitation letters, “will preserve for this country valuable data on the moods, grievances, hopes, and aspirations.”<sup>5</sup> By way of “foreign languages” could the full complex of response come through. Eventually, he added, copies of the interviews might find their way back to “European scholars” for whom the languages were not foreign. Diversity of languages would thus multiply the scholarly communities that would profit from using the interviews.

Only retrospectively did Boder comment on the benefit of the approach of using the DPs’ “own language.” “It was my experience,” he notes, when Jacob Wilf shifted from an acquired Russian to a native-born Yiddish, “that the flow of speech with recently acquired second languages is greatly restrained and the expression of ideas in most cases substantially hampered.” A second transcription note conveys even more decisively that “own language” meant speaking without being “restrained” or “hampered.” Having acceded to an interviewee’s wish to change from a language that Boder knew well to one he did not, he sets out the guiding principle: “Since that is her language in which she can talk freely without any difficulty and artificiality, I will endeavor to understand her.”<sup>6</sup> In both cases, the interviewee’s comfort was paramount.

Boder’s ostensible goal was for the interviewee to “talk freely.” Writing decades later, Geoffrey Hartman views Boder’s approach to languages as an ethical guide for later testimonial projects:

Interviews of survivors were first recorded by David Boder, a Professor of Psychology at the Illinois Institute of Technology.... “Through the wire

recorder," Dr. Boder wrote, "the displaced person could relate in his own language [and] in his own voice the story of his concentration camp life." That principle still guides, for example, the videotape project of the Yale Archive for Holocaust Testimonies. The survivors should tell their stories in their own language and in their own voice. Otherwise their humanity is alienated a second time; their very memories are taken from them.<sup>7</sup>

Hartman powerfully articulates what Boder may have implied: that language choice is bound up with humanity and that refusal to honor the choice is akin to committing a crime. The theft of memory also is complicit with the initial crime of dehumanization. In contrast, offering a choice of language restores humanity and enables memory most effectively to be given voice. Hartman's gloss reinforces the importance of language but leaves ambiguous its exact relation to "voice," that is, to the nature of testimony itself.<sup>8</sup> Nor does it set forth how ironclad such a policy should be. Indeed, we will see that Boder himself was not always singularly guided by his concern for the narrator's "flow of speech."

#### "IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE": THE PROBLEM OF MULTIPLE LANGUAGES

The multilingual mix of DPs was on Boder's mind from early on, as when considering how to make a record of the stories they would tell. The sheer number of languages moves him to opt for an innovative interview technology:

It seems impossible that there are enough newspaper correspondents versed in the languages of Russian, Polish, Jewish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Mongol, Dutch, Flemish, and even German sufferers in concentration camps that their stories could be recorded for contemporaries as well as posterity with sufficient detail and precision by the usual ["paper and pencil"] method of interview.<sup>9</sup>

This insurmountable personnel problem serves to explain why Boder chose to use a wire recorder: in lieu of a cadre of multilingual reporters, a portable recording device could step in. Concerned with the practical side of documenting the DPs' stories, Boder also clearly took for granted that the interviews would take place in numerous languages. At no point did he envision a search for a common tongue, even though it was the quantity of languages—beyond what could be responsibly processed—that presented a hurdle. This fundamental commitment to multiple languages is remarkable, especially given that, when it came to transcribing the interviews, Boder submitted to a monolingual format.

The roster of languages here—a list that Boder first set down in May 1945—refers to what he imagined he would encounter when in Europe.<sup>10</sup> Interviewing some fifteen months later, it turned out that he was to a large degree on target, with a few exceptions: Dutch and Flemish do not

appear, while English and Spanish do. The emendations again point to the project's shift in conception, the earlier vision encompassing not only DPs but also perpetrators or simply European workers. The reference to "Mongol" shows just how inclusive at this stage Boder hoped to be. That English was left out should not come as a surprise, since it was a language marginal to victims and perpetrators alike. That Spanish, in contrast, was not listed suggests that Boder may not have had in mind that Greek Jews—whose native language was a Spanish dialect, Ladino—were part of the DP constituency.<sup>11</sup> When later, however, he had the opportunity in Paris to interview a number of these Jews, he was able to draw on the Spanish that he had acquired during his sojourn in Mexico two decades earlier.

#### WARTIME LANGUAGE HABITS

As we have seen, Boder cast his interview net widely, indeed wider than any other similar project. Eager to record a full range of wartime experience, he included those who had survived in the center of the onslaught as well as those who held out on the margins, those who endured ghettos and persevered in labor or concentration camps as well as those who hid in forests, fought in Russia, or withstood the rigors of Siberia. Yet when it came to reckoning with the "impact of catastrophe" on language, he took the concentration camp ordeal as the benchmark:

I endeavored to keep the material [of the transcript] as near to the text of the original narratives as the most elementary rules of grammar would permit. I kept in mind that most of the displaced persons had spent their time of imprisonment in camps among inmates of divergent tongues and dialects. For years they had been deprived of all reading matter (even prayer books), of religious services, of radios, and often of opportunities to talk with others in their own tongue. It is no wonder that their language habits show evidence of trauma.<sup>12</sup>

This focus on the camps was surprising. Not more than 50 percent of his interviewees had gone through one kind of camp or another. Yet what he heard about the drastic privations of the concentration and labor camps—what Boder, as we have seen, termed "deculturation"—must have specially affected him. Under these conditions, multilingualism became something to contend with, uprooting the "inmates" from normal social exchange. Though Boder never evokes it explicitly, the shadow of Babel hung heavy over his characterization of the interviewees' language problems.

Others have chronicled the linguistic disruption caused by the concentration camps: the life-and-death consequences of knowing or not knowing German, the emergence of a special language of concentration camp dialect or idiom, known as *lager jargon*.<sup>13</sup> Boder, for his part,

focuses on two aspects: the linguistic residue of the experience and the practical implications for transcribing the interviews. In the transcripts, he steers between a faithful reproduction of the “evidence of trauma,” on the one hand, and the “elementary rules of grammar,” on the other, between, in more general terms, deculturation and culture. Leaving aside for the moment the question of translation, the transcripts are crafted to come as close as possible to the language of the camps without becoming unrecognizable to those who had the good fortune never to enter them.

But the nature of the postwar interviews brings about a related kind of linguistic disruption:

[T]he emotional states aroused by the recollection of episodes of such unparalleled stress definitely contribute to the peculiar verbal structure and the discrepancies in time and place found on occasion in the narratives.<sup>14</sup>

Heightened emotional states also wrench language and narrative from their usual patterns. Boder did not usually express what he thought would be the effect of the interviews on the DPs. Yet from these remarks we see that he was aware of the overwhelming feelings the interviews could unleash. The twisted language that Boder felt called to reproduce in the transcripts derives both from the deprivations of the past and the upheavals of the present.

Boder believed that “language habits” would reveal what the interviewees had been through. His attention to language as evidence had a clear precedent. He had devoted his 1927 master’s thesis to the psychology of language, specifically focusing on what he called the “adjective/verb quotient.” Earlier research claimed that the varying ratio between the two was due to age or emotional instability. In contrast, Boder argued that kinds of discourse (written versus spoken; literary, legal, or scientific) determined the quotient.<sup>15</sup>

Beyond the particulars of the study, several aspects stand out. First, Boder believed a key facet of analysis was the difference between written and spoken language. Writing involves a “repeated and premeditated activity,” while speaking possesses “spontaneity and speed.” He also differentiates between “speech production,” on the one hand, and “speech perception and understanding,” on the other.<sup>16</sup> Audience, in other words, has to be taken on its own terms, especially when it comes to spoken language. Second, only by surveying a wide range of discourse can one gain a full picture. Third, multilingual evidence (German, Russian, Spanish, and English) helps make the case. And fourth, after only a year in America (he immigrated in 1926) Boder felt confident about venturing a “psychological interpretation” of “the English language.” Indeed, his study, based as it is almost exclusively on American literature and letters, reads as an affidavit of Boder’s successful acclimatization to American society.

Important though it is to take account of Boder’s previous investigation of language, it is less clear how to weigh it. He completed his

master's thesis in 1927; almost twenty years later he interviewed the DPs. He clearly did not undertake the study of the "psychology of language" with the interview project in mind; if anything, it can be viewed as emerging in the aftermath of what Boder in his thesis-based article calls "the World War," that is, World War I. Nor did the thesis serve as a springboard for the interview project, or even for further studies of a similar kind. Indeed, whatever the attractions that the psychological analysis of language offered, they were not great enough to have him pursue them further.

But he did not leave the subject completely behind either, as witnessed by the fact that he published the material only in 1940. So even though Boder had not focused on the psychological study of language in the interval, he also had not abandoned it. It was moreover from this publication that *Time* magazine thought enough of Boder's investigations to summarize his findings later that year. Whatever the reasons that "the publication of [the study] was delayed," it did nothing less than earn him national press—something that Boder, with an eye toward a popular audience, clearly appreciated.<sup>17</sup>

The interview project occasioned a return in earnest to the study of the psychology of language. Indeed, Boder planned to write an article on the "linguistic aspects of the narratives"—the second of four planned analyses of the interviews. The article was apparently never completed. But there does exist a summary, which lists Boder's assistant at UCLA, Donald Procter, as coauthor and bears the title, "Language Affectivity and Traumatic Content as Means of Assessment of Catastrophe Reports." The study honed in on fifteen interviews, which were chosen "in order to explore the relationship between affectivity of communication patterns and traumatic content of verbatim recorded catastrophe interviews." As with his completed essay, "The Impact of Catastrophe," Boder was proposing to contrast a group of DPs "with concentration camp experience" to those who did not go through the camps. Yet Boder updates this sample in one significant way, adding to this round of analysis victims of the 1951 Kansas City flood. The study of "Language Affectivity," then, was to have been the first place that Boder would have extended his investigation of catastrophe outside of the European wartime experience.

#### "THIS POLYGLOTISM": THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERVIEW LANGUAGES

The "divergent tongues and dialects" of Boder's European DP interviews have their own distribution and logic. The largest number of interviews occurs in German, then in Yiddish, and then Russian. The other languages—English, Spanish/Ladino, Polish, French, Lithuanian, and Latvian—constitute a smaller but diverse group.<sup>18</sup> Most DPs chose a language and continued to speak it throughout the interview; some chose a

language and then Boder suggested one in which he perceived they had greater facility,<sup>19</sup> and some shifted languages within the course of the interview.

Most of the time the interview language was chosen to enable the interviewee to be at his most articulate. Yet Boder coupled this accommodation to the victim's language with his own two-pronged agenda: evidence and audience. As we have seen, his stress on language as evidence derives from an attempt to be faithful to the impoverished linguistic circumstances of the victims during the Holocaust. Yet the matter of audience was also crucial. Whatever Boder's impressive repertoire of languages, he was at the time of his visit to the DP centers based in the United States. It was here he would find an audience; it was here he would bring the message that the audience needed to listen to. He would preface every interview with this cue:

We know very little in America about the things that happened to you in concentration camps. If you want to help us out by contributing information about the fate of displaced persons, tell your own story.<sup>20</sup>

And most of the American audience who knew very little undoubtedly regarded English as their primary tongue.

On the rare occasions, then, when Boder came across a DP who could reasonably manage English over the course of an interview or even part thereof, he would not miss the chance—even though English was a tongue spoken with native facility by no DP whom he interviewed. Clearly, Boder had to juggle priorities. To go with English meant setting aside the scientific criteria—the search for linguistic evidence of trauma in native languages—that determined the interview protocol and had him emphasize the DPs' "own language." Yet set it aside he did.

The interview with Mene Mizrahi, twenty-four-year-old native of Salonika, Greece, demonstrates this forcefully. The only son of a Spanish Jewish father and a Turkish Jewish mother, Mizrahi, deported with them to Bergen-Belsen, lost both parents in the closing days of the war. In Salonika, a great center of Sephardic Jewry, Mizrahi had attended a German school, where he had also studied French. In contrast, English he had "learned alone," outside a formal educational framework. Boder, the polyglot who added languages as he added countries, replied with wonder at such independence. Mizrahi's solitary industry worked to his advantage in the postwar period, for knowledge of English enabled him (as it did Bella Zgnilek and Marcelle Precker) to land a job with the Joint Distribution Committee. Yet for our purposes, the end of the recording, where one overhears Boder and Mizrahi speaking fluent German, brings home the point that English was chosen not for reasons of linguistic comfort but rather for its capacity to bring the DPs' story and message back to America. It was this audience who needed to hear what happened.

The tension between evidence and audience, between native and acquired tongues, and, as we will see, between retribution and

conciliation, appears perhaps most dramatically in the case of Bella Zgnilek, a twenty-two-year-old Polish Jew who, having studied some English in school in Sosnowicz before the war, was working in August 1946 in the Joint Distribution Committee's Paris office. The sense of pride at being able to hold her own in an English-language office job moved her, according to Boder's notes, to choose to interview in English. Yet English, as we will see, does not have the final word. Zgnilek first recounts her mostly tragic story: the shooting of her older brother for infringement of curfew, the deportation of her mother and siblings—whose whereabouts in 1946 were still unaccounted for—and her own ordeal as a member of a work detail in the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. Knowing how to speak and type German, however, enabled her to be transferred to an office job with significantly better conditions, where she worked until liberated by the Russians. Language was thus already bound up with the shift in her fortunes that she believes allowed her to survive.<sup>21</sup> Having come to the conclusion of the interview, Boder invites Zgnilek to add a closing remark:

[I]s there anything you want to tell your own people in America from you? /Pause./ The microphone is yours. What do you think shall we tell them about all these...displaced people and deportees.<sup>22</sup>

Zgnilek's response is polite but carries an undertone of chagrin:

Well, I will just send them regards, and I am happy that not everybody of the Jews went through such a hell [hard life] /?/ as we did.<sup>23</sup>

Speaking in English from the scorched earth of Europe, Zgnilek refers to the situation of American Jews, the largest Jewish community who were spared going "through such a hard life." Though she herself was not spared such a fate, she emphasizes the happiness that this knowledge brings to her. Her comments thus divide world Jewry into two groups: those who went through it, and those who did not. Clearly, addressing this hell-spared community in their own tongue, Zgnilek pictures the cup half full.

Yet she herself feels these sentiments convey only half the picture. To complete it, she must turn to a different tongue, Polish, a language that, ironically enough, allows another side to be spoken.

BODER: Bella wants to add a few remarks in Polish. Go ahead, Bella.

ZGNILEK: /In Polish:/ I would like to tell you, my friends, that all of us Jews ought to [strongly] hate the Germans because of the wrongs which they did to us and our families, because they broke our hearts, broke our homes, and we ought never to forget that.<sup>24</sup>

By venting her bitterness in Polish, Zgnilek forges it into a Jewish tongue, a language of lament, accusation, and exhortation. No longer constrained by polite conventions, Zgnilek emphasizes not happiness but the "wrongs which they did," not the distinction between those who "went through

such a hard life" and those who did not, but the uniformity of response ("all of us Jews") that links the different communities—American included. If the English message points to the possibility of a Jewish future with the American community leading the way, the Polish message sets forth the proper attitude to the past; in Zgnilek's formulation, hatred preserves the reality of what was "broken" and who is responsible for it.

Zgnilek's shift to Polish catches a postwar irony. During the war, as I have noted elsewhere, the drift to Polish among a significant segment of Poland's Jews was viewed either as a refusal to be cut off from the nation at large or as a rejection of Jewish life and culture.<sup>25</sup> Zgnilek's final remarks point in a different direction, coinciding with a general preference of Polish Jewish survivors to testify not in Yiddish but in Polish.<sup>26</sup> Polish Jewish writers such as Julian Stryjkowski also tried to transform the role that Polish once played: "Let the selfsame Polish language," wrote Zygmunt Bauman of Stryjkowski's postwar aesthetics, "which lured the dead with its splendor and yet proved a cage for many, become their permanent and secure shelter now that they are no more. Let them enter through this language the enchanted land they once lived in without being a part of."<sup>27</sup> In Zgnilek's case, too, Polish is used against itself. Yet her words, spoken outside of Poland, tell of disenchantment, of shelter not gained but lost.

Zgnilek's switch from English to Polish is also remarkable in the context of Boder's interviews, for, along with English, Polish is Boder's problem language. Though he himself did not speak it, he conducted sections of four interviews in which the interviewee spoke Polish while he questioned in Russian, an arrangement that by and large worked out well enough.<sup>28</sup> Yet the dissonance between the two languages, however slight, was likely the reason why, in one case, he insisted that a child narrator interview not in Polish (which she preferred) but in Yiddish (in which she had significantly less facility).<sup>29</sup> The interview was in several ways exceptional. Raisel Meltzak was at thirteen years old the youngest interviewee, one of the Polish Jewish children under the care of Lena Kuechler at the Bellevue facility in Paris. Her age and fragile emotional condition likely convinced Boder that not fully sharing an interview language would have made it impossible to establish a rapport. This was a rare instance, then, when the interviewee had her language of choice (Polish) taken from her. This imposition of a language may explain the audio recording's upbeat tone of the (mainly Yiddish) narrative, which seems so at odds with the increasingly brutal chronicle that she relates.

A final mark of the special problem Polish posed comes through in the fact that the Polish interviews, plus Zgnilek's explosive final coda, were translated not by Boder but by his collaborator Bernard Wolf (about whom we will soon learn more). Boder was least at home in Polish, his own distance from it symbolic of its ambiguity for Jews telling their wartime stories. Zgnilek's turn to Polish thus not only mandates what "all of

us Jews ought to" do, but also may have challenged Boder's sense of what Polish could do, and for whom.

Though Zgnilek's English and Polish remarks seemingly articulate contrary responses, it may be that, from another angle, the second message complements the first. Precisely because American Jewry did not go through such a hard life, they risk attenuating a passionate response toward the enemy, cultivating forgetfulness as to what was suffered "to us and our families." This gap between the two communities, exactly that which Zgnilek voices appreciation of in her English remarks, points to the fragility of a collective memory ("we ought never to forget that"), and leads to her concluding emphasis on it.

But the notion that Zgnilek's switch from English to Polish should be viewed under the rubric of audience is mine, not Boder's. As his pointed comments that follow Zgnilek's and conclude the interview transcript emphasize, he sees it rather as an expression of feelings:

BODER: [Zgnilek's final remarks] were a kind of a postscript that I wanted to have recorded. It is exceedingly important to have the feelings of these young people. We notice here that [over the course of the interview] she spoke in German, in English, in Polish, and when it came to express her feelings she preferred to express in Polish.<sup>30</sup>

For Boder, Polish, one of Zgnilek's native tongues, offers the preferred medium to express her feelings—feelings that in this case are decidedly vengeful. Again, rather than seeing the switch from one tongue to another as offering the possibility to invoke delicate subjects (e.g., obligatory hatred of Germans) that could not be brought up in English, Boder highlights her age—"the feelings of these young people." Why exactly Boder believed that "having" (rather than venting or airing) these feelings was "exceedingly important" is left unsaid. Perhaps Boder is commenting here particularly in his role as a psychologist for whom feelings constitute a vital record of response.<sup>31</sup> The focus on expressing feelings may also have fit in with his larger design of rehabilitating the image of the DP; feelings here (even those advocating such a negative, if understandable, response) would document the vitality of such people, hence revising the general, to his mind reprehensible, idea that DPs were abnormally lethargic.

Zgnilek's Polish "postscript" also prompts Boder's closing reflection on the kind of terms most suitable for describing it:

This polyglotism, or multilingualistics if we want to call it that way, represents a psychological and ethical /ethnic/ problem at the same time.

Zgnilek's abrupt shift in tone and content between English and Polish moves Boder to invoke categories—polyglotism or multilingualistics—that do not appear elsewhere in the transcripts. Indeed, the shift in the message from English to Polish is so dramatic that it brings out the very

problem of languages—of choice of language as an active shaping force in the content of what is being expressed. As Boder then adds, the progression from gratitude in English to hatred in Polish represents a two-sided problem, psychological and ethnic. The psychological dimension Boder has addressed in his remarks on the expression of feelings; the ethnic dimension—a transcription correction of the interview word “ethical”—alludes to issues of diglossia and audience, issues of what can be said in a mother but not an adopted tongue (and vice versa), what can be said to one audience but not to another.

Finally, although Boder backtracked and substituted his interview expression “ethnic” for “ethical,” it may be that the ethnic problem remains also an ethical one. Speaking in a language that is pointedly meant to be understood by one group while remaining opaque to another invokes problems of sincerity and truth, concerns as basic to ethics as to ethnicity. The message of remembering broken hearts and homes expressed in Polish reflects back upon the more benign English message in another way, highlighting the fact that the vast bulk of the interview has been conducted in English. If the mother-tongue Polish conveys a message so different from the English, might not the rest of the interview be viewed in a similar light, whereby the English has softened and civilized the youthful “feelings” that Boder in this case thought so important to express?

#### EQUAL HEAT: THE TRANSLATOR AS COMMENTATOR

Boder’s team included various students at various times.<sup>32</sup> An essential member, Bernard Wolf, came aboard in Los Angeles, where Boder had relocated in 1952. Wolf was attractive to Boder because of his fluency in languages and because he himself had gone through labor and concentration camps.<sup>33</sup> Born in Szydłowiec, Poland, Wolf, eleven years old when the war began in 1939, had been interned in a number of Polish forced labor camps before being deported to Buchenwald, where he spent several years. At the close of the war he was sent to and eventually liberated from Terezin. Orphaned like so many, he was shipped to England with a group of Buchenwald children.<sup>34</sup> His five years in England added English to his repertoire of languages and he was fluent when he traveled to Los Angeles to reside with relatives. As a freshman at UCLA studying English literature, he read of Boder’s project, contacted him, and was asked by Boder to work as a translator.

Over the next years, Wolf translated from Yiddish, German, and Polish at least twenty-nine interviews.<sup>35</sup> Wolf followed a simpler method than Boder did. Boder played back the interview on one wire recorder, while he translated into English on a second wire recorder; the English recording was then typed out.<sup>36</sup> Wolf, perhaps less wed to the wonders of wire recording technology, translated the interview

phrase by phrase directly onto a pad of paper. Although Boder let Wolf proceed according to his own technique, Boder did instruct him that the translation should try to imitate the language of the original, a strategy meant to maintain the “verbatim without editorial adaptations of any kind” translation that Boder sought. In some cases, Wolf, knowing firsthand the spoken culture of the camps, was the perfect conduit for the translation, able to make sense of the idiomatic expressions in lager jargon.

Just for this reason, however, was Wolf not merely a skilled technician. His engagement with the recordings was what Susan Suleiman, with reference to a survivor reading another survivor’s Holocaust memoir, has called “autobiographical reading” (or, in Wolf’s case, “autobiographical listening”).<sup>37</sup> The stories he listened to he had lived through a few years before; indeed, in some cases he had been together with the interviewee at the same camp at the same time. This kind of intimacy had two effects. First, on-site knowledge moved Wolf to gloss episodes or details in an account, inserting his own comments in brackets and tagging them with his initials. When, for example, Samuel Isakovitch describes the rationing of food in Buchenwald, he refers to a “Kino,” a theater, in a context where one would hardly expect theatrical entertainment:

ISAKOVITCH: And when one came out after bathing...he went outside improperly dressed in only...he only had something like a shirt...nothing...and when he stepped outside he immediately caught col...froze up, and remained lying outside near the blocks. Then every morning we threw the dead into the latrine...every morning we covered the dead with sand.../those/ that have lain on the ground. Then in the morning we went out for appell...and we were given once a day to eat...we were given at twelve o'clock in the Kino of the quarantine...

BODER: What is a Kino? /The word appeared far out of context, hence the question./

ISAKOVITCH: There was a Kino...

BODER: Hm.

ISAKOVITCH: in the quarantine...

BODER: Hm.

ISAKOVITCH:...there in Buchenwald...and...

BODER: What did you call a Kino?

ISAKOVITCH: It was a Kino. There they dispensed the food...there was a Kino.

BODER: Oh, a Kino, a theater.

This is precisely where Wolf steps in to clarify:

Footnote: The Kino was a large auditorium that had been used to show movies for the old-time political prisoners. It was located in the small lager called the “Quarantine.” At the time of Isakovitch’s arrival, the small lager was overcrowded and the movie house was used for dispensing the food rations to the newly arrived prisoners. B.W.<sup>38</sup>

Providing history and context for what otherwise would remain strangely out of place, Wolf's annotation gives the curious reference a precise, if unsettling, logic. Hired on the basis of language skills, Wolf's glosses were a bonus, offering a basic hermeneutic by which to follow the unfolding drama of the interview.

They also complemented and, in a fashion, superseded Boder's professorial authority. Boder was by all accounts authoritarian in dealing with students. The interaction between professor and student he kept clearly demarcated. Being an undergraduate, Wolf understood that he had to defer to Boder's authority. Yet his amphibious role, student yet survivor, translator yet witness to the events being recounted, earned him an authority that was difficult to challenge. Yet even here Boder often held his ground, refusing to yield when it came to translating a word or phrase over which he and his student differed.

This intransigence makes all the more impressive the fact that Boder let pass the transcription insertions that Wolf entered on his own initiative. In one place, moreover, Boder himself alludes to Wolf's double role, and thereby confirms the special nature of Wolf's experiential authority. In the interview in question, Adolf Heisler is recounting the "luck" that enabled him to reach Buchenwald when most did not:

HEISLER: And luckily we were taken and transported to Buchenwald from there.

BODER: Transported back to Buchenwald.

HEISLER: Yes, and so...

BODER: Nu?

HEISLER: But with me it was a special stroke of luck. I don't know how I succeeded in that whole affair, because all were transported in the rr-.../correcting himself/ on foot.

BODER: Yes.

HEISLER: And I had told myself—there were /other/ sick people—I am not going on foot any more. Let them kill me here. I have to go and suffer and then die? I decided to die here on the spot.

BODER: Nu?

HEISLER: And then there came, in the last moment, trucks, and the sick were loaded on the trucks, and they were taken away.

BODER: To Buchenwald?

HEISLER: Yes.

BODER: Nu?

HEISLER: And that was our luck. /The following note was inserted in the first-draft translation by Mr. Bernard Wolf who himself was in Buchenwald at that time: He is probably referring here to the death march from Ohrdruf to Buchenwald. "Twelve thousand prisoners left Ohrdruf, less than half arrived in Buchenwald."/<sup>39</sup>

Boder's introduction to the gloss—emphasizing that Wolf "himself was in Buchenwald"—casts Wolf as one who has the right to insert such a "note." In the next line, Boder plays the role that Wolf usually played

himself, glossing the words spoken by the witness in order to elucidate half-told events. Yet in contrast to Wolf, Boder's "probably" places him on the outside looking in, trying, speculatively, to reconstruct a historical episode (the "death march"). In contrast, Wolf's phrasing qualifies nothing: "Twelve thousand prisoners left Ohrdorf, less than half arrived in Buchenwald." Wolf's haunting phrase not only precisely counts numbers. Its symmetry also reenacts the movement of the "march" (a word used by Boder but not by Wolf). Just as with the march itself, the first half of the sentence shows the prisoners at full strength as it begins, while the second half tells of the terrible losses sustained at its end. The symmetry also brings out the irony: the prisoners "left" and then "arrived." The latter action seemingly fulfills the earlier one, yet arrival here bespeaks not resolution but dissipation, not a completed motion but a terminal one. Finally, at the end of each phrase stands a camp (Ohrdorf...Buchenwald), their parallel position limiting and encompassing the prisoners' world; any movement outside leads not to freedom or well-being but to a similar constricting place, with the only change being a different name. Moreover, if the camps are lethal, the movement between them is even more so—a fact that in the sentence is measured by the distance between "left" and "arrived."

Treating Wolf's gloss like a line of poetry is no doubt unusual but justified because it tells an epic story in hauntingly shapely form. This shapeliness sets it off from Boder's discursive, nearly scientific prose. It also sets it off from the staccato interview exchange between Heisler and Boder, wherein each voice limits and pushes at the other. In contrast to these, Wolf's comment is a unit unto itself. Its compressed picture of general conditions surely complements Heisler's specific story. But it also stands alone, an observation crafted from within the memory of being there.<sup>40</sup>

Hired as a translator, Wolf, as survivor of ghettos and camps, thus served as an essential member of Boder's team. Yet his work on the project had an eminently personal dimension as well; the translation of the interviews (and glosses thereon) became what he referred to as "my testament," the work bringing to the English-speaking world a version of his own experience. The intimacy is understandable. If for the general reader the interview accounts are searing, they were for him often intolerable, bringing back memories so vividly that he would sit crying and would eventually have to leave off with the task of translation. Viewing the interviews from the inside, and rendering them into a language that could be understood, Wolf could tell his story via the stories of others. His task of translation was thus both in language and in experience, a rendering into English but also joining his words to their narrative—which frequently was also a version of his. Like a writer of fiction (which the translation of the interviews certainly was not), Wolf could relay what he went through but not have to expose himself by doing it. The glosses—the relatively infrequent short comments that Wolf set down

under his own name—were those points at which the veil dropped. His voice and authority were there brought into the open.

Important in its own right, Wolf's increasingly active role also suggests the change in Boder's project. For several years, Wolf's contributions were small and infrequent. But by 1956, he had become indispensable, translating twenty-four of the twenty-eight interview transcripts published that year.<sup>41</sup> What had been a one-man operation became collaborative; what had been the work of an outsider striving for objectivity yielded to the idiom of the insider telling a version of his story. Together they endeavored to overcome, in Antoine Berman's evocative formulation, the "obscure space" that intervenes between the conception of translation and its execution.<sup>42</sup> With Polish, the strangely Jewish non-Jewish language that held a unique place in Boder's repertoire, the balance shifted most dramatically: "The Polish translation," wrote Boder in another inserted note, "is almost the exclusive responsibility of Mr. Bernard Wolf."<sup>43</sup> With the "almost" Boder saved his collaborative share in the final interview text; with the "exclusive" he signaled that when it came to Polish he was out of his depth. Translation became the vehicle for Boder to return his project to those who had most to say.

The search for evidence was one facet of Boder's quest. In addition, he had to move between and among languages, both in the multilingual interviews he conducted and in the effort to translate them for a wider audience. A European Jew himself, he knew that what was spoken in one tongue often could not be said in another, that a radical diglossia was often the order of the day. Yet translation was imperative; otherwise the DPs' testimony, designated above all for an American audience, would languish. On top of that general imperative, the coded language of the ghettos and camps demanded its own translation, a skill requiring personal experience—something that Boder, well ensconced in America during the Second World War, did not have. He had to find a way to import the expertise, to enfold it within the project itself, to let it have its say, to give the translation, in the measured expression of poet Myra Sklarew, equal heat.<sup>44</sup> Outsider to the tragic destruction of European Jewry, Boder labored to have the story told from within.

**"THE LAST THING HE SHOULD HAVE CARED  
ABOUT WAS LITERATURE"**

Eager to use the wire recorder to document the DPs' plight, Boder conceived of his interview work under the rubric of literature:

It is no exaggeration to state that never before have verbatim recorded narratives been presented as a form of literature.<sup>45</sup>

That Boder should cast these "verbally reproduced narratives" as a new form of literature did not come out of the blue. While still in Russia,

Boder had taught literature at a gymnasium;<sup>46</sup> he himself penned some interesting, though unpublished, short stories and poems. More recently, he had featured literary texts in his psychology of language study. Yet it took determination to go a step further and designate the DP stories as literature. What moved Boder to present these narratives under such an unlikely rubric? What did he gain by doing so? And by casting the narratives under the shadow of literature, did he not risk losing the professional audiences, social scientists and historians alike, who would seem to be most naturally drawn to the narratives as primary documents?

Indeed, calling some kinds of narrative literature has sometimes worked to compromise them. So literary and cultural critic Irving Howe, responding to accusations that George Orwell's novel *1984* lacked an inspired style, pointed to the limitations of conventional literary criteria when applied to this kind of writing. Orwell's commitment to expressing the evil of totalitarianism is such that, to Howe's mind, "delicacies of phrasing or displays of rhetoric come to seem frivolous—*he has no time, he must get it all down*.... The last thing Orwell cared about when he wrote *1984*, the last thing he should have cared about, was literature" (Howe's emphasis).<sup>47</sup> A similar pique has been voiced in terms of writings from, or about, the Holocaust. "How," queries Irving Halperin in one of the earliest studies in English on Holocaust narratives, "is [the reader] to judge literary works in this area?...given the extraordinary nature of their content...what criteria would one use in evaluating them as literature?" Halperin believes they should be read "not so much as *literary works* but rather as important documents of modern consciousness" (Halperin's emphasis).<sup>48</sup> Neither Howe's nor Halperin's words were the last on the subject. Numbers of critics (and, for that matter, writers) have searched for ways to reconcile the tensions between form and content that they sharply delineate. But the fact that the designation "literature" was so roundly taken to task later on intensifies the question surrounding Boder's eagerness to confer this name upon his interviews.

The question is further sharpened when we consider one of the most influential studies of Holocaust testimony, Lawrence Langer's *Holocaust Testimonies*.<sup>49</sup> A literary critic who helped to establish the field of Holocaust literature, Langer changed course when he came to analyze video interviews with Holocaust survivors, arguing that these interviews have "a freedom from the legacy of literary form and precedent."<sup>50</sup> This freedom allows oral testimony access to a realm of the Holocaust closed to both conventional literary study and to history. In this respect, oral memoirs, as I understand Langer, go beyond (or beneath) the literary, circumventing the aesthetic boundaries that restrict the kind of story a victim can tell and a listener can hear. Again, not all scholars have taken the step that Langer has, presuming to liberate oral testimony from a bondage to literature. Yet Boder, for his part, went in exactly the opposite direction, joining his "verbatim recorded narratives" to the realm of

literature as if it were a match made in heaven. What were the forces operating in the late 1940s (roughly the same time Orwell published *1984*) that led Boder to declare his interviews "a form of literature"? How does such a designation affect our encounter with them today?

Boder conceived of his interviews as a pathbreaking example of post-war literature. The collection of interviews

presents the *first* case in world literature where use is being made of actually verbatim recorded narratives, a form of literature which is bound to emerge in the future as the result of newly invented recording devices. (Boder's emphasis)<sup>51</sup>

Boder usually bent over backward to qualify his claims. In this case, however, he throws caution to the winds, making a categorical claim for newness and innovation.

The founding of a new form of literature pointed to new forms of interpretation as well, to critical strategies that would be particularly responsive to the aural medium:

It is also highly probable that in time we shall develop an art of listening to authentic recordings and find new methods of appreciation of verbally reproduced narratives.

In this formulation, the recordings were not simply a means to cope with the problem of multiple languages. They had their own inherent worth. Indeed, that other perceptual avenue, as Boder called it, would in time spawn an art of listening. Dedicated to transcribing the recordings and putting them before a reader, Boder was clearly wishing to retain the special aspect of recordings as sound. This was the feature that would last. It would create a literature independent, as it were, of pen and paper.

This innovative gesture is perhaps ahead of its time. But the scholarly community will soon catch up:

It seems not too remote a speculation that with the development of recording machinery an art of verbatim recording of personal experiences will develop and take its special place in the fields of psychology, anthropology and general literature.

It is this triad—personality, ethnography, and narration, to shift the terms slightly—that defines the interviews' "special place." In the field of general literature, as we will see, one classic work more than any other exerted its influence on Boder's concept and method.

#### BODER'S ANCIENT MARINERS: GREAT LITERARY WORKS AND EXPERIMENTAL READING

"I Am Alone" is the title for the first chapter of *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, which consists of the interview with Anna Kovitzka, the last to be interviewed in Germany and the next to the last on the expedition as a

whole. The title is apt because, like so many Boder interviewed, Kovitzka was alone, bereft of family and, particularly, her murdered infant child. The Rosh Hashanah holiday, when the interview took place, sharpened the sense of the family's absence: "But after work, to come alone to my room—today is a holiday. Where are all mine, who used to celebrate the holidays with me?" She ends the interview with the words that give the chapter its name: "My own people are no more. I am alone."<sup>52</sup>

Hauntingly exact when describing her predicament, the words also echo those of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*: "Alone, alone, all, all alone" declares the mariner in the wake of his loss of innocence.<sup>53</sup> One of the pillars of English Romantic verse, the *Rime* tells of an "ancient Mariner" who compels a wedding guest to listen to his marvelous and sad account of a sea voyage where a thoughtless act of violence brings a deathlike curse upon the ship's sailors. Only when he repents of his senseless act of cruelty is the curse lifted, and the voyage continues.

Seemingly light years apart from Anna's predicament, the Mariner's tale is joined to Anna's by Boder himself. Commenting on Kovitzka's resigned observation, "one has to live"—uttered in response to her chronicle of leaving her parents and facing increasingly dangerous conditions in the Grodno ghetto—Boder explains the survivor guilt that lies behind it by way of a passage from part 4 of Coleridge's poem—a section that expresses the Mariner's anguish at having lived on while others did not:

The many men, so beautiful;  
And they all dead did lie;  
And a thousand slimy things  
Lived on; and so did I. (lines 236–239)

The cry of "all, all alone" comes in the passage directly before this one and, though Boder does not refer to it explicitly, it works in the poem as a lead-in to "lived on." It is because of being all alone, having survived while others "dead did lie," that the perception of unfairness and the guilt growing out of it comes to the fore. The Mariner grotesquely contrasts the dead beautiful men with the living on of "slimy things." Thus to use "I Am Alone" as the title of his book's first chapter brings these associations to bear on Anna's story from the beginning; the echoing final line of the interview—"I am alone"—brings them to the surface.

Boder's sense that *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* offers a powerful prototype of the Holocaust survivor has found notable expression elsewhere. Primo Levi, in particular, gave prominence to the poem and its protagonist, drawing on his "favorite literary role model" for the epigraph to his final collection of essays, *The Drowned and the Saved*, as well as the opening lines of his poem, "The Survivor":

Since then, at an uncertain hour,  
That agony returns,  
And till my ghastly tale is told  
This heart within me burns.<sup>54</sup>

For Levi, the Mariner's agony stems not from "this guilt of having survived" but from the obligation of storytelling and the "inescapable memory" that fuels it. That the Mariner has to accost the wedding guest, forcing him to listen, also recalls the fear expressed by Levi that he (and the other victims) upon return to normal life would encounter an indifferent audience.<sup>55</sup> The Ancient Mariner thus stands for Levi largely as a counterexample, one that defines half of the survivor's storytelling needs.

In a slightly altered vein, Geoffrey Hartman invokes the Ancient Mariner as representing one pole of survivor testimony in general:

Survivor testimony...is partly a flashback, an obsessive monologue like that of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner in the poem of that name. But it is also a narrative in search of itself that depends on a voluntary rather than a hypnotized listener, on a caring and careful ear.<sup>56</sup>

On the divide between a hypnotized and a voluntary listener, Boder puts forth recurrent questions that perhaps best display his careful ear. In any case, this focus on the Mariner as obsessive storyteller pursues a different line of association than Boder's concern with the anguish of being alone. There may of course be overlap, the obsessive story pouring forth in order to overcome the aloneness that defines the situation of the moment. And to some degree Hartman's formulation tries to integrate both poles, bringing the obsessed teller together with the caring listener. But Boder's emphasis on the Mariner's aloneness emerges from the desperate circumstances of the summer of 1946, when the DPs' prewar families were either known to have perished or remained unaccounted for, and not enough time had passed for new families to come into being. Anna's profound aloneness no doubt moved Boder to shape his interpretation of the Ancient Mariner in her image.

*The Ancient Mariner* not only gave Boder a vocabulary for a survivor's predicament. It also provided a model for interpreting the interviews as literary works:

The field of general literature presents numerous examples of detailed commentaries on great literary works such as the Greek and Roman classics, the tragedies of Shakespeare, or Goethe's *Faust*. One of the masterpieces especially favored by commentators is Coleridge's "Rhyme [sic] of the Ancient Mariner" and it appears that the wire-recorded stories of the Displaced Persons could well be handled in a similar fashion provided broad use is made of findings, theories, and hypotheses offered by psychology, anthropology, and sociology.<sup>57</sup>

Having recast the "wire-recorded stories of the Displaced Persons" into the shape of classic literature, Boder chooses Coleridge's *Rime* as the most fitting template for their analysis.

In the essay that follows the above-quoted introduction, "The Tale of Anna Kovitzka: A Logico-Systematic Analysis or an Essay in

Experimental Reading," Boder takes a single interview and treats it as a poem, proceeding in his commentary from phrase to phrase, even at times focusing on a word within the phrase. The essay, moreover, develops its interpretation of the interview by highlighting a number of literary features, most noticeably absence, narrative gaps, and pacing.

"In 1939," remarked Anna toward the beginning of the interview, "I was still with my parents." Boder proceeds to explicate this seemingly innocuous opening statement:

Seven years have passed—nevertheless the narrative begins by placing herself [*sic*] as an integrated part of a "snug" family circle. There are frequent references [in the interview] to *parents*, father, father-in-law, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, husband, daughter, but not a single episode involving her mother, although she definitely states that at the start of the war she was with her parents, and that after the father went into hiding she remained with her mother.<sup>58</sup>

He goes on to explain the mother's absence from the narrative in three different ways, two "Freudian" and one "sociological." The most powerful is based, Boder tells us, on what he heard from a "number of [interview] recordings" and invokes repression: "the thought of the mother who has presumably perished in the crematories is so unbearable that it suffers the utmost degree of repression."<sup>59</sup> Like many that Boder spoke to, for Anna the loss of the mother is singularly overwhelming. This is one of few instances where Boder addresses the kind of repression of painful memory that has become a staple of the discussion of Holocaust survivors' trauma and trauma studies more generally. As I have noted earlier, Boder does not usually define trauma in this fashion. And even here, he veers away from endorsing this view by noting that "Freudians have never clearly distinguished between repressions of memory material and blocking caused by reluctance to mention or to discuss people or events which arouse memories of [a] superpainful nature." Indeed, repression of the unconscious may not be a factor at all. Anna may have omitted mentioning her mother because her loss, perhaps more intensely felt than others, was better not to dwell on. Boder thus returns to Anna (and his other narrators) a conscious agency, a choice to preserve by way of "reluctance" a private zone of loss. Boder knew and affirmed that those who had suffered terrible losses were not obliged to tell everything they remembered.

But more interesting than the specific explanations is Boder's focus on how Anna begins her story and on what she leaves out. This scrutiny of narrative beginnings and absences shows Boder to have concerns primarily different than those of a historian. It is not so much what is said as how—and what that reveals about the personality under the impact of catastrophe. Boder's analysis also dramatizes the seriousness with which he took the material of the interview. No matter how improvised were the conditions in which he conducted the interview, the results—the

strategies that shaped the grim narratives—were worthy of detailed analysis.

Boder also points to omissions in the narrative pattern: "Here is," he put it succinctly, "a gap in the story."<sup>60</sup> Anna's description moves abruptly from Kielce to Grodno, from an area of Poland occupied by the Germans to one controlled by the Russians, from a setting of terror and oppression to one of relative calm. Boder is struck that the movement between the cities must have had "dramatic episodes" such as the separations from the family and illegal border crossings, but Anna filtered these out of her account. Boder attributes this strategy to emotional fatigue: the narrator "must after reporting an experience of stress, or smarting discomfort, create an anticlimax in the story which corresponds to the state of exhaustion following a paroxysm."

No one, Boder seems to say, can tell about horrible emotional experiences without pause. The telling depletes the teller as much as any listener. But within the course of an interview of this kind there was no opportunity to truly take a break. So instead, "the person[,] worn-out emotionally, if prodded to continue to narrate, is bound to pick from his memory events which no matter how grotesque by themselves, may appear less distressing within a certain frame of reference."<sup>61</sup> Although Boder generalizes the theory, it is nevertheless clear that he derives it from his DP interview experience. He was the one who prodded; he urged the DPs to recount, one after another, progressively sad tales of occupation, deportation, and incarceration; he apparently saw that no one can narrate such awful events with equal intensity. The story reflects the experience of telling as much as it reflects the events being recounted. The narrative gap thus testifies to the grueling task of testimony.

Boder's explanation is not then so much literary as psychobiological. This is indeed typical of Boder's analysis. The literary point of departure usually quickly yields to a broader set of cultural, sociological, political, and ethnic as well as psychological speculations. And the theory of emotional fatigue actually undermines a full-blown literary interpretation of the narrative. By attributing the same catalyst to every narrative gap, Boder overlooks the dynamics of the specific interview. Relief at escaping from the Germans, for instance, could well account for the calm with which Anna describes her arrival in Grodno; or the repression of the event of leaving her parents, whom as it turns out she was never to see again, could equally account for skipping over so much at this point in her story. But whatever the plausibility of his explanation, it was his being drawn to the omissions and gaps that is significant, his attention to what was left out, his act of interpreting Anna's story by who and what was missing, that is noteworthy.

Even though these were spontaneous narratives rather than crafted poetry or prose, Boder believed the DP interviews deserved the kind of careful explication extended to classic literature—foremost of which

was Coleridge's poem. Yet Boder's preference for this poem over other classic literary works comes by way of "stumbling over commentaries" on the *Rime*. Of these, the commentary that made its greatest mark on Boder (as on other readers) was that of twentieth-century writer and critic Robert Penn Warren:

This method was called by Red Bain a logio-systematic analysis, and by Professor Robert Penn Warren in his recent study of the Ancient Mariner—an Experiment in Reading.<sup>62</sup>

The model poem thus came with a model commentary already in place, indeed one that since its publication has dominated the *Rime*'s postwar critical interpretation.

Penn Warren, a celebrated novelist and poet in his own right, was also one of the guiding lights of "new criticism," the most influential American literary critical movement from the 1930s through the 1960s. His essay on *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* revised the study of Coleridge, one of the premier figures of English Romanticism. Warren wrote the "recent study," which he first delivered as a lecture at Yale University in April 1945, during the last years of the Second World War.<sup>63</sup> It originally appeared in 1946 in the *Kenyon Review* and was subsequently published in a book the same year, together with a new edition of Coleridge's poem bearing illustrations by Alexander Calder.<sup>64</sup>

Warren's essay, countering two long-standing critical trends, had, and still has, a profound influence on interpreting the *Rime*.<sup>65</sup> For all that, no critic has substantially addressed the essay's relation to the period of its wartime gestation. To be sure, the essay does not invoke wartime Europe nor does Warren himself elsewhere allude to a connection. But John Burt, a leading commentator on Warren's oeuvre, believes that the essay must in some way respond to the war.<sup>66</sup> He notes that Warren's book-length poem, *Brother to Dragons*, in process during the same period, is full of references to the Holocaust. "It would be hard to imagine," Burt continues, "that Warren's thinking about Coleridge's poem and his work on his own poem—a poem suffused with much the same point of view as his Coleridge essay (although rather darker)—did not influence each other." So Boder may have been drawn to the essay's tacitly "dark" dimension.

In contrast, Calder's illustrations seem to belie this darker side.<sup>67</sup> The sailors are pictured as nude and athletic, distinguished from one another by subtle shifts of facial features and hair. Produced during the war (and the Holocaust), one might think the sailors would have reflected the state of the world in the terrible throes of battle and carnage. But Calder's mariners look strong and well provided for, their physical well-being perhaps echoing Warren's symbolic reading of the poem.

Why did Warren appeal to Boder as a model for this kind of analysis? Boder says little on this score, making it necessary to speculate. The notion of evil operative in Warren's interpretation of the poem may have

resonated deeply with Boder. Warren argues that, since there is “no motivation,” the Mariner commits his crime out of “perversity.” While other critics saw the lack of motivation as a deficiency, Warren viewed it as one of the poem’s central contributions. He borrows from Poe to articulate the nature of this perverse evil, in a memorable phrase, as the “longing of the soul to *vex itself*.” Such a formulation comes close to engendering the kind of perplexity Boder experienced when trying to fathom the evil described in interview after interview. Three other features of his interpretation stand out in relation to Boder: first, Warren emphasizes not the Mariner’s obsessive telling, but rather the loneliness that comes in the wake of his actions; second, in several instances he highlights the complicated relation between the perpetrator of the crime and his accomplices (i.e., the sailors on board the Mariner’s ship) in a way that echoes Boder’s concern with the bystander; and third, the poem’s key passage, according to Warren, is the one Boder cites (“and a thousand slimy things / lived on”), though they each stress different aspects.

Clearly in sympathy with Warren’s precedent, Boder nonetheless had his own ends in sight. On the simplest level, his calling the recordings literature was meant to broaden the community of readers. As documents, even upgraded to the level of “human documents,” the interviews were of interest primarily to researchers. Placed alongside classic literature, the interviews could be read (or heard) with profit by anyone. Second, the attribution gave him a model for commentary, for attending to nonfiction with the kind of care usually reserved for fiction. It allowed for close attention to detail, especially to language, narrative, and psychological circumstance. Like Warren, Boder could expand or contract his remarks as necessary, move between macro and micro elements, and bring to bear whatever was necessary to elucidate the multiple levels of Kovitzka’s tale.

His warrant for in-depth analysis did not blind Boder to the fact that these were spontaneous narratives and thus did not display the craft found in great art. “They do not offer,” as Boder soberly expressed it, “the best from a standpoint of conventional literary form.” But once that point was conceded and the special status of the interviews acknowledged, the analysis could go forward. These were hybrid texts, ambiguous enough in form and character that Boder could treat them under the rubrics of both social science and literature. It was the interplay between the two that gave this form of literature its distinction.

Boder’s has not been the only attempt, of course, to join these two realms, to take what has its basis in scientific research and render it into a literary text. Oliver Sacks’s clinical tales, to note one remarkable example, dramatize arcane episodes in neuropathology with the goal of “restor[ing] the human subject at the centre—the suffering, afflicted, fighting, human subject.” The way to accomplish this was to “deepen a case history to a narrative or tale.”<sup>68</sup> That Boder called the interview “The Tale of Anna Kovitzka” hints that he had something of the same idea in

mind. Yet his task was made more complicated by his refusal to render the DP interviews into a more artful literary language. Instead, his commentary attempted to reveal the literariness that inhered in the verbatim recorded narratives, craftless though they might be. Like Orwell, he eschewed the delicate phrasings and displays of rhetoric. But in Boder's case, he did not care any less for literature. Contrary to Langer's misgivings, the designation "literature" would not confine but rather release testimony's full potential.

For researchers today, the ease with which Boder could make the claim is itself bracing, containing as it does a vision of the potential harmony between disciplines, an idea that the Holocaust—the symbol of destruction in the extreme—could (or, better, should) give birth to new forms of inquiry and expression, and a mandate for transforming awkwardly communicated experience into the classics of our time.



## *Epilogue: Rewriting the History of Holocaust Testimony*

Boder's project compels us to rethink the models of Holocaust testimony and the terms that characterize them.

Indeed, a case study of his interview project carves out a distinctive territory for early postwar testimony: neither immediate nor belated, neither of a piece with the wartime writings nor divorced from them. Not the work of a historian, Boder's interviews are nonetheless tied to a cluster of historical issues: the DP saga, immigration, and the ambiguous place (if there was to be a place) of Jews in postwar Europe.

Yet even this ensemble of concerns does not do full justice, for Boder's project, launched at a transitional moment of history, outgrew it, so that his work accelerated even as the DP crisis eased. I have chosen, then, to call the Boder interviews "unbelated testimony"—a historical designation formulated to bear some (but not a great deal of) polemical edge. These were interviews undertaken without undue delay, collected as the opportunity arose or was created, urged forward by an awareness of time's passage but subject to the administrative constraints of the postwar world. Unbelated testimony issued forth unbidden by later events; nothing had to happen to release this testimony from chains of silence or disinterest.

There is yet an additional distinction to Boder's project: his "happy idea"—the fact that he recorded the interviews and preserved the recordings—distinguishes his work from all other unbelated testimony. What exactly do these recordings give us today, beyond the raw material of a primary document?

Several ideas have been ventured. Listening to the recordings gives us a sense of the survivors' youth, overturning the notion—particularly accented with the rise of video testimony—that all survivors are, and always were, aging. Even though we factually know that the narrators were young at the time of the war, hearing young voices brings the point home on a visceral level.<sup>1</sup> According to a second proposal, the recordings better dramatize the rawness, the continued lack of mastery of one's own story at this early stage of recounting. This sense of the narrator nearly out of control, the story nearly out of reach, can be better heard than read.<sup>2</sup>

The third idea pertains to the nature of the interview format. Boder's recordings gain objectivity on behalf of the survivors. With the other

early postwar interviews, we are left only with a written version, usually deriving from the hand of the interviewer or other editors. With Boder's recordings, one can hear (more or less well) the words spoken that at least in some cases have later been rendered into a written narrative. Hence, Boder's transcribed version is not the final word. The transcript (and translation) can almost always be checked against the recording.

These recordings of course also preserve Boder's side of the interview equation: his questions, comments, pauses, affirmations. Indeed, literary scholar and oral historian Alessandro Portelli points out that audio usually bests video in honoring the interviewer's contribution. Whereas videotaped interviews often eliminate the questioner from the camera's view, relegating him or her to the background, audio picks up both voices equally.<sup>3</sup> The Boder interviews bear this out, keeping as they do Boder's exhorting voice in the foreground. In this way, the recordings insist on Boder's dramatic presence in the interview. They also invite one to challenge Boder's characterization of his own protocols and role—an invitation that in some cases I have taken up.

Boder believed in closure and, moreover, in closure of a certain kind. At the very end of *Topical Autobiographies* (page 3163, to be exact), at the very bottom of the page, he had printed in Hebrew script the word *hazak*, a flourish that was both surprisingly conventional and strikingly innovative. Boder knew well what he was doing. "The three kriptic letters at the end," he wrote to his friends Francis and Maggie Coughlin in 1957, allowing the German k ("kriptic") to creep into his otherwise admirable English spelling, "are the Hebrew word *Khazak* meaning 'be strong' and they are imprinted at the end of each book of the Torah."<sup>4</sup> The practice of concluding with "be strong" in the Torah's printed editions has its source in an episode following the death of Moses, where God wishes his successor Joshua the strength to continue to speak and teach the words of Torah. Having labored to learn the sacred teachings of an entire book of the Torah, the student, like Joshua, is in need of the strength to go forward.

The invocation of *hazak* has a further dimension. Not only is it printed at the end of each of the five books of the Torah, but, as the synagogue Torah reader ceremonially concludes the chanting of a book, the congregation shouts "*hazak*" (actually "*hazak hazak v'nishazeik / Be strong, be strong, and may we be strengthened!*"). Indeed, this verbal affirmation is perhaps better known than the printed coda. In another way, then, this gesture suited Boder to a tee, for the word *hazak* too has both an aural and printed dimension, the printed word being the verbatim transcription of the congregation's proclamation.

This was not a common way to end a book, even a book more overtly Jewish in character than Boder's collection of interview transcriptions. Indeed, I know of no other case where an author (or editor) has consecrated his own book in similar fashion. In this respect, Boder's use of *hazak* identifies him splendidly. For he was close enough to Jewish

tradition to know the convention of ending one of the five books of the Torah with this reverential word. Yet he was distant enough to wrench the word out of its time-honored context and affix it to the collection of interviews.

What could it mean that he saw his work as having a likeness to Torah—a likeness clearly implied in the earnest lines penned to his good friends the Coughlins? It may be that “likeness” was what Boder was after, a final declaration of the high seriousness with which he pursued this mission.<sup>5</sup> Working with the tools and conventions of the secular academic, Boder felt that his collection of grim tales transcended these boundaries. He was not alone among twentieth-century academics in looking beyond the secular to ratify his work. Indeed, his gesture would accord, in Gabrielle Spiegel’s incisive formulation, with the secular historian’s ambivalent quest. On the one hand, in order to write critical history, the historian must opt for a desacralized viewpoint, one that rejects the bias imported with any particular religious perspective. On the other hand, the historian hopes to confer on his or her project the seriousness of the sacred, even after abandoning its premises. This quest, according to Spiegel, has frequently found the dose of the sacred it seeks in the antihistorical category of memory. Boder’s reference to *hazak* would be one of the ways by which such historians (or, in his case, social scientists) actually “negate the sacred but seek to retain its aura.”<sup>6</sup>

But the formulation does not entirely square with Boder’s closing gesture. If Boder was aura-seeking, why do it in a way so guarded, oblique, and marginal? Why be—to invoke his own arresting term—so cryptic? Here again, Boder has the audience at the forefront of his calculations. For a Jewish reader in the know, the Hebrew letters would be unconventional but understandable. For the general reader (which would of course include Jews who could not read Hebrew or were unfamiliar with the conventions of sacred texts) the letters remain cryptic, a strange set of marks that, if noticed at all, would require explication.

In 1949, Boder concluded *I Did Not Interview the Dead* in a far less cryptic and audacious way. There he gave the last word to Jack (i.e., David) Matzner, speaking of his Wiesbaden synagogue memorial:

for those who shall not return anymore, and for those who were able to leave this country in time, so the word of God may spread over all the world, a memorial to all who knew Wiesbaden and who once lived in Wiesbaden.<sup>7</sup>

Matzner’s homage certainly had its own compelling force. In the case of the book, however, nothing by Boder came after, likely because the publishers had advised Boder to cut back on commentary, of whatever sort. In contrast, the 1957 collection had room to maneuver. Roaming with a free hand over his self-published text, he could add what he wanted, no matter how “kriptic” or irregular. Yet for all that, the conclusions of the 1949 book and 1957 text share an affinity for closure, and, moreover, for

closure obtained by way of conventional religious gestures: one a memorial to a sacred place, the other the invocation of a sacred word.

Among Boder's papers in an undated folder marked "Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*" is a single piece of paper bearing a handwritten note:

*Project*

Things they never told  
to their children, especially  
after the age of 60 or other age level.  
Things they never told  
to their parents after the age of 40, or  
other age level.<sup>8</sup>

The note outlines in brief a projected study that Boder apparently never carried out. Such a project is especially interesting coming from someone devoted to helping people tell what is difficult. The focus here is on what was never told to those to whom one is closest. Perhaps this points to the flip side of Boder's questions and supplies a justification for them: if closeness implies having never told, distance (professional or experiential) enables disclosure—at least of some things.

Two other items stand out. First, Boder conceives of the project symmetrically, or nearly so. Having never told goes in both directions. By taking account of both parents and children, he is sure to deal with the issue from multiple angles and from different perspectives based on one's position in the family. This passion for symmetry, for one side mirroring the other, may reflect back on the nature of the DP interviews, implying that the back and forth between interviewer and narrator has its own symmetry, each side having its turn to say and not say, tell and not tell. And second, with age one tells less. With age one becomes more cautious, more guarded, less impulsive, less forthcoming. Does this epigrammatic schema of telling less allude to Boder's eagerness to interview the young, those who would divulge fully, unreservedly, without calculation? To interview those who even have the audacity to challenge the premises of the form and substance of the interview itself? So it was that Abraham Kimmelmann, whom Boder took to be even younger than he was, could turn the tables, asking indelicate questions that cut to the heart of the matter:

MOHNBLUM [KIMMELMANN]: (*Rather timidly*) Yes. I want to ask you a question. You are a professor of psychology?

QUESTION [BODER]: Yes. Please speak louder. (*He apparently tried to avoid the microphone.*)

MOHNBLUM: Are the psychologists so far advanced that they really know human nature so well? Do they really have a picture of man's various qualities? Do they really understand the human qualities so well?

QUESTION: Absolutely no.

MOHNBLUM: You are entirely right. I didn't ask you simply because I wanted to know, because I know this already. I just wanted to hear it from you. After all that I have seen, I know that we know nothing yet.<sup>9</sup>

## Appendix I: Chronology of Interviews

JULY 29–OCTOBER 4, 1946

Interview site, name, and date are followed by available information on interviewee's age, birthplace, wartime locations, and interview language.

### Paris ORT, July 29–30

Michail Khichenko, July 29

*Russia, Paris ORT janitor; Russian*

Leon Shachnovski, July 29

*Russia, Kovno ghetto, Dachau, Augsburg, Stutthof; Russian*

Polia Bisenhaus, July 29

*Poland, Kielce ghetto, Częstochowa, Bergen-Belsen, Burgau, Türkheim, Dachau; Yiddish, German*

Raisel Roset, July 30

*Age fifty, Poland, Zamosc/Yediza ghettos, Częstochowa; Yiddish*

Boleslaw Czolopicki, July 30

*Age forty-three, Poland, Geldern-Kappelen; Polish, Russian, English*

Adam Krakowski, July 30

*Age twenty-one, Poland, Sachsenhausen, Braunschweig, Ravensbrück, Ludwigslust; German*

Dr. Fuswerk, July 30

Marco Moskovitz, July 30

*Age nineteen, Slovakia, Birkenau, Breslau, Flossenbürg; German*

Malfis Marson, July 30

*Paris, French resistance; French, German, Russian, English*

Samuel Isakovitch, July 30

*Age eighteen, Romania, Sighet ghetto, Birkenau, Monowitz, Buchenwald; German*

Mrs. Rudo, July 30

*Age thirty-seven, Spain, forced laborer in Germany; Spanish*

### Chateau Boucicaut, July 31–August 2

Mendel Herskovitz, July 31

*Age eighteen, Poland, Lodz ghetto, Skarzsko-Kamienna, Buchenwald, Dachau; Yiddish*

Jurek Kestenberg, July 31  
*Age seventeen, Poland, Warsaw ghetto, Majdanek, Skarzysko-Kamienna, Buchenwald; Yiddish*

Kalman Eisenberg, July 31  
*Age eighteen, Poland, Starachowice ghetto and camp, Auschwitz, Buna, Flossenbergs, Buchenwald; Yiddish*

Fela Nichthauser, August 1  
*Age twenty-three, Poland, Sosnowiec, Birkenheim, Waldenburg, Greben, Bergen-Belsen; Yiddish*

Israel Unikowski, August 2  
*Age eighteen, Poland, Lodz ghetto, Birkenau, Buchenwald; German*

**Paris/Rue de patin, August 3-9**

Jola (Yetta) Gross, August 3  
*Age thirty-six, Czechoslovakia, Munkacs, Birkenau, Buchenwald; German*

Helena Neufeld, August 3  
*Age thirty-three, Poland, Lvov/Warsaw ghettos, Pawiak, Bergen-Belsen; Polish*

Maximillian Lipschutz, August 4  
*Age thirty-five, Czechoslovakia, Krakow ghetto; German*

Nina Barzilay, August 4  
*Age fifty-four, Greece, Haidari, Bergen-Belsen, Börgermoor; Spanish*

Bella Zgnilek, August 4  
*Age twenty-two, Poland, Sosnowiec, Auschwitz, Gross-Rosen, Gabersdorf; English, German, Polish*

Janine Binder, August 4  
*Age twenty-one, Poland, Lvov ghetto, Stuttgart; German*

Bertha Goldwasser, August 4  
*Age thirty-four, Poland, Drancy; German*

Jacob Button, August 5  
*Age forty-one, Greece, Bergen-Belsen; German*

Eda Button, August 5  
*Age thirty-four, Greece, Bergen-Belsen; German*

Rita Benmayor, August 5  
*Age twenty, Greece, Auschwitz, Ravensbrück, Retzow, Malchow; German*

Audrey [Andre] Richard, August 5  
*France, resistance; French*

Henja Frydman, August 7  
*Age twenty-two, Belarus, Drancy, Auschwitz; Yiddish, German*

Edith Serras, August 7  
*Age thirty-six, Bessarabia, Drancy, Birkenau, Ravensbrück; Yiddish, German*

Fania Freilich, August 9

*Age forty-four, Poland, Drancy; Yiddish*

Mira Milgrom, August 9

*Poland, Kielce; German*

Esther Freilich, August 9

*Age thirteen, Drancy; German*

### **Paris JDC, August 12**

Marcelle Precker, August 12

*France, Drancy; English*

David Lea, August 12

*Age twenty-eight, Greece, Krakow, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Warsaw, Dachau/Landsberg; German, Spanish*

Henry Suchami, August 12

*Age thirty-eight, Greece, Auschwitz, Buchenwald; Spanish*

Manis Mizrahi, August 12

*Age twenty-four, Greece, Bergen-Belsen; English*

Mr. Fenger [no first name], August 12

### **Paris Grand Hotel, August 16–21**

Jacques Bramson, August 16

*Age thirty-five, Poland, Buchenwald, Perigueux, Limoges, Compiègne; Russian*

Julian Weinberg, August 17

*Age fifty-six, Poland, Lodz ghetto; German*

Dr. Jacob Wilf, August 17

*Age forty, Poland, USSR; Yiddish*

Rachel Gurmanova, August 17

*Age twenty-five, Poland, Warsaw ghetto; Yiddish*

Boder attends and records lectures at the World ORT conference, Paris, August 18–20, then resumes interviewing at the Paris Grand Hotel

Jacob Oleiski, August 20

*Age forty-five, Lithuania, Kovno ghetto, Stutthof, Dachau; Yiddish*

### **Paris/Kahn home, August 21**

Abraham Schrameck, August 21

*Age seventy-eight; French, English*

Jean Kahn, August 21

*Age fifteen, France; French, English*

Marcelle Kahn, August 21

*France, Spain/North Africa; French*

Charles Jean, August 21

*Age thirty-one; French, English*

Admiral Louis Kahn, August 21

*France; French*

**Paris JDC, August 22–23**

Nelly Bundy, August 22

*Austria, Drancy, Birkenau, Auschwitz, Ravensbrück, Malchow, Taucha, Meissen Oschatz, Grimma; English*

Erine (Trina) Rosenwasser, August 22

*Age twenty-two, Hungary, Kisvarda ghetto, Auschwitz/Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen; German*

Max (Otto) Feuer, August 22

*Age thirty-one, Austria, Sachenshausen, Dachau, Buchenwald; English, German*

Karl Josephy, August 23

*Age thirty-seven, Austria, Les Milles, Septfonds, Noe; German*

Friedrich Schlaefrig, August 23

*Age seventy-one, Austria, Theresienstadt; German*

Jacob Minski, August 23

*Age thirty-eight, Switzerland, Lodz ghetto, Birkenau, Gorlitz; German*

**Geneva ORT and DP Center, August 26–28**

Ludwig Hamburger, August 26

*Age nineteen, Poland, Auschwitz, Blechhammer, Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald; German*

Sigmund (Seymour) Reich, August 26

*Age twenty, Austria, Krakow ghetto, Radomysl Wielki, Mielec, Flossenbürg, Kamenz, Dachau; Yiddish*

David Hirsch, August 26

*Age eighteen, Germany, Gurs, Rivesaltes, Les Avants; German*

Wolf Nerich, August 26

*Age seventeen, Poland, Breslau, Blechhammer, Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald; German*

Alexander Gertner, August 26

*Age nineteen, Romania, Grosswardein ghetto, Auschwitz/Birkenau, Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald; Yiddish*

Yanusch Deutsch, August 27

*Age seventeen, Hungary, Székesfehérvár ghetto, Bergen-Belsen; English*

Adolf Heisler, August 27

*Age eighteen, Czech, Czynadowo ghetto, Munkacs ghetto, Auschwitz/Birkenau, Buchenwald; German*

Kurt [Gert] Silverberg, August 27

*Age seventeen, Germany, Auschwitz, Gleiwitz, Buchenwald; German*

Abraham Kimmelmann, August 27-28

*Age twenty, Poland, Dabrowa ghetto, Sosnowiec, Markstadt, Gross-Rosen, Fünfteichen, Buchenwald; German*

Malka Johles, August 28

*Age forty-six, Poland; German*

Arthur Breslauer, August 28

*Age fifty-four, Hungary, Bergen-Belsen; Yiddish, German*

### **Tradate, Italy, August 31-September 2**

Jacob Schwarzfitter, August 31

*Age thirty, Poland, Sosnowiec, Blechhammer, Allrich/Harz, Bergen-Belsen, Altengrube; German*

Nechama Epstein, August 31

*Age twenty-three, Poland, Warsaw ghetto, Miedzyrzec ghetto, Auschwitz/Birkenau, Majdanek; Yiddish*

George Kaldore, August 31

*Age twenty-three, Hungary, Birkenau, Buna; German*

Isaac Wolf, September 1

*Age thirty, Poland, Russian army; German*

Benjamin Piskorz, September 1

*Poland, Warsaw ghetto, Majdanek, Auschwitz/Buna, Gleiwitz, Dachau, Buchenwald, Dora-Nordhausen; Yiddish*

Bernard Warsager, September 1

*Age thirty, Poland, Posen, Buchenwald, Eisenberg; German*

Abram Perl, September 2

*Age twenty-seven, Slovakia, labor camp/partisan; German*

Esther Krueger, September 2

*Age twenty, Poland, Kielce, Skarzysko Kamienna, Czestochowa; German*

Toba Schiver, September 2

*Age twenty-two, Czechoslovakia, Mateszalka ghetto, Auschwitz; German*

### **Paris/Grand Hotel, September 7**

Fira Munk, September 7

*Russia, hid in Paris; Russian*

### **Paris Bellevue, September 8**

Lena Kuechler, September 8

*Age thirty-four, Poland, Krakow ghetto, hid on Polish estate; Yiddish, Polish*

Nathan Schacht, September 8

*Age fifteen, Poland, hid in forest; Yiddish*

Edith Zierer, September 8  
*Age fifteen, Poland, Plazow, Skarzysko-Kamienna, Częstochowa; German*

Joseph Ferber, September 8  
*Age thirty-three, Poland, Soviet army; Yiddish*

Lina Stumachin, September 8  
*Age thirty-six, Poland, Krakow ghetto, Plaszow, Auschwitz, Ravensbrück, Malchow; German, Polish*

Rose (Raisel) Meltzak, September 8  
*Age thirteen, Ukraine, hid in forest; Yiddish*

**Henonville, near Paris, September 12–13**

Rabbi Solomon Horowitz, September 12  
*Age thirty-seven, Tarnopol, Buczacz; Yiddish*

Clara Neiman, September 12  
*Age twenty-five, Russia, USSR; Russian, Yiddish*

Udel Stopnitsky, September 12  
*Age thirty-one, Poland, Bedzin ghetto, Birkenau, Gross-Rosen, Flossenbürg, Dresden, Leitmeritz, Theresienstadt; Yiddish*

Ephraim Gutman, September 12  
*Age twenty-nine, Ukraine, Kovno ghetto; Yiddish, German*

Isaac Ostland [Ausband], September 13  
*Age thirty-one, Lithuania, USSR; Yiddish*

Isaac Brin, September 13  
*Age thirty-eight, Poland, Lodz ghetto; Yiddish*

Hadassah Marcus, September 13  
*Age thirty-two, Poland, Warsaw ghetto, Majdanek, Auschwitz, Ravensbrück, Neustadt; Yiddish*

Dina Linik, with children, September 13  
*Poland, USSR; Russian*

Pinkhus Rosenfeld, September 13  
*Age forty-three, Poland, Lodz ghetto, Auschwitz, Chemnitz, Karlsbad; German, Yiddish*

Hein Brixler, September 13  
*Poland, Russia; Yiddish, Polish*

**Munich Camp Flak Kaserne, September 19–20**

Julius Kluver, September 19  
*Age forty-three, Ukraine, Mennonite; German*

Anna Braun, September 20  
*Age forty, Ukraine, Mennonite; German*

Ernesto Moeller-Arnold, September 20  
*Age fifty-two, Chile, businessman in Poland; Spanish*

Hildegarde Franz, September 20  
*Age seventy-five, Germany, Theresienstadt; German*  
Charlotte Schultze, September 20  
*Age forty-seven, Germany; German*  
Juergen Bassfreund, September 20  
*Age twenty-two, Germany, Auschwitz, Monowitz, Gross-Rosen, Dachau, Mühldorf; German*

**Munich Camp Lohengrin, September 21**

Captain Robert Zeplit, September 21

*Age fifty-six, Latvia; English*

Anna Prest [Paul], September 21

*Age forty-five, Estonia; Russian*

Sophia Zurilis, September 21

*Latvia, Dachau; German*

Thomas Billi, September 21

*Age fifty-eight, Russia-Estonia; Russian*

Janis Kalnetzkis, September 21

*Age forty-six, Latvia; Latvian*

Andre Sevalkietis, September 21

*Age forty-one, Lithuania; German*

Bronia Skudaykin, September 21

*Age thirty-six, Lithuania; Lithuanian, German*

Father Yoan Kharchenko, September 21

*Lithuania, Riga, Kovno camp; Russian*

Alphonsus Paulus, September 21

*Age thirty-three, Lithuania, Kaunas, Pravieniskes, Dachau; Lithuanian*

Vladus Lukashavidus, September 21

*Age thirty-three, Lithuania, Polish army prisoner of war; Russian*

**Munich area Camp Feldafing, September 23**

Max Meyer Sprecher, September 23

*Age thirty-seven, Germany, Sachsenhausen, Auschwitz/Birkenau, Buna, Dachau; Yiddish*

Helena (Tzippy) Tischauer, September 23

*Age twenty-seven, Czechoslovakia, Auschwitz/Birkenau, Ravensbrück, Malchow; German*

**Munich UNRRA University, September 24**

A. Ingmar, September 24

*Age twenty-three, Estonia; German*

Ulnar Janis, September 24

*Age forty-three, Latvia, Riga, Danzig; Russian*

Victor Ferdinandsk, September 24

*Age twenty, Lithuania; German*

Valerius Michelson, September 24

*Age thirty, Latvia; Russian*

Nathan Finkel, September 24

*Age twenty-six, Ukraine, Sosnowiec ghetto, Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald; Russian*

Roma Tcharnobroda, September 24

*Age thirty, Poland, Kielce/Lvov/Warsaw ghettos, Majdanek, Skarzysko-Kamienna, Częstochowa, Ravensbrück, Dachau/Burgau, Landsberg; German*

Bogaslav [no last name], September 24

*Poland, Warsaw ghetto, Pawiak, Gross-Rosen; Polish, German*

### **Wiesbaden, Germany, September 25–26**

Leon Frim, September 25

*Age forty-seven, Ukraine, Przemysl ghetto, Szebnie, Auschwitz, Gleiwitz, Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald; German*

Joseph Umpholent<sup>2</sup>, September 25

*Poland; Yiddish*

Juda Gaulen, September 26

*Jewish Agency representative from Palestine; English*

Jack (David) Matzner, September 26

*Age thirty-two, Germany, Drancy, Gross-Rosen, Bergen-Belsen; German*

Anna Kovitzka, September 26

*Age thirty-four, Poland, Grodo ghetto, Birkenau, Lippstadt; Yiddish*

Dr. Weinberg, September 26

Boder returns to Paris and attends memorial service organized by Rabbi Sheely, September 29

### **Paris Grand Hotel**

Dimitri Odinetz, October 4

*Age sixty-two, Russia, Compiègne; Russian*

## Appendix II: The Disputed Number of Boder Interviews

In the 1957 "Addenda" to *Topical Autobiographies*, Boder states that he conducted 109 interviews. He gives the exact number when he is tallying the number of transcriptions: "The work is far from completed. The five series cover seventy narratives. About 39 interviews out of 109 originally recorded still remain to be translated."<sup>1</sup>

Until recently, this number was accepted without question.<sup>2</sup> But Boder's calculation, made at the end of his formal comments on the project, complicates rather than clarifies the number of interviews he conducted. His earlier statements either present a significantly lower number or, more commonly, measure the interviews conducted by the number of recorded hours.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, interview lists (both his own and those compiled by others) yield a number more than 109. Finally, recourse to the recordings suggests a higher number yet. Striking is the fact that the number 109, neither round nor (as it turns out) correct, was so easily accepted (by myself and others) as canonical.

Boder's earliest written summation (March 1947) refers to "about seventy people": "The following lines, therefore, should be taken simply as a travelogue, as a set of notes on the personal impressions gained from about one hundred twenty hours of listening, covering the stories of about seventy people."<sup>4</sup> The introduction to *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, which was based on the earlier "travelogue," reproduces the same figures.<sup>5</sup> Some four years later the numbers remain virtually consistent. "The Impact of Catastrophe," the major article that appeared in 1954, speaks of "more than seventy interviews."<sup>6</sup> The number remains the same, even while suggesting there may be more than what is stated. Difficult to explain on a pragmatic level, Boder's attraction to the number seventy may have come unwittingly, for symbolic reasons particularly associated with Jewish life and lore.<sup>7</sup>

Two or three years later the number somehow climbs to "109"—a much closer approximation to what is to be found on the recordings, but a bewildering jump in Boder's predictable calculation up until that time.<sup>8</sup> The jump was actually even steeper. Boder's typed list dated December 2, 1955, curiously includes 120 interviews, though they are not individually numbered. They are rather compiled according to spool number (indeed, it is the only list I have found in which spools 1 and 2 appear, likely denoting two or three interviews that Boder conducted

en route to France). Given that many interviews either did not fill an entire thirty-eight minute spool or were recorded on multiple spools, the numbering of spools does not correspond to the number of interviews *per se*. The steep rise in the number of interviews (to either 109 or 120) must have been related to the increasing production of transcriptions, particularly to Boder's awareness of how many interviews still required transcription. The list dated December 2 codes the interviews with a "t" for "translated" or "u" for "unfinished translation"; other compilations exclusively list unfinished translations or transcriptions. Immersed in the process of keeping track of what had been done and how much more there was to do, Boder became attentive to the actual number of interviews.

Several inventories postdate Boder's death in 1961. One was compiled at the Library of Congress by Delante Johnson, assistant to John Howell, in 1994, around the time Howell was transferring the wire recorder spools to tape. The list totals 114 interviews. The source of Johnson's list, as indicated at the top of his compilation, was likely a set of index cards containing basic information about the spools (it is not known when the index cards were filled out or who did it). In any case, Johnson's effort, like that of Boder himself, was to make a general inventory of the spools; the task of determining the number of interviews came as a by-product, if at all.

The emphasis changed, however, when in 2002 the Oral History Department of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum produced the first list devoted exclusively to indexing interviews. This list grew out of the department's quest to reinterview surviving Boder interviewees. Based on seven previously compiled lists (none of which were those of Boder himself), it gave at the end a total of 122 interviews—two of which were duplicates, leaving a total of 120. Strikingly, it was the first list to essay a total number, a development that reflected the new emphasis on the interviews in their own right.

Three years later a dramatic shift occurred in the mode of compilation. The Oral History Department's interview-intensive list itself served as the basis for a new authoritative list, the documentation for which came not from previously compiled lists—Boder's or any other—but from copies of the recordings themselves. David Jacobsen, research assistant at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies in 2005, compiled the expanded list, which numbered 129 interviews. Pathbreaking in its use of the recordings, Jacobsen's list actually synthesized two previous formats: (1) an inventory of Boder's recordings, including songs and religious services as well as spoken interviews; and (2) an alphabetical roster of spoken interviews with detailed annotation. The shift from the Oral History Department's pragmatic agenda to the CAHS's research-oriented one likely gave birth to this hybrid form.

# Appendix III: *Topical Autobiographies of Displaced People*

## VOLUMES I THROUGH XVI

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Vol	Chap	Interview	Pages	Micro-card(s)	Spool(s)
1	1	Abe Kimmelman	1-128	1, 2, 3, 4	83-88, 91, 92, 122
	2	Udel Stopnitsky	129-201	5, 6	122
2	3	Isaac Ostland	202-243	7	125B, 126A
	4	Anna Kaletzka	233-275	8	164B, 165, 166A
	5	Juergen Bassfreund	276-318	9	137B, 138B, 139A
	6	Fania Freilich	319-363	10	36, 37, 38
3	7	Fela Nichthauser	364-405	11	15, 16
	8	Julius Kluver	406-422	12	132
	9	Anna Paul	423-428	13	140B, 141A
	10	Jack Matzner	449-484	14	163, 164A
	11	Ephraim Gutman	485-522	15	124, 125A
4	12	George Kaldore	523-574	16, 17	97, 98, 99
	13	Henja Frydman	575-639	18, 19	29, 30, 31, 32, 33
	14	Dimitri Odinetz	640-666	20	168-169A
	15	Father Kharchenko	667-680	21	143C, 144
5	16	Anna Braun	690-730	22	133, 134
	17	Jacques Bramson	732-826	23, 24, 25	45, 46, 47, 48
	18	Roma Tcharnabroda	827-864	26	155B, 156A
6	19	Polia Bisenhaus	865-886	27	3B
	20	Max Feuer	887-954	28, 29	64, 65
	21	Rachel Gurmanova	955-1019	30, 31	51, 52, 53
	22	Leon Shachnovski	1020-1032	32	3A
	23	Janine Binder	1033-1063	33	23
24		Raisel Roset	1064-1079	34	4A

Vol	Chap	Interview	Pages	Micro-card(s)	Spool(s)
7	25	Jacob Schwarzfitter	1080–1134	35, 36	93, 94
	26	Friedrich Schlaefrig	1135–1204	37, 38	67, 68, 69
	27	Erene Rosenwasser	1205–1278	39, 40	62, 63
	28	Julian Weinberg	1279–1301	41	49
8	29	Edith Serras	1302–1366	42, 43	34, 35
	30	Jacob Oleiski	1367–1404	44	54, 209
	31	Jacob Minski	1405–1472	45, 46	70, 71
	32	Dr. Jacob Wilf	1473–1499	47	50
9	33	Nelly Bundy	1500–1580	48, 49	60, 61
	34	Ludwig Hamburger	1581–1634	50, 51	72, 73A
	35	Mendel Herskovitz	1632–1703	52, 53	9, 10
10	36	Samuel Isakovitch	1704–1740	54, 55	7
	37	Max Meyer Sprecher	1741–1783	56	146A, 147, 148
	38	Israel Unikowski	1784–1849	57, 58	17, 18
	39	Bernard Warsager	1850–1902	59, 60	104B, 106, 107A
11	40	Jurek Kestenberg	1903–1950	61, 62	11, 12A
	41	Esther Krueger	1951–1985	63	139
	42	Rabbi Solomon Horowitz	1986–2042	64, 65	120, 121A
	43	Helena Tischauer	2043–2111	66, 67	149, 150, 151
12	44	Abram Perl	2112–2153	68	107B, 108
	45	Sigmund Reich	2154–2185	69	73B, 74A
	46	Adolph Heisler	2186–2222	70	81
	47	Miss Jola (Yetta) Gross	2223–2254	71	19
	48	Benjamin Piskorz	2255–2318	72	102, 103
13	49	Alexander Gertner	2319–2422	74, 75, 76	77, 78, 79
	50	Isaac Wolf	2423–2497	77, 78	100, 101
	51	Adam Krakowski	2498–2532	79	5A
14	52	Kalman Eisenberg	2533–2570	80	12B, 13, 14
	53	Miss Bella Zgnilek	2571–2591	81	22
	54	Mrs. Nechama Epstein	2592–2668	82, 83	95, 96, 104A
	55	Mrs. Clara Neiman	2669–2694	84	121B
	56	Mrs. Hadassah Marcus	2695–2743	85, 86	128, 129
15	57	Mrs. Helena Neufeld	2744–2763	87	20
	58	Miss Lena Kuechler	2764–2808	88	114, 115
	59	Nathan Schacht	2809–2829	89	116A
	60	Miss Edith Zierer	2830–2854	90	116B
	61	Joseph Ferber	2855–2876	91	117
	62	Pinkhus Rosenfeld	2877–2922	92	130B, 131
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<i>Vol</i>	<i>Chap</i>	<i>Interview</i>	<i>Pages</i>	<i>Micro- card(s)</i>	<i>Spool(s)</i>
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	65	Mrs. Charlotte Schultze	2978-3000	95	136B, 137A
	66	Miss Rose (Raisel) Meltzak	3001-3015	95	119A
	67	Ernesto Moeller-Arnold	3016-3039	96	135
	68	Victor Ferdinandsk	3040-3054	96	153B
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# Notes

## Preface

1. Samuel Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History? Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).
2. See for example David Bankier and Dan Michman, eds., *Holocaust Historiography in Context* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008), one focus of which deals with early postwar historiography.
3. Zoe Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, trans. Jared Stark (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).
4. I address in appendix 2 the issue of the indeterminate number of interviews.

## Introduction

1. UCLA, Box 1.
2. Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales* (London: Dent, 1977), 7.
3. The best-known example is Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).
4. On the disputed number of interviews conducted by Boder, see appendix 2.
5. David Boder, *Topical Autobiographies of Displaced Persons* (Chicago and Los Angeles: Author, 1950–1957), vol. 15, chapter 63.
6. *Ibid.*, vol. 11, chapter 40.
7. *Ibid.*, vol. 10, chapter 38.
8. *Ibid.*, vol. 8, chapter 29.
9. Inga Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5.
10. In the preface to *The Years of Extermination*, Saul Friedländer calls the response to Holocaust victim diaries (or images) “disbelief,” a “quasivisceral reaction, one that occurs before knowledge rushes in to smother it.” This comes close to what I am referring to as perplexity. The difference is one of figure and ground: for Friedländer, the intermittent diarists’ voices disrupt a larger historical narrative and pierce “the smugness of [its] scholarly detachment,” occasioning or preserving “disbelief.” For Boder, the speaking voices were the narrative itself, giving rise to perplexity. Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), xxvi.
11. David Boder, “The Displaced People of Europe: Preliminary Notes on a Psychological and Anthropological Study,” *Illinois Tech Engineer* (1947): 2. Reprinted by the author.

12. Eugene Kulischer, *Europe on the Move: War and Population Changes, 1917–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948); Paul Frings, *Das internationale Flüchtlingsproblem, 1919–1950* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Frankfurter Hefte, 1951); Jacques Vernant, *The Refugee in the Post-War World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953); Malcolm Proudfoot, *European Refugees, 1939–1952: A Study in Forced Population Movements* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1957); Michael R. Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Mark Wyman, *DP: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945–1951* (Philadelphia and London: Balch Institute Press and Associated University Press, 1989); Anna Holian, “Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: The Politics of Self-Representation among Displaced Persons in Munich, 1945–1951,” unpublished dissertation, 2005; Tony Judt, *Postwar* (New York: Penguin, 2006).
13. Nicholas Tolstoy, *The Secret Betrayal* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977); Mark R. Elliott, *Pawns of Yalta: Soviet Refugees and America's Role in Their Repatriation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982).
14. See Jan Gross, *Fear: Antisemitism in Poland after Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpretation* (New York: Random House, 2006); Joanna Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), especially chapter 6; Joanna Michlic, “Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1918–1939 and 1945–1947,” *Polin* 13 (2000): 34–61; and David Engel, “Patterns of Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1944–1946,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 26 (1998): 43–86. Among Boder's interviewees who try to account for the violence, see particularly Lena Kuechler, who recounts the desperate circumstances that compelled her to move her orphanage in 1946 from Poland to France. Compare Kuechler's strident remarks with those of Jacob Wilf, the vice chairman of the Jewish Regional Committee of Upper Silesia, and Rachel Gurmanova who, as Jews still residing in Poland, try apologetically to account for the violence and pogroms. In chapter 2, I discuss Boder's effort to assess the Jewish predicament in postwar Poland.
15. See Yehuda Bauer, *Bricha: Flight and Rescue* (New York, 1970); *She'erit Hapletah, 1944–1948*, ed. Yisrael Gutman and Avital Saf (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990), 51–116; Yohanan Cohen, *Crossing Every Border: Bricha, Poland, 1945–1946* (Tel Aviv, 1995 [Hebrew]); David Engel, *Liberation and Flight: Holocaust Survivors in Poland and the Struggle for Leadership, 1944–1945* (Tel Aviv: 1996 [Hebrew]; Thomas Albrich, ed., *Flucht Nach Eretz Israel* (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 1998).
16. George Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950).
17. On the formation of the DP camps, see Holian, “Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism,” 46–53; Hagit Lavsky, *New Beginnings: Holocaust Survivors in Bergen-Belsen and the British Zone in Germany, 1945–1950* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 34–36; Yehuda Bauer, *Out of the Ashes: The Impact of American Jews on Post-Holocaust European Jewry* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1989), chapter 3.
18. The International Refugee Organization took over administration of the DP camps in 1947; at the end of 1951, the small number of remaining camps came under the jurisdiction of the German authorities. The last of the German DP camps—Föhrenwald—closed in 1956.

19. Bauer, *Out of the Ashes*, the focus of which is the AJDC; Sarah Kavanagh, *ORT and the Rehabilitation of Holocaust Survivors* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008); Alex Grobman, *Battling for Souls: The Vaad Hatzala Rescue Committee in Post-Holocaust Europe* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 2004); Leo Schwarz's early chronicle, *The Redeemers: A Saga of the Years, 1945–1952* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Young, 1952), attempts to depict the interplay among the full gamut of organizations. He was the AJDC representative in the American Zone in Germany, 1945–1947. Other essential studies of Jewish DPs, focusing mainly on DP camps in Germany, include *She'erit Hapletah, 1944–1948*, ed. Yisrael Gutman and Avital Saf; Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Ze'ev Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Lavsky, *New Beginnings*; Ruth Gay, *Safe Among the Germans: Liberated Jews After World War II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Atina Grossman, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Avinoam Patt and Michael Berkowitz, eds., 'We Are Here': *New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010). On America's ambivalent response to the plight of Jewish DPs, see particularly Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), and Arieh Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945–1948* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). Studies that focus on DP communities in France, Switzerland, and Italy—those in which most of Boder's interviews took place—will be cited in the chapters that follow.

20. Letter to Dael Wolfe, June 19, 1945. UCLA, Box 1.

21. Already in June 1945 the "Inter-Allied Psychological Study Group," working under the Welfare Division of UNRRA, had written up the fruits of their research in a forty-seven-page document, "Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons." See Dan Stone, ed., *Post-War Europe: Refugees, Exile and Resettlement, 1945–1950* CD-ROM (London: Gale, 2009). The mainly British-staffed group included psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and at least one young sociologist, the University of Chicago-based E. A. Shiels, who in the ensuing years became a leading figure in the discipline. I have found no correspondence between Shiels and Boder or, for that matter, other evidence of contact or communication. But the fact that they were both Chicago-based in 1945–1946, and both Jewish social scientists who were interested in psychological dimensions of the European DP experience, makes it invitingly possible that they would have conferred on the subject.

Somewhat later, Polish-born American Jewish psychiatrist Paul Friedman also interviewed DPs in 1946. See his comments in "The Road Back for the DP's: Healing the Scars of Nazism," *Commentary* 6 (1948): 502–510; "The Effects of Imprisonment," *Acta Medica Orientalia* 7 (1948): 163–167; and "Some Aspects of Concentration Camp Psychology," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 105 (1949): 601–605. For more general overviews, see "Psychiatry and the Holocaust," in *Medical and Psychological Effects of Concentration Camps on Holocaust Survivors*, ed. Robert Krell and Marc Sherman (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1997). Beth Cohen notes the

repercussions of some early psychological investigations on American attitudes in dealing with DPs as immigrants: *Case Closed: Holocaust Survivors in Postwar America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 136–142. Leo Srole has been identified as a psychologist (see Bauer, *Out of the Ashes*, 85, 88) but was actually a sociologist and anthropologist. Srole worked in the Landsburg DP camp in Germany under the rubric of UNRRA; his important article advocating on behalf of the DPs appeared in early 1947. See “Why the DP’s Can’t Wait,” *Commentary* (January 1947): 13–24. Srole was known (and later became even better known) for his sociological research on mental health, a specialty that may have given rise to the mistaken attribution of psychologist.

22. See my discussion of Boder’s aborted use of the Thematic Apperception Test, chapter 5.
23. See chapter 6 for a discussion of Boder’s approach to trauma.
24. Philip Friedman, “European Jewish Research on the Holocaust,” in *Roads to Extinction: Essays on the Holocaust*, ed. Ada June Friedman (New York, 1980), 500–524. Friedman’s essay originally appeared in 1949 in the *Proceedings of the Academy*. Shmuel Krakowski, “Memorial Projects and Memorial Institutions Initiated by She’erit Hapletah,” in *She’erit Hapletah, 1944–1948*, ed. Yisrael Gutman and Avital Saf (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990), 388–398; Laura Jockusch, “‘Collect and Record: Help to Write the History of the Latest Destruction!’ Jewish Historical Commissions in Europe, 1943–1953,” dissertation, New York University, 2007; Laura Jockusch, “Chroniclers of Catastrophe: History Writing As a Jewish Response to Persecution Before and After the Holocaust,” in *Holocaust Historiography in Context*, ed. David Bankier and Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008), 135–166; Laura Jockusch, “Khurban Forschung: Jewish Historical Commissions in Europe, 1943–1949,” *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 6 (2007): 441–473; Laura Jockusch, “Jewish Historical Commissions in Occupied Germany, 1945–1949,” paper presented at the 2005 Summer Workshop, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Laura Jockusch, “Jüdische Geschichtsforschung im Lande Amaleks: Jüdische historische Kommissionen in Deutschland 1945–1949,” in *Zwischen Erinnerung und Neubeginn: Zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte nach 1945*, ed. S. Schönborn (Munich, 2006), 20–41; Ada Schein, “‘Everyone Can Hold a Pen’: The Documentation Project in the DP Camps in Germany,” in *Holocaust Historiography in Context*, ed. David Bankier and Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008), 103–134.
25. *Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue, Jewish Historical Institute Archives, Record* (Warsaw: 1998–2002); see also Natalia Aleksium, “The Central Jewish Historical Commission, 1944–1947,” *Polin* 20 (2008), 74–97.
26. Rita Horváth, “Jews in Hungary after the Holocaust: The National Relief Committee for Deportees, 1945–1950,” *Journal of Israeli History* 19 (1998): 69–91; Rita Horváth, “A Jewish Historical Commission in Budapest”: The Place of the National Relief Committee for Deportees in Hungary [DEGOB] among the Other Large-Scale Historical-Memorial Projects of She’erit Hapletah after the Holocaust (1945–1948),” in *Holocaust Historiography in Context*, ed. David Bankier and Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008).

27. Some sites began later in 1946 and even in 1947. On the Central Historical Commission's work in general and interviews in particular, see the previously cited works by Jockusch; Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope*; and Ada Schein, "Educational Programs in the Jewish DP Camps of Germany and Austria, 1945–1951," dissertation (in Hebrew), Hebrew University, 2000.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Philip Friedman notes the pragmatic goals of the journal—"to stimulate further eyewitness depositions"—but still felt obliged to comment on the "unscholarly" approach. See Philip Friedman, "European Jewish Research on the Holocaust," 513.
30. A number of these recorded songs can be heard at the "Music and the Holocaust" section of the World ORT Web site ([www.ort.org](http://www.ort.org)).
31. The Koniuchowski papers (with a translation from Yiddish into English by Jonathan Boyarin) are archived at Yad Vashem. One of the few extracts to be published appeared in the early 1950s as "The Revolt of the Jews of Marcinkonis," *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* 8 (1953): 205–223, and was reprinted in an abridged version under the same title in *They Fought Back: The Story of the Jewish Resistance in Nazi Europe*, ed. Yuri Suhl (1967; New York: Schocken, 1978), 160–164.
32. Letter from Philip Friedman to Yaakov Pat, April 6, 1948. In the letter, Friedman asks Pat's help to secure a stipend for Koniuchowski so that he would be able to continue "his collection of testimony," which he does in "a masterly fashion, which could serve as an example for all of our historical commissions." YV, Koniuchowski papers.
33. His papers, for instance, include a communique from the Bialystok Historical Commission. UCLA, Box 1.
34. Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 11.
35. Christopher Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 37–44.
36. Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, trans. Jared Stark (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).
37. Tony Kushner, "Holocaust Testimony, Ethics, and the Problem of Representation," *Poetics Today* 27 (2006): 276–278.
38. Leon Poliakov, *Bréviaire de la haine* (Paris: Calman-Levy, 1951); Gerald Reitlinger, *The Final Solution: The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe, 1939–1945* (1953; New York: Perpetua, 1961).
39. See Reitlinger, *The Final Solution*, 531, 537–541.
40. Kushner, "Holocaust Testimony," 276–277.
41. For another resourceful if not fully adequate attempt to conceptualize this evolution, see Anita Shapira, "The Holocaust: Private Memories, Public Memory," *Jewish Social Studies* 4 (1998): 40–58.
42. Henry Greenspan, "An Immediate and Violent Impulse": Holocaust Survivor Testimony in the First Years after Liberation," in *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide*, vol. 3, ed. John Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 110. See also Henry Greenspan', "The Awakening of Memory: Survivor Testimony in the First Years after the Holocaust and Today" (Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2001).

43. Having spoken of the “contradictory middle ground” as specifically characterizing early postwar testimony, Greenspan then enigmatically asserts, “it is also within that contradiction, I will suggest, that we should locate all the testimony that still goes on today” (“An Immediate and Violent Impulse,” 112). What allows for the carryover of the “contradiction” from the early period to the later is not clear to me.
44. Laura Jockusch, “Jewish Historical Commissions in Occupied Germany, 1945–1949,” 6. My translation from the Yiddish.
45. Ibid. One of Boder’s interviewees, the ORT leader Jacob Oleiski, believes the goal of forgetting is paramount: “it is impossible,” declared Oleiski, “to create that genial /way of/ life which would...under which that great mournful past which the people have experienced *could be forgotten*” (emphasis added).
46. See Annette Wieviorka, “From Survivor to Witness: Voices from the Shoah,” in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 133, 141; Kushner, “Holocaust Testimony,” 275–276; Peter Suedfeld et al., “Erikson’s ‘Components of a Healthy Personality’ among Holocaust Survivors Immediately and Forty Years after the War,” *International Journal of Aging and Human Development* 60 (2005); and Alan Rosen, “The Evidence of Trauma: David Boder and Writing the History of Holocaust Testimony,” in *Holocaust Historiography in Context*, ed. David Bankier and Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008). I have thus responded to the same polemical impulse.
47. See chapter 2.
48. David Roskies, “Landkentenish: Yiddish Belles Lettres in the Warsaw Ghetto,” in *Holocaust Chronicles: Individualizing the Holocaust through Diaries and Other Contemporaneous Personal Accounts*, ed. Robert Moses Shapiro (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1999), 17. See also Samuel Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History? Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 13.
49. The title of Greenspan’s article—“An Immediate and Violent Impulse”—inadvertently intensifies the confusion. The title is taken from remarks of Primo Levi, who is, however, using “immediate” not to mean instantaneous but rather urgent, unmediated, basic: “The need to tell our story to ‘the rest,’ to make ‘the rest’ participate in it, had taken on for us, before our liberation and after, the character of an immediate and violent impulse [il carattere di un impulso immediato e violento], to the point of competing with other elementary needs.” *Survival in Auschwitz*, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York: Collier, 1993), 9. Levi’s sense of *immediate* yields to the temporal meaning in the body of Greenspan’s essay. But the relation between the two different connotations of the word is left unclear.
50. David Roskies, “Ringelblum’s Time Capsules,” in *The Jewish Search for a Usable Past* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 26. “There exists,” Roskies argues, “a closed canon of wartime writings that testifies to the historical reality of what later came to be known as ‘The Holocaust.’ This literature of the Holocaust, written primarily in Yiddish, Polish, and German, but also in Hebrew, French, Russian, Italian, and other continental languages, is distinct from the literature *on* the Holocaust, which will go on being written for generations to come,

primarily in English and Hebrew, but also in all the languages of Europe and of the Slavic countries recently liberated from bondage."

51. See Henry Louis Gates Jr., "Introduction: The Language of Slavery," in *The Slave's Narrative*, ed. Charles T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), xii–xiii.

52. At a symposium on Boder's work in Berlin, June 2007, Dori Laub responded to my strict division between wartime and postwar testimony by arguing (I paraphrase) that "we differ in terms of the meaning of 'after': I believe that in the subjective experience of survivors there was no strict division; even the after was not truly after." His symposium paper, "The Evolution of Testimony," reinforces this view by asserting (following Annette Wieviorka's model) the continuity of wartime and early postwar testimony. For a detailed discussion of this continuity, see Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*; for Laub's assessment of the book, see Dori Laub, "Review of *The Era of Testimony*, by Annette Wieviorka," *Journal of Genocide Research* 9 (2007): 475–512.

53. Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life Is with People: The Jewish Little-Town of Eastern Europe*, foreword by Margaret Mead (New York: International University Press, 1952).

54. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Introduction," in *Life Is with People: The Culture of the Shtetl*, by Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, foreword by Margaret Mead (New York: Schocken, 1995).

55. Margaret Mead and Rhoda Métraux, eds., *The Study of Culture at a Distance* (New York: 1953), 3.

56. Peter Novick, *The Holocaust and American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

57. Other American-based writers—for example, Marie Syrkin and H. Leivick—did take it upon themselves to travel to Europe with the intention of reporting on the DPs' predicament. Scholars—for example, sociologist Koppel Pinson—came to DP centers with the goal of assessing the "Jewish life" of displaced persons. See Koppel Pinson, "Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of Jewish DP's," *Jewish Social Science* 9 (1947), 101–126. And American journalists dramatized the plight of the DPs in newspapers and magazines. But no other American that I am aware of interviewed DPs to collect narratives of their wartime experience.

58. Hasia Diner, "Post-World War II American Jewry and the Confrontation with Catastrophe," *American Jewish History* 91 (2003): 446. In her authoritative history of American Jewry, Diner condenses but does not alter her argument. For example, the observation that postwar American responses to the Holocaust inevitably came with a happy ending is something of a red herring. As Diner points out, happy endings notwithstanding, "American Jewish rhetoric and performances of the Holocaust...in the 1950s did not minimize the death, destruction, and pain." Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654–2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 264. See particularly Diner's extended discussion in *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945–1962* (New York: New York University Press, 2009). From the standpoint of intellectual history of the period, Lawrence Baron has taken a similar approach. See "The Holocaust and American Public Memory, 1945–1960," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 17 (2003), 62–88.

59. For a useful summary of these competing claims, see Alan Mintz, *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).
60. Israel Knox, "Introduction," *Anthology of Holocaust Literature*, ed. Jacob Glatstein, Israel Knox, and Samuel Margoshes (1968; New York: Atheneum, 1980), xx.
61. Dan Michman accords with this judgment in his analysis of linguistic cultures shaping historical research on the Holocaust. "One Theme, Multiple Voices: Language and Culture in Holocaust Research," in *The Holocaust: The Unique and the Universal. Essays in Honor of Yehuda Bauer*, ed. S. Almog et al. (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2001) [Hebrew], 8–37. An English version of the essay appeared in Dan Michman, *Holocaust Historiography: A Jewish Perspective: Conceptualizations, Terminology, Approaches and Fundamental Issues* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003), 357–388.
62. Donald Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 3.
63. Carl Marziali, "Before It Had a Name: Part I," *This American Life* [radio program], October 26, 2001.
64. Jorge Semprun, *Literature or Life*, trans. Linda Cloverdale (New York: Viking, 1997), 200–201.
65. *Le Grand Voyage* (The Long Voyage) and *Quel beau dimanche!* (What a Beautiful Sunday).
66. See Henry Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History*, foreword by Robert Coles (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998).
67. James Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 160.
68. David Roskies has emphasized the importance of language and milieu in giving shape to such recounting. See his review of *Holocaust Testimonies*, by Lawrence Langer, *Commentary* (November 1991).
69. For "Buder," see the English translation of Shmuel Krakowski's response to Yaffa Eliach in the "Discussion" section of the volume, *She'erit Hapletah, 1944–1948*, ed. Yisrael Gutman and Avital Saf (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990) and, with a sense of consistency, in the index to the volume.

## Chapter 1

1. Latvian State Archives, e-mail notification, February 2006.
2. See *The Jews in Latvia*, particularly the essay by Shaul Lipschitz, "Jewish Communities in Kurland" (Tel Aviv: Association of Latvian and Estonian Jews in Israel, 1971); Josifs Šteimanis, *History of Latvian Jews*, trans. Helena Belova (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2002); and the articles on Courland, Libau, and Latvia in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* and *Encyclopedia Judaica*.
3. Dov Levin, "Libau—Liepaja," *Pinkas Hakehillot Latvia v'Estonia* [Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Latvia and Estonia] (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1988), 170.
4. "The Tale of Anna Kovitzka: A Logico-Systematic Analysis or an Essay in Experimental Reading," 48–49. UCLA, Box 4.
5. See Hirsch Abramowicz, *Profiles of a Lost World: Memoirs of East European Jewish Life before World War II*, trans. Eva Zeitlin Dobkin (Detroit: Wayne

State University Press, 1999). Abramowicz speaks of the institute particularly in the chapters on Joshua Steinberg and Chaim Fialkov; both introductions to the volume (by David Fishman and Dina Abramowicz) contain information relevant to the institute. See also Israel Cohen, *The Jews of Vilna* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1933), 335.

6. Abramowicz, *Profiles of a Lost World*, 126.
7. Purdue speech, January 15, 1948, p. 8. AHAP, M19. Boder dates the Leipzig visit in a July 1945 "Supplement to Personal History Statement Form 2205 (663)," Section 23 [hereafter cited as "Personal History Statement"]. UCLA. The statement was probably written in an effort to gain clearance for his trip to postwar occupied Europe. He dates the period in Leipzig somewhat more precisely in a questionnaire produced in 1956 as part of an American Council of Learned Societies fellowship application. His students and colleagues say that he regularly spoke of Wundt.
8. Wundt's pivotal role in the formation of psychology is a staple of the history of psychology. See for instance Henryk Misiak and Virginia Staudt Sexton, *History of Psychology: An Overview* (New York: Psychological Corp., 1966), particularly the chapter, "Wilhelm Wundt, The Founder of Scientific Psychology." For a more critical yet appreciative appraisal of Wundt's role, see Kurt Danziger, *Constructing the Subject: Historical Origins of Psychological Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
9. Adrian Brock has argued that the claim is mistaken. See "Was Wundt a 'Nazi'? Volkerpsychologie, Racism and Anti-Semitism," *Theory and Psychology* 2 (1992): 205–223.
10. "Purdue speech, January 15, 1948." AHAP, M19, p. 8.
11. In addition to Wundt, Leipzig in this period gave rise to a distinguished academic culture. See for example Roger Chickering, *Karl Lamprecht: A German Academic Life 1856–1915* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993); and Matthias Middell, *Weltgeschichtsschreibung im Zeitalter der Verfachlichung und Professionalisierung. Das Leipziger Institut für Kultur- und Universalgeschichte 1890–1990*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Akademische Verlagsanstalt, 2005).
12. The situation of Leipzig Jewry was special in two respects: (1) the first synagogue in the modern city was built by Reform Jews (most first-built synagogues in German cities were initiated by Orthodox Jews); and (2) foreign-born Eastern European Jews constituted a significant percentage of the community. Hence, Boder would have fit in quite easily. See Robert Allen Willingham, *Jews in Leipzig: Nationality and Community in the 20th Century*, dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2005.
13. "Personal History Statement," Section 23.
14. Wundt's American students included G. F. Arps, E. A. Pace, G. A. Tawney, and H. C. Warren. Arps was among those in the final group, his 1906 visit to Leipzig likely overlapping with Boder's.
15. As Boder phrased it in his "Personal History Statement."
16. Irving Howe, *The World of Our Fathers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 120. Jewish immigration in the years before and after was also formidable: 1904–1907, 499,082; 1900–1910, 1,037,000.
17. On Jewish life in St. Petersburg in this period, see Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

18. On Bekhterev, see David Joravsky, *Russian Psychology: A Critical History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 83–91; Roger Thomas, “Bekhterev, Vladimir Mikhailovich,” *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, ed. A. Kazdin (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2000), 398–399.
19. An abridged, updated English translation is titled *General Principles of Human Reflexology*, 4th ed. (New York: International Universities Press, 1973).
20. See Joravsky, *Russian Psychology*, 83. Like most other commentators, he notes the unrestricted admission to both Jews and women. Bekhterev himself refers to the policy in his autobiography, characterizing it as a provocative gesture made toward the minister of education, Schwarz. Vladimir Bekhterev, *Autobiografia* (Moscow, 1928), 32. My thanks to Yisrael Cohen for obtaining Bekhterev’s memoir and for help with translation.
21. The 1916 article, which originally appeared in a volume of essays titled *The Shield*, was recently translated as “From Darkness to Light,” *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology* 41 (2003): 76–79. My thanks to Olga Borovaya for help with an earlier translation.
22. Bekhterev’s deposition appears as “The Iuchinskii Murder and the Expert Psychiatric-Psychological Opinion,” *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology* 41 (2003): 7–70. Joravsky notes that Sikorski was “one of Bekhterev’s teachers” and that, in addition to Bekhterev’s opposition, a group of notable colleagues denounced Sikorski for misuse of his expertise (p. 86). For an overview of the Beilis affair, see Rebecca Marks Costin, “Mendel Beilis and the Blood Libel,” in *Jews on Trial*, ed. Robert Garber (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2005); Albert Lindemann, *The Jew Accused: Three Anti-Semitic Affairs (Dreyfus, Beilis, Frank), 1894–1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Mendel Beilis, *The Story of My Sufferings*, trans. Harrison Golberg (New York: Mendel Beilis, 1926).
23. On Anski’s various ethnographic, literary, and cultural roles, see Gabriella Safran and Steven Zipperstein, eds., *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006). For the chronicle, see S. Anski, *Der Yudisher Hurbn fun Poylen, Galitsye un Bukovina fun Tog-Bukh*, in *Gezamelte shriften*, vols. 4–6 (Warsaw, 1928). Anski’s chronicle has been translated into English as *The Enemy at His Pleasure: A Journey through the Jewish Pale of Settlement during World War I*, ed. and trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Metropolitan, 2002). For Anski’s role in shaping a new Jewish response to catastrophe, see David Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), and “The Library of Jewish Catastrophe,” in *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shape of Remembrance*, ed. Geoffrey Hartman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994). Orna Kenan links the historical commissions’ mode of collecting testimony in the DP camps to Anski’s earlier efforts. But the influence of earlier upon later is left somewhat vague. See Orna Kenan, *Between Memory and History: The Evolution of Israeli Historiography of the Holocaust, 1945–1961* (New York: Lang, 2003), 29, 51.
24. On the emergence of Jewish ethnography in this period, see Itzik Nakhman Gottesman, *Defining the Yiddish Nation: The Jewish Folklorist of Poland* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003).
25. “Personal History Statement,” Section 6A.

26. In a 1932 letter, written by Boder as he advocated on behalf of his daughter's noncitizen residence privileges in the United States, he speaks of being "not only the father to my child, but I have been acting as her mother since her early childhood." While hardly serving as conclusive evidence on the actual state of affairs over twenty years earlier, the letter does show how Boder thought of his role. Letter to Judge Mary M. Bartelme, October 11, 1932. AHAP, M19.
27. Ze'ev Ivianski, *Achiot Givurot Ha'anot* [My Glorious Sisters in Affliction; Hebrew] (Beit Lachamei Hagetaot, 1987), 7–8.
28. Phone interview with Ze'ev Ivianski, February 2006.
29. One can at this stage only speculate as to why such a charge would circulate in his first wife's family and be brought to light at such a late date (two related but perhaps separate questions).
30. Phone interview with Ze'ev Ivianski, February 2006. Letter from Ivianski to David Steinberg, a nephew of Nate Levien, Elena Boder's husband. Letter dated November 21, 1998, courtesy of David Steinberg.
31. Carl Marziali, "Before It Had a Name: Part I," *This American Life* [radio program], October 26, 2001.
32. Boder refers to his teaching position in his 1946 interview with Dmitri Odinetz, a colleague of Boder's at the gymnasium and a teacher at the Psychoneurological Institute. *Topical Autobiographies*, vol. 4 (1950), 640. For more on Boder's relationship to and interview with Odinetz, see chapter 3.
33. Another reference characterizes the position as a "personnel officer (captain), 15th Engineering Labor Battalion." See Boder's information sheet, "For 1957 Directory, American Psychological Association, Supplement: Employment History," June 21, 1956. UCLA/Box 19. One should not be misled by the "officer" rank to think that Boder was one of the few Jews to hold such a commission in the Russian army in this period. The rank was not a military but a civilian one, issued for convenience. Indeed, nine Jews were promoted to army officer rank from 1874–1917; Boder was not among those in this small group. See Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *Jews in the Russian Army, 1827–1917: Drafted into Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 134–136. I am indebted to Zvi Gitelman for his help with analysis of this data. In addition to the usual sources, Boder also refers to this position in a March 23, 1954, letter to Harvard anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn. AHAP, M11.
34. Ibid.
35. See Richard M. Connaughton, *The Republic of Ushakovka: Admiral Kolchak and the Allied Intervention in Siberia, 1918–1920* (London: Routledge, 1990).
36. "Personal History Statement," Section 6A.
37. Ibid., Section 1B.
38. Phone interview with Professor Steven Tobriner, great-nephew of David Boder's wife, Dora Neveloff Boder, September 2004.
39. As Boder comments in the transcript of one interview: "I suspect that this is an assumed name. The so-called infiltrates, that is the individuals who were running away from Lithuania and Poland or other regions which we are accustomed now to call the 'iron curtain' states were behaving rather cautiously. They would not give their right names and [did] not tell too much about how they managed to arrive in France, or for that matter in

Switzerland or Italy." *Topical Autobiographies*, vol. 2, chapter 3, 203. As Tony Judt notes, there was a "well-founded fear of reprisals against anyone who had spent time in the West, even if that time had been spent in a prison camp." Many did not avoid the active pursuit of the Soviets to repatriate: over 2 million DPs were returned to the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1947. Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 30.

40. Letter to Kluckhohn, March 23, 1954.
41. For Boder's years in Mexico, I have in part drawn on S. Jurado Cárdenas, V. Colotla, and X. Gallegos, "David Pablo Boder: Su breve estancia en la psicología mexicana" [David Pablo Boder: His Brief Stay in Mexican Psychology], *Revista Mexicana de Psicología* 6 (1989): 205–209. I am grateful to Victor Colotla for providing me with a copy of the article.
42. Recent works on the flu epidemic and its often overlooked implications include Carol Byerly, *Fever of War: The Influenza Epidemic in the US Army during World War I* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); and Alfred Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
43. David Pablo Boder, *La Educacion, El Maestro y el Estado* (Mexico City: CVLTVRA, 1921).
44. Of the seven interviews with Greek DPs, three—with Nino Barzilai, David Lea, and Henry Suchami—were conducted wholly or partly in Spanish. Boder also interviewed two Gentile bystanders in Spanish, a Spaniard Mrs. Rudo and the Chilean Ernesto Mueller-Arnold.
45. "Personal History Statement," Section 23.
46. Michael Berkowitz details this cruel perception in *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), particularly in the chapter titled, "Lingering Stereotypes and Jewish Displaced Persons."
47. Jurado Cárdenas et al., "David Pablo Boder."
48. Elena Boder was apparently able to officially immigrate only in fall 1932, an impasse alluded to in Boder's above-cited letter of October 1932 (n. 26). After being in Chicago for five years Elena had to return to Mexico and reenter the United States. The process was anything but perfunctory. Boder had to fight to get her the authorization that she required. His sensitivity to the variable nature of U.S. immigration bureaucracy, already likely well honed, was no doubt greatly intensified.
49. "Personal History Statement," Section 23.
50. David P. Boder, "The Adjective/Verb Quotient: A Contribution to the Psychology of Language," *Psychological Record* 3 (1940): 309–344.
51. See for example Martin Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology: Institutionalization, Diversity, and the Rise of Sociological Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); and Carla Cappetti, *Writing Chicago: Modernism, Ethnography, and the Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). This movement shaped Jewish approaches to social science in this period as well. For Thomas's influence in particular, see Daniel Soyer, "Documenting Immigrant Lives at an Immigrant Institution: Vivo's Autobiography Contest of 1942," *Jewish Social Studies* 5 (1999): 219–220.
52. 1931 American Psychological Association Directory.

53. The book listed is Norman Fenton's *Shell Shock and Its Aftermath* (St. Louis: Mosby, 1926). On the cultural significance of the term and phenomenon of shell shock in the post–World War I era, see Jay Winter, "Shell Shock and the Cultural History of the Great War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 35 (2000): 7–11. This issue of the journal contains articles devoted to the cultural history of "shell shock."
54. An obituary of Boder written by his friend and IIT colleague, Phil Shurrager, wrongly names Steven Ransom, who was neither the dissertation director nor on the defense committee. I am indebted to Northwestern University archivist Patrick Quinn for information on Boder at Northwestern.
55. I rely here on the obituary published in 1963 by Gordon H. Ball and a number of other UCLA students whom Fearing had mentored. "Franklin Fearing, Psychology, Los Angeles," *University of California: In Memoriam*, April 1963.
56. Franklin Fearing, *Reflex Action: A Study in the History of Physiological Psychology* (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1930).
57. See Edwin Shneidman's recollections of Fearing at UCLA in the late 1930s: "Fragments of an Autobiography," *Journal of Personality Assessment* 82 (2004): 129–137.
58. Franklin Fearing, "Review of *I Did Not Interview the Dead*," by David Boder," *Journal of Social Psychology* 34 (1951): 145–148.
59. David P. Boder, *The Influence of Concomitant Activity and Fatigue upon Certain Forms of Reciprocal Hand Movement and Its Fundamental Components* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935).
60. Letter from Boder to Minna Taubes, April 19, 1955, UCLA, Box 22. See also the "Liepaja [Libau] Jewish Cemetery Book 1909–1941," <http://www.liepajajews.org/cem/M.htm>.
61. *Ibid.*
62. Elena Boder's curriculum vitae. I am indebted to Dr. Richard Gatti, a long-time colleague of Elena, for providing me with a copy of her CV.
63. For one view of Boder and the early days of the Psychological Museum, see L. T. Benjamin Jr., "David Boder's Psychological Museum and the Exposition of 1938," *Psychological Record* 29 (1979): 559–565.
64. *Psychological Museum—Topics* 2 (1938).
65. *Ibid.*
66. Andrew Winston, "'As His Name Indicates': R.S. Woodworth's Letters of Reference and Employment of Jewish Psychologists in the 1930s," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 32 (1996): 30–43; and Andrew Winston, "'The Defects of His Race': E.G. Boring and Antisemitism in American Psychology, 1923–1953," *History of Psychology* 1 (1998): 27–51.
67. M. Ellen Mitchell, director of the Psychological Institute, IIT. Personal communication, May 2005.
68. *Time*, June 10, 1940, 56–57.
69. Boder must have had in mind an armistice, since no peace treaty was signed with Germany at the war's end. Thanks to Jürgen Matthäus for pointing out Boder's slip.
70. Boder kept up contact with both colleagues and students at IIT. But his relations with the institution itself were strained by IIT's decision to cut his \$100 a month pension to \$10 a month. The correspondence regarding

this issue and Boder's contention of the pension cut fill a thick file. AHAP, M19.

71. "Addenda," *Topical Autobiographies*, 3160.
72. Letter to Francis and Maggie Coughlin, May 23, 1957.
73. Boder likely knew well Pavlov's research, which was available in Russian considerably before it was in English. Boder's physiological psychology dissertation topic bears some relation to Pavlov's work, and Boder cites several of Pavlov's publications. The exact scholarly debt is still, however, to be determined.

## Chapter 2

1. Letter from Manni Falk, April 22, 1945. UCLA, Box 24.
2. Antony Beevor and Artemis Cooper, *Paris after the Liberation, 1944–1949* (New York: Penguin, 1994). On postwar France in regard to French and other Jews, see Jean-Marc Dreyfus, "The French Administration and State Facing the Jews," conference paper, Jerusalem, 2007; Patrick Weil, "The Return of Jews in the Nationality or the Territory of France (1943–1973)," in *The Jews Are Coming Back: The Return of the Jews to Their Countries of Origin after WWII*, ed. David Bankier (New York: Berghahn, 2005); Eric Ghoslan and Kathy Hazan, *A la vie! Les enfants de Buchenwald du shtetl à l'OSE* (Paris: Editions le Manuscrit, 2005); Maud Mandel, *In the Aftermath of Genocide: Armenians and Jews in Twentieth-Century France* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Kathy Hazan, *Les orphelins de la Shoah—Les maisons de l'espoir (1944–1960)* (Paris: les Belles Lettres, 2000); Judith Hemmendinger and Robert Krell, *The Children of Buchenwald: Child Survivors of the Holocaust and Their Postwar Lives* (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2000); Daniel G. Cohen, "Insertion et transit: les réfugiés juifs de l'après-guerre, 1945–48," *Archives juives* 29 (1996): 92–101; Isabelle Goldsztejn, "Ausecours d'une communauté: l'American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee en France (1933–1950)," master's thesis, 1992, Université Paris I; David Weinberg, "The Reconstruction of the French Jewish Community after World War II," in *She'erit Hapletah, 1944–1948*, ed. Yisrael Gutman and Avital Saf (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990); François Delpech, "L'immigration juive polonaise en France," *Sur les Juifs, Etudes d'histoire contemporaine* (Lyon: PUL, 1983), 161–170. On postwar historical commissions in France, see Renee Poznanski, "La création du Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine en France (Avril 1943)," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 63 (July–September 1999): 51–64; and Annette Wieviorka, *Déportation et génocide: Entre la mémoire et l'oubli* (Paris: Plon, 1992), 412–431.
3. "Nelly Bundy," *Topical Autobiographies*, vol. 9, chapter 33.
4. See Henry Greenspan, "The Awakening of Memory: Survivor Testimony in the First Years after the Holocaust and Today" (Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2001; Peter Suedfeld et al., "Erikson's 'Components of a Healthy Personality' among Holocaust Survivors Immediately and Forty Years after the War," *International Journal of Aging and Human Development* 60 (2005): 229–248; Maria Ecker, "Verbalizing the Holocaust: Oral/Audiovisual Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors in the United States," in *How the Holocaust Looks Now: International Perspectives*, ed. Martin Davies and Claus-Christian Szejnmann (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

5. This chronological list is dated December 2, 1955, and bears the heading, "List of Interviewees and Spools of European Displaced People." AHAP.
6. Elie Wiesel, June 2006, personal communication.
7. Memorandum: May 1, 1945. UCLA, Box 1.
8. "Memorandum," May 1, 1945. UCLA, Box 1.
9. Letter to Archibald MacLeish, July 11, 1945. UCLA, Box 1. MacLeish served in this position from December, 1944 to August, 1945.
10. UCLA, Box 1.
11. This was conveyed to Boder by Dael Wolfle, of the National Research Council, and apparent academic liaison to the OSS. UCLA, Box 1.
12. The German response was of interest to many. See for example David Rodnick, *Postwar Germans: An Anthropologist's Account* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948). Rodnick interviewed 151 "individuals" regarding their views of Nazism and the persecution of Jews.
13. Letter to Dr. Franziska Baumgarten-Tramer, 1945. YAP.
14. David Boder, "The Displaced People of Europe: Preliminary Notes on a Psychological and Anthropological Study," *Illinois Tech Engineer* (1947): 2; see also David Boder, *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), xii.
15. "The Displaced People of Europe," 2.
16. *Ibid.*, 2–3.
17. ORT is an acronym from the Russian, "Obshestvo Remeslenofo zemledelcheskofo Truda," meaning "The Society for Trades and Agricultural Labour." Launched in Russia in 1880, the organization endeavored to provide vocational skills for the increasingly impoverished Jews of Imperial Russia. Extending its range in the twentieth century, ORT supported afflicted Jewish refugees during World War I, became internationally active in the 1920s, continued to operate during World War II in some ghettos, and was especially dedicated to vocational centers for Jewish DPs in the aftermath of the Holocaust. See Jack Rader, *By the Skill of Their Hands: The Story of ORT* (Geneva: World ORT Union, 1960); Leon Shapiro, *The History of ORT: A Jewish Movement for Social Change* (New York: Schocken, 1980) and Sarah Kavanaugh, *ORT and the Rehabilitation of Holocaust Survivors* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008).
18. "Spool Book," November 3, 1947. UCLA, Box 15. In another place, Boder expresses the "lamentable" loss similarly: "Among the many reasons that make so lamentable the delay of these interviews from 1945, when they were planned originally, to 1946, when the means for the expedition were finally found, is the unquestionable loss of freshness in the descriptions of the liberation scenes." "The Tale of Anna Kovitzka," 81.
19. See my discussion of the "rhetoric of immediacy" in chapter 1. Even such a fine historian as Saul Friedlander has ignored the distance of time passed when, wishing, as many of us have done, to enhance the status of early post-war testimony, he prefacing a quotation from a Boder interview with the tag, "a ghetto survivor interviewed immediately after the war." Saul Friedlander, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), 145.
20. See for example Primo Levi's trenchant comments on the dejection experienced by many at the time of liberation in *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Vintage, 1989), 70–73.

21. Ze'ev Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 17–18.
22. See Jan Gross, *Fear: Antisemitism in Poland after Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpretation* (New York: Random House, 2006); Joanna Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), especially chapter 6; Joanna Michlic, "Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1918–1939 and 1945–1947," *Polin* 13 (2000): 34–61; and David Engel, "Patterns of Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1944–1946," *Yad Vashem Studies* 26 (1998): 43–86. As we will see, Boder's interviewees who came from or via Poland try to account for the violence in various ways.
23. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xii.
24. Primo Levi notes that, in these years, he forgot the stories that he was told during the war, which were all similar. *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Collier, 1993), 65.
25. The Greek Jews were Nino Barzilai, Rita Bennayor, Eda Button, Jacob Button, David Lea, Manis Mizrahi, and Henry Suchami.
26. "The Displaced People of Europe," 3.
27. See Donald Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 4.
28. Boder's emphasis on the young can be viewed in contrast to Gordon Allport's important study that influenced the direction of Boder's own. See chapter 4.
29. The International Red Cross, for example, classified children as those sixteen years and under.
30. See in particularly David P. Boder and Ethel P. Beach, "Wants of Adolescents: I. A Preliminary Study," *Journal of Psychology* 3 (1936): 505–511. We recall that Boder also served on the staff of the Chicago Institute for Juvenile Research.
31. "The Displaced People of Europe," 5–6.
32. "Psychological Survey of the Displaced Persons of Europe," 3. *Illinois Institute of Technology News Bureau*, undated. The original typescript reads, "Dr. Boder did a complete study of the children..." But the word "complete" is crossed out in favor of a penciled in "rather comprehensive," an emendation Boder apparently felt obliged to make. YA.
33. "The Displaced People of Europe," 3.
34. This was indeed the wishful refrain sounded by Jacob Oleiski: "It is impossible to create [in the difficult conditions of the German DP camps] that genial way of life under which that great mournful past the people have experienced could be forgotten."
35. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xii–xiii.
36. Prologue to the interview with Leon Shachnovski.
37. *Topical Autobiographies*, vol. 22 (1953), 1020.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Examples of non-DPs include Judah Gaulen, representative of the Jewish Agency, and Dimitri Odinetz, Russian exile in Paris, the latter of whom I discuss at some length in the following chapter.
40. *Topical Autobiographies*, vol. 22, 1021.
41. "Initial" here refers to a first interview with a DP; as we have seen, Shachnovski's interview was preceded by that of Khichenko. Yet Khichenko

was himself preceded by several interviews which apparently took place aboard the ship en route to Europe. One (spool 1) was with Stephen Wise, noted American Reform rabbi, and the other (spool 2) is listed as "Alperin and Cantoni." This sequence explains why the Khichenko/Shachnovski interviews begin with spool #3 rather than with spool #1. The Library of Congress list of spools begins with number 3; in this case, there is no indication as to what happened with spools 1 and 2.

42. Hence Boder's heading for the interview project memorandum: "Memorandum on the Recording and Study of Verbatim Reports of War Sufferers in Europe."

43. *Topical Autobiographies*, vol. 8 (1955), 1473.

44. *Ibid.*, 1367.

45. *Ibid.*

46. Later that same day, Boder again seeks an assessment of the Jews' position in Poland. In this case, however, he links this assessment directly with the recent Kielce pogrom:

BODER: Tell me, Miss Gurman/ova/ how is the situation of the Jews at present? What do you say about the Program [sic] of Kielce?

GURMANOVA: /Still in tears. One cannot help thinking her cautious reply has something to do with her necessity to return to Poland—first words not clear/ Always after a war, it is understood that various things may happen.

BODER: It is a time of transition? And you think the Jews...

GURMANOVA: /In a conciliatory tone. ??/ Well they hanged the people...who were guilty—they were hanged.

BODER: And you think things will become normal?

GURMANOVA: I think it will. Poland, where there were three and a half million Jews, will probably have the Jews again.

Like Wilf, Gurmanova presents a picture of a resurrected Jewish community in Poland. The Kielce pogrom was one of the unfortunate aspects of the postwar period; justice nevertheless prevailed and the perpetrators were decisively punished, seemingly a sign that the nation will not tolerate violence against Jews. Boder's notes make clear that he feels she is obliged to speak a party line; he tries to pursue the line of questioning he took with Wilf but this time he finds she is not able or willing to supply the background information.

47. See I. Posner, ed., *Jacob Oleiski: A Man's Work*, trans. Olivia Hilel (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yotze Lita b'Yisrael, 1986); Leo Schwarz, *The Redeemers: A Saga of the Years 1945-1952* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Young, 1953); Ada Schein, "Educational Programs in the Jewish DP Camps of Germany and Austria, 1945-1951," dissertation (in Hebrew), Hebrew University, 2000, chapter 8.

48. When Boder reaches Germany he sees for himself and feels obliged to record the surge of Polish refugees hoping to gain entry to the DP camp: "Only tonight [September 20] arriving at the camp I saw a group of people congregating at the gate, a group of people who represent apparently a kind of inter-departmental football. In spite of the fact that the social service organizations were informed that the camp was overcrowded and one could almost expect a 'revolt' if new inmates should be added to the camp, new and more crowds

are arriving which represent the so-called infiltrates. These are the people who are running away from the pogroms in Poland or just from other occupation sectors with the desire to find refuge in the blessed American Zone."

49. On Hecht's formidable wartime efforts on behalf of Europe's Jews and postwar agitation on behalf of a Jewish homeland, see Gil Troy, "From Literary Gadfly to Jewish Activist: The Political Transformation of Ben Hecht," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 40 (2003): 431-449; Atay Citron, "Ben Hecht's Pageant-Drama 'A Flag is Born,'" in *Staging the Holocaust: The Shoah in Drama and Performance*, ed. Claude Schumacher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 70-93; and Steven Whitfield, "The Politics of Pageantry, 1936-1946," *American Jewish History* 84 (1996): 231-251. Hecht's play, *A Flag is Born*, advocating open entry to postwar Palestine for Europe's Jewish DPs, was in rehearsal in New York at the time Boder interviewed Oleiski.

50. Yiddish transcription of Boder's speech, included in a letter from C. L. Lang, Secretary to the World Conference of ORT-Union, November 14, 1946. Translation mine.

51. David Wyman chronicles the larger and smaller meetings, marches, memorial pageants, and protests that, as he argues, had woefully little effect on US government policy. These protests included an October 6, 1943 "pilgrimage for rescue" by 400 Orthodox rabbis in Washington, D.C. David Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

52. The idiom of sackcloth and ashes circulated in the postwar period as setting a standard for the proper response. In one instance a commentator on the Nuremberg trial, Shabtai Keshev (aka Shabse Klugman) said that in the courtroom one should "wear sack and ashes, sit down on the floor and say kinnot [lamentations] for the devastation and lowliness of humankind." From Keshev's series "Ba-makom ha-resha sham ha-mishpat," in *Undzer Veg* (March 8, 1946). I am grateful to Laura Jockusch for this reference.

53. See the letters from Sam Englander, Publicity Director, American ORT, September 25, 1946 (UCLA, Box 23); from C.L.Lang, October 25 and November 14 (UCLA, Boxes 1 and 18) and from Boder to Louis Boudin, Chairman of American ORT Federation, March 22, 1947 (UCLA, Box 23).

### Chapter 3

1. Switzerland's wartime and postwar stance toward Jewish refugees was far more complex and, in certain respects, inhospitable than Oleiski's panegyric would allow for. See Heini Bornstein, *Switzerland—An Island: Aid and Rescue Activities 1939-1946* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, Moreshet, 1996); Eveline Zeder, *Ein Zuhause für Jüdische Flüchtlingskinder: Lilly Volkart und Ihr Kinderheim in Ascona 1934-1947* (Zürich: Chronos, 1998); and Simon Erlanger, "Nur Ein Durchgangsland": *Arbeitslager und Interniertenheime für Flüchtlinge und Emigranten in der Schweiz 1940-1949* (Zürich: Chronos, 2006).
2. Psychiatrist Dori Laub has commented that, to his mind, Kimmelmann's ability to put the events of the war at a psychological distance set him

apart from virtually all other Boder interviewees. Personal communication, November 2007.

3. In chapter 4, I comment on one such episode in the context of discussing the chapter on Kimmelman in Boder's book, *I Did Not Interview the Dead*.
4. On the general situation of Jewish DPs in Italy, see Susanna Kokkonen, "Jewish Refugees in Postwar Italy, 1945–1951," dissertation, Hebrew University, 2003; Susanna Kokkonen, "Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Italy, 1945–1951," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 20 (2008); and Eva Pfanzelter, "Between Brenner and Bari: Jewish Refugees in Italy, 1945–1948," in *Escape through Austria: Jewish Refugees and the Austrian Route to Palestine* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 83–104.
5. I discuss Boder's debt to Warren in chapter 7.
6. Lena Kuechler, *Meine Kinder* [My Children], trans. Aharon Tzafnat (Paris: Editions U.P.J., 1948).
7. Lena Kuechler-Silberman, *Mea Yeladim Sheli* [My Hundred Children] (Tel Aviv: 1959). An English translation first appeared in 1961 under the title *My Hundred Children*. Two films have also taken up Kuechler's extraordinary tale. A 1987 docudrama, *Lena: My Hundred Children*, directed by Edwin Sherin, dramatized the events of the revised Hebrew memoir; a 2003 Israeli documentary, *Mea Yeladim Sheli* [My Hundred Children], featuring Kuechler's natural daughter and eight of the "hundred" children, chronicles the postwar challenges facing Kuechler by way of the participants' recollections and reflections. On Kuechler's efforts in the context of the rescue of Poland's Jewish children, see Nahum Bogner, *At the Mercy of Strangers: The Rescue of Jewish Children with Assumed Identities in Poland*, trans. Ralph Mandel (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009).
8. See "The Displaced People of Europe," 5–6, where Boder dubs Kuechler the "Pied Piper" of a "children's colony," a characterization blending charisma with entrepreneurship.
9. See the review of Kuechler's Yiddish memoir by Marcia Epstein Allentuck in *Commentary* (April 1953): 427–429.
10. Boder noted the trip to Geneva in the Kimmelman interview transcript: "This concludes spool 92. We have to conclude the interview because I have not more spools with me now. This is Kimmelman's report and we stop [the interview] at Gross-Rosen. He will continue for me when I return. /I did return to Switzerland but here I received a telegram of my clearance to Germany and so the interview for which I specially returned could not take place. It is a pity because judging from that which we got from him so far, the description of the liberation would have been most instructive./"
11. "The Displaced People of Europe," 6.
12. *Ibid.*
13. See Primo Levi, "The Gray Zone," in *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Vintage, 1989), 35–69, for a searching discussion of those "human cases" in the concentration camps and ghettos about which "it is necessary to declare the imprudence of issuing hasty moral judgment" (43–44). For an attempt to elaborate Levi's notion, see Jonathan Petropoulos and John Roth, eds., *Gray Zones: Ambiguity and Compromise in the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (New York: Berghahn, 2005).
14. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, 170.

15. *Ibid.*, 163.
16. *Ibid.*, 162.
17. Kluver's account does not veer far from either internal Mennonite histories or academic ones, which attribute to the Mennonites a "poly-ethnic" origin. Depending on who is recounting the history and for what purpose, the point of origin could be Swiss, Dutch, or German. See for example Calvin Redekop, *Mennonite Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).
18. *Ibid.*, 163.
19. *Ibid.*, 164.
20. *Ibid.*, 166.
21. David Boder, "The Impact of Catastrophe," *Journal of Psychology* 38 (1954): 5. On the ambiguous status of the Volksdeutsche, particularly at the end of the war, see Doris Bergen, "The Volksdeutsche of Eastern Europe and the Collapse of the Nazi Empire, 1944–1945," in *The Impact of Nazism: New Perspectives*, ed. Alan Steinweis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 101–128. Bergen draws on Boder's interview with Kluver to illuminate the Mennonites' postwar rejection—with a measure of bad faith—of their wartime embrace of German ethnic identity. In contrast to Bergen's helpful examination of Kluver's responses within the context of the Volksdeutsche, my focus is not on Kluver *per se* but on Boder's engaged attempt to tease out the implications of Kluver's story. Curiously, Bergen cites *Topical Autobiographies* as the source of the interview transcription but does not cite *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, wherein Kluver's interview has a much more prominent position. Bergen also cites Niewyk's *Fresh Wounds* as the source of Boder's project rather than Boder's own writings—an ironic reference in this case since Niewyk did not include Kluver (or any other non-Jewish interviewees) in his abridged collection of interviews (Bergen, 127). See also Wendy Lower, "Hitler's 'Garden of Eden' in the Ukraine: Nazi Colonialization, Volksdeutsche, and 1941–1944," in *Gray Zones: Ambiguity and Compromise in the Holocaust and Its Aftermath*, ed. Jonathan Petropolis and John Roth (New York: Berghahn, 2005); and for a general review of prewar and wartime associations, see Valdis Lumans, *Hitler Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993). Although Boder's earlier postwar writing classifies the various (and sometimes ambiguous) role of Mennonites and other non-Jewish DPs, he did not use the term Volksdeutsche—or perhaps was not familiar with it—until some years later. See for example the 1947 publication, "The Displaced People of Europe," 6–7.
22. Peter and Efrieda Dyck, *Up from the Rubble* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1991), 117 ff. On the Mennonites in particular in World War II, see Marlene Epp, *Women without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); on the earlier period under the Soviets, see John Toews, *Lost Fatherland: Mennonite Emigration from Soviet Russia, 1921–1927* (Vancouver: Regent College, 2003).
23. Leo Schwarz, *The Redeemers: A Saga of the Years, 1945–1952* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Young, 1952), 18–23; Yehuda Bauer, *Out of the Ashes: The Impact of American Jews on Post-Holocaust European Jewry* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1989), 52.
24. There remains, however, only a fragment of the Erwin Tischauer interview on the extant recordings. And he is, moreover, not listed on Boder's

interview list, a sign that after all it may have been an incidental exchange that did not to Boder's mind comprise a full-fledged interview. For her part, Helen Tischauer claims that Boder did indeed conduct a significant interview with her husband. For further discussion of these issues and a substantial commentary on Boder's interview with Helen (Zippi) Tischauer, see Jürgen Matthäus, "Displacing Memory: The Transformation of an Interview," in *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor: Holocaust Testimony and Its Transformations*, ed. Jürgen Matthäus (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). For purposes of cross-reference, I have maintained Boder's spelling. Helen T. spells it without the "s": Tichauer. See Matthäus.

25. Matthäus's pioneering study of this interview is one of a half-dozen essays in the collection cited above. For his part, he aims to show the progressive distancing that occurred in the "transformations" of the original interview, both in Boder's own transcription and in Donald Niewyk's later abridgment.

Matthäus's contentions are persuasive. Yet his explanations are not always in harmony with the larger picture of Boder's approach. For one, Matthäus suggests that there was a "disparity between the interviewee's intent and the interviewer's interpretation." While Tischauer was looking to recount her ordeal with a rational precision, Boder was ostensibly focused on "emotional expressions of trauma." But this attributes to Boder a concept of trauma that he did not subscribe to. His notion of trauma, as we have seen, was not emotion based. It referred rather to those violations of dignity—what he called "deculturation"—that could be indexed or scored. And whatever the implications of Boder's transcription notes, they do not—here or elsewhere—invoke the term "*trauma*."

Second, Matthäus's analysis, while wonderfully balanced, raises the issue of Boder's lack of knowledge, since Tischauer's own explanation for the disparity points, at least in part, to Boder's ignorance: "To this day, Helen Tichauer remains shocked about this misinterpretation which, together with other mistakes in the Tichauer *Topical Autobiography*, confirmed her impression that Boder had been too ignorant and was too rushed to make proper sense of her testimony." Yet the circumstances militate strongly against this assessment. Tischauer's interview was approximately Boder's 100th; nineteen earlier interviewees had also been incarcerated in Auschwitz-Birkenau or one of its satellite camps. By this time, Boder was clearly familiar with, if not an insider to, the malevolent circumstances of the camp. His approach sometimes sounded naive. But Boder often chose that style in order to prompt the interviewee to speak without any presupposition that the audience was informed about the subject. Optimally, this strategy allowed each interview to stand on its own and could be listened to and understood without reference to any of the others.

The transcription of Tischauer's interview, rendered by Boder more than nine years after the interview itself (February 1956) is of course a different story. One can surely be skeptical of his remembering the interaction vividly. Yet here too his "ignorance" does not seem to be factor. He had been working with the interviews for ten years, had relistened to and transcribed dozens, had analyzed some closely, and, on top that, had been reading in the literature. He thus transcribed and annotated the interview with likely a firmer knowledge base than when he originally conducted it.

One other comment regarding language and translation. Boder's collaborator in the translations, Bernard Wolf, was particularly active in this series of interviews: he is listed as assisting in the translation of twenty-four of the twenty-eight interviews transcribed in series four of *Topical Autobiographies*. Interestingly, Tischauer's is one of the four he is not listed on. Yet, since Wolf was so much on the scene at this point, it cannot be ruled out that he was involved. These circumstantial details do not negate Matthäus's claims (based partially on Tischauer's) that Boder's transcription misconstrues the meaning of words and events. They do suggest that Boder was aware of his limitations when it came to the language of the camps and that he may have consulted with his collaborator if he came up against unfamiliar material.

26. Laura Jockusch, "'Collect and Record: Help to Write the History of the Latest Destruction!' Jewish Historical Commissions in Europe, 1943–1953," dissertation, New York University, 2007, 244.
27. For a discussion of the role of UNNRA University, see Nina Bschorr, "'Wir wollten alle so gerne lernen...': die UNRRA-Universität im DP-Camp Deutsches Museum in München," *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 17 (2008): 269–293; Anna Holian, "Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: The Politics of Self-Representation among Displaced Persons in Munich, 1945–1951," unpublished dissertation, 2005, 463–515; and Anna Holian, "Displacement and the Post-War Reconstruction of Education: Displaced Persons at the UNRRA University of Munich, 1945–1948," *Contemporary European History* 17 (2008): 167–195. Holian made use of Boder's interviews as well as reinterviewing a half-century later some of the students.
28. Matzner's age is recorded as forty-two. But according to the birthdate in Matzner's written memoir, this number is off by ten years, making his age thirty-two at the time of the interview. Matzner was first married only after the war, in 1948. See "Publisher's Afterword," in *The Musselman: The Diary of a Jewish Slave Laborer*, by David Matzner, with David Margolis (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1994).
29. Matzner makes clear in his interview that the synagogue he is referring to (where the interview was conducted) is not the architecturally famous Temple of Wiesbaden, which was set on fire during Kristallnacht and demolished thereafter, but a smaller synagogue that "was not set on fire only because such a fire would have threatened the neighborhood," 197.
30. Reeve Brenner cites these words from Matzner's interview in order to show a survivor whose religious faith was unchanged and who in the aftermath of the war dedicated his life to a "single all-consuming objective." But while these objectives are generally, notes Brenner, "not a religious practice in the traditional sense," Matzner's synagogue-restoring mission, traditional in every respect, doesn't quite fit under Brenner's rubric. See *The Faith and Doubt of Holocaust Survivors* (New York: Free Press, 1980), 53–54.
31. The list was nearly duplicated in the acknowledgments section of *I Did Not Interview the Dead*.
32. Carl Marziali, "Before It Had a Name: Part I," *This American Life* [radio program], October 26, 2001. The 2009 BBC production, "I Did Not Interview the Dead," follows in kind. Though it features Boder speaking these words three times during the course of an hour, the program never links the words

to the Rosh Hashanah liturgical context out of which they emerge. Mark Burman and Alan Dein, "I Did Not Interview the Dead," Archive on 4, BBC July 4 & 6, 2009.

33. See Peggy Kennedy Grimstead, *The Odyssey of the Turgenev Library* (Amsterdam, 2003), 22–23, 28. It is worth noting that Grimstead draws on Boder's interview with Odinetz for significant information about the library during the war. After his long exile in Paris, Odinetz eventually returned to Soviet Russia in 1948, serving as a professor at Kazan State University until his death in 1950. His life then closed the circle in a way that Boder's never quite did.

34. Paul Ignatiev, Dmitry Odinetz, and Paul Novogrotsev, *Russian Schools and Universities in the World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press and the Carnegie Endowment, 1929). The volume appeared in a series of 150 volumes edited by James Shotwell on the economic and social history of the first world war. Odinetz was responsible for the first half of the volume, "Russian Primary and Secondary Schools during the War." He includes some pithy comments regarding the Russian government's discrimination against Jews. After chronicling the checkered policy toward education of Jews in Russia from the mid-nineteenth century to the immediate prewar period, Odinetz concludes,

There is little doubt therefore that the [Russian] Ministry of Education succeeded by means of a policy of obstruction in hindering the intellectual progress of Jewish youth and in condemning it to spiritual starvation at the very moment when it longed and sought for an education.

35. On music and song during the Holocaust, see Shmerke Kaczerginski, ed., *Dos Gesang fun Vilna Ghetto* [Songs from the Vilna Ghetto] (Paris: Committee of Jews of Vilna in France, 1947); Shmerke Kaczerginski and H. Leivick, *Lider Fun Di Ghettos un Lagern* [Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps] (New York: Cyco-Bicher Farlag, 1948); Rita Pups and Bernard Mark, *Dos Lied fun Ghetto* [Songs from the Ghettos] (Warsaw: Yiddish-Bukh, 1962); Eleanor Gordon Mlotek and Malke Gottlieb, eds., *We Are Here: Songs of the Holocaust* (New York: Education Department of the Workmen's Circle, 1983); David Roskies, "Ten Ghetto Poets," in *The Literature of Destruction* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989); Gila Flam, *Singing for Survival: Songs of the Lodz Ghetto* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

36. Shirli Gilbert, "Buried Monuments: Yiddish Songs and Holocaust Memory," *History Workshop Journal* 66 (2008): 107–128.

37. See <http://www.holocaustmusic.org>. The ten songs are "Buchenwaldlied"; "Di Shif Seder"; "Do tif in a Vald"; "Dort in dem Lager"; "Es Brent"; "Heveti shalom aleikhem"; "Lo bayom belo baylaya"; "On a heim, on a dakh"; "Shir haPalmach"; "Yeder geshikhte hot ire ende." Gilbert had a significant role in organizing the resourceful site. Yet the name for specific section of the site that Boder's contribution comes under ("Displaced Persons")—does not mesh very well with the title of the Web site ("Music during the Holocaust").

38. See <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/music>. Ethnomusicologist Brett Werb authored the notes on Boder's contribution.

39. Songs recorded at one site—the religious DP community of Henonville—have disappeared. Boder includes the spool (no. 44) and its songs in his interview and song collection lists. But the Library of Congress does not. Given that the Henonville interview spool numbers range from 120 to 131, Boder apparently transferred the Henonville songs to spool 44 from a later damaged spool.
40. Jockusch, “Collect and Record.”
41. Laura Jockusch confirmed in conversation the absence of historical commission recording of narrative testimony.
42. On Alan Lomax, see the “Alan Lomax Collection,” <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/lomax/>; on former slave interviews, see Voices from the Days of Slavery, at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/vfsabout.html>; on the Linguistic Atlas projects, see <http://us.english.uga.edu/>.
43. I am grateful to Gerda Klingenboeck, Alexander von Plato, and Alessandro Portelli for their email comments detailing the paucity of pre-World War II European recorded interviews.
44. Brett Werb, “Shmerke Kaczerginski, Partisan-Troubadour” in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry* 20 (2008): 392–412.
45. Gilbert, “Buried Monuments.”
46. Quoted by Gilbert, “Buried Monuments.”
47. In a related approach, Leah Wolfson has recently examined songs that emerge within the course of the English-language testimony of the Survivors of the Shoah Foundation interviews. See Leah Wolfson, “Is there anything else you would like to add?” Visual Testimony Encounters the Lyric,” *South Atlantic Review* 73 (2008).
48. In a transcription footnote to Unikowski’s interview, Boder shows that he was keeping track of the crossover of material from one site to another: “This song is attributed to the Polish-Jewish song writer Gebuertig. See also the spool (without a number) marked Henonville [sic] Songs, where this song was sung by Guta Frank. See also Geneva songs, Spool 84 and Tradate songs, Spool 105.”
49. The characterization “ballad-like” narratives appears in several places, including on the book jacket summary of *I Did Not Interview the Dead*.
50. In the transcription, Boder adds comments from a folklorist perspective: “She sings two stanzas. The melody which she claims is Russian really consists of two songs. The first is a Russian song which starts with the words, “In vain you, boy, are coming,” but the second half appears not to be in Russian. The words will be given in the appendix.”
51. On the ordeal of being ordered to sing at Auschwitz, see Guido Fackler, “‘We All Feel This Music is Infernal . . .’ Music on Command at Auschwitz,” in *The Last Expression: Art and Auschwitz*, ed. David Mickenberg, Corinne Granof, and Peter Hayes (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003), 114–125. At another point Frydman both accounts for the transmission of the song and comments on the relevance of its content:

FRYDMAN: We were very tired, and we were talking about how it was possible for such things to happen. One is beaten, one starved, people being gassed. We remembered a song that we sang in Drancy, that was a song that came from Dachau, which was composed by the first prisoners of Dachau, and this song was very well suited to the lager.

BODER: How did that song come over to Drancy?

FRYDMAN: To Drancy? Through political prisoners.

BODER: What language was it in?

FRYDMAN: French. That was translated from the German. Then the song says: “Far away in some place there are large spaces of bad soil, where the bullets do not sing in the dried up trees. You only hear the steps of the Germans and the rattle of the arms, and only crying and weeping, and no song comes from the lager.” That song indeed described the lager. The tune itself was a good description. It is a very sad tune. We sang that song, and so passed the day.

BODER: What melody was it? /Here she sings the famous song which is on the other spools, and will be inserted here later./

FRYDMAN: These two verses told a lot. “Death to the one who tries to escape.” And so it was. Not only death to the one who tries to escape, run away, but death to all those who are there.

52. The undated list, with the heading “Displaced Persons’ Songs—Spool Numbers,” includes (in nearly random sequence) Bellevue (France); Tradate (Italy); Geneva; Henonville (France); and Mennonites. AHAP.

## Chapter 4

1. “Memorandum, May 1, 1945.” UCLA, Box 1.
2. Thompson suggested that they put together a record album of “highlights” of Boder’s interviews, arguing that most people don’t have wire recorders but many have record players and may be willing to buy the records. Letter to Boder, March 31, 1947, UCLA, Box 23.
3. On Boder’s fidelity to the wire recorder, see chapter 5.
4. David Boder, “Spool 169,” *Chicago Jewish Forum* (Winter 1947–1948): 102–106. The term “spool” came from the wire recorder “spools”—reels around which were wound steel wire. Each spool allowed for thirty-eight minutes of recording time.
5. As mentioned above, Spools 1 and 2 were interviews conducted by Boder en route to Europe and were in some (but not all) respects viewed by him as outside the boundaries of the DP interview project *per se*.
6. See Donald Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 5.
7. Joshua Bloch, *Annotated List of Books Issued by the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1890–1952* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1953), 1.
8. Jonathan Sarna, *JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture: 1888–1988* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1989), 184–186.
9. Marie Syrkin, *Blessed Is the Match: The Story of Jewish Resistance* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1947), 14.
10. Bloch, *Annotated List of Books Issued*, 9.
11. It should be noted that Sarna treats Syrkin’s book under the rubric of Zionism and virtually excludes reference to its connection with the Holocaust. See Sarna, *JPS*, 197. This exclusion may be accounted for by the fact that Sarna does not have a heading or subheading dealing with JPS’s response to the Holocaust but rather discusses its cautious strategy under the heading “World War II.”

12. Mark Wischnitzer, *To Dwell in Safety: The Story of Jewish Migration since 1800* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1948), ix.
13. Letter from Grayzel to Boder, June 9, 1948; from Jacobs to Boder, October 14, 1948; from Boder to Jacobs, November 16, 1948; and from Jacobs to Boder, November 24, 1948. UCLA, Box 21.
14. Letter from Grayzel to Boder, February 21, 1949. UCLA, Box 21.
15. Letter from Boder to Jacobs, November 13, 1948. UCLA, Box 21.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Letter from Grayzel to Boder, February 1949. UCLA, Box 21.
18. "A Tale of Anna Kovitzka," 60.
19. Solomon Grayzel, *A History of the Jews: From the Babylonian Exile to the End of World War II* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1947), 351. Grayzel did consider economic factors in relation to "the Badge" but in a manner diametrically opposite to that of Boder. Though the Catholic Church decreed the wearing of a badge in 1215, governments did not enforce the regulation as long as Jews maintained "economic strength." For Boder, the badge was associated with economic privilege; for Grayzel, it marked the diminishment of economic power.
20. Letter to Maurice Jacobs, November 13, 1948. UCLA, Box 21.
21. Maurice Samuel, *Prince of the Ghetto* (New York: Knopf, 1948). JPS published the book in conjunction with trade publisher Knopf, an arrangement JPS pursued with books they believed would appeal to a broader readership.
22. See my discussion of broken English, particularly as it relates to the writings of Cynthia Ozick and Art Spiegelman, in *Sounds of Defiance: The Holocaust, Multilingualism, and the Problem of English* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).
23. The term "bystanders" came into fashion to refer to this group in the 1980s. See David Ceserani and Paul A. Levine, eds., *"Bystanders" to the Holocaust: A Re-evaluation* (London-Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002). Yet the terminology was in place much earlier, as witnessed by the fact that Boder used the triad of victim-perpetrator-bystander in some of his earliest formulations of the interview project. While the situation of the non-Jews whose interviews appear in *I Did Not Interview the Dead* was ambiguous, it should be noted that the category of bystander does not apply to all non-Jews, some of whom were outright victims of the Nazis.
24. In a 1947 publication, Boder refers to this group as "DPs of Christian Faith" and devotes a separate section to their background and circumstances in the DP camp. See "The Displaced People of Europe: Preliminary Notes on a Psychological and Anthropological Study," *Illinois Tech Engineer* (March 1947). In his later, more rigorous 1954 article, "The Impact of Catastrophe," he classifies them as "friendly Eastern refugees": "Friendly" because they (as opposed to the Jews) were dealt with benignly by the Nazis, "Eastern" because they came from Eastern European countries. See David Boder, "The 'Impact of Catastrophe,'" *Journal of Psychology* 38 (1954): 3–50.
25. Boder eventually published the "Traumatic Inventory" in the final volume of *Topical Autobiographies*, vol. 16, 3141–3159. The full title is "Traumatic Inventory for the Assessment and Evaluation of Interviews with Displaced Persons." See chapter 6 for a fuller discussion of Boder's approach to trauma.

26. Nick Stargardt, *Witnesses of War: Children's Lives under the Nazis* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005), xv–xvi.
27. "Jörn" is a shortened form of "Juergen." Thus what Boder did with Bassfreund/Gastfreund is similar to the shortening of "Abraham" to "Abe" with Kimmelmann/Mohnblum.
28. UCLA, Box 19.
29. *Topical Autobiographies*, vol. 2, chapter 3, 203.
30. On Estonia's response to occupation during World War II, see *Estonia, 1940–1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity* (Talinn: Estonian Foundation for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity, 2005); Anton Weiss-Wendt, *Murder without Hatred: Estonians and the Holocaust* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009); Anton Weiss-Wendt, "The Soviet Occupation of Estonia in 1940–1941 and the Jews," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12 (1998): 308–325; David Gaunt, Paul Levine, and Laura Palasuo, eds., *Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania* (Bern: Lang, 2004). For searching reflections on the enigma of Estonian response, see Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 220–227.
31. See "Tables of Contents," in "The D.P. Story," AHAP, M17. It is worth noting that every title in the published version is different from its counterpart in the earlier one.
32. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, 193.
33. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, 125–126.
34. Surveying psychiatric and psychological research on the Holocaust, Robert Krell comments on this specific episode, believing that the contention shows Boder's "unease." That may have been the case. But Boder's choice to end the chapter as he does demonstrates a different view on his part. While it is remarkable that Krell forcefully selects only this exchange to comment on in his remarks on Boder in his survey, he misses the fact that the Kimmelmann interview was abridged for the book. See Robert Krell, "Psychiatry and the Holocaust," in *Medical and Psychological Effects of Concentration Camps on Holocaust Survivors*, ed. Robert Krell and Marc Sherman (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1997), 8.
35. See Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence*.
36. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xviii.
37. Maurice Hindu's 1929 volume, *Humanity Uprooted*, is one of the first to use the term in this manner. Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1951). Several authors preceded Boder in using the term to refer to World War II displaced persons. See *Europe's Uprooted People* (Washington, DC: National Planning Council, 1944); and Zorach Warhaftig, *Uprooted: Jewish Refugees and Displaced Persons after Liberation* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the American and World Jewish Congress, 1946).
38. See Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982); and Arieh Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945–1948* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).
39. Letter to Mrs. Samuel Levin, July 31, 1947. UCLA, Box 23.

40. Gossett argued his case by labeling displaced persons as "bums, criminals, black marketeers, subversives, revolutionaries, and crackpots of all colors and hues." See Matthew Gibney, *The Ethics and Politics of Asylum: Liberal Democracy and the Response to Refugees* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 137-138.
41. Letter from Leo J. Margolin to Boder, March 22, 1948. YAP.
42. "Your Right to Say It: Should We Close the Gates to Displaced Persons?" Transcript of radio program, March 30, 1948. AHAP, M19.
43. Ralph Eckerstrom was responsible for the book's overall design. *I Did Not Interview the Dead* was one of the American Institute of Graphic Art 50 Books of the Year.
44. Ziva Amishai-Maisels, *Depiction and Interpretation: The Influence of the Holocaust on the Visual Arts* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1993), 131-134.
45. I am indebted to art historian Dr. Mirjam Rajner for sharing her observations on the stylistic aspects of the book jacket. Personal communication, December 2005.
46. See for instance, Ze'ev Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and David Bankier, ed., *The Jews Are Coming Back: The Return of the Jews to Their Countries of Origin after World War II* (New York: Berghahn Books; Jerusalem, Yad Vashem, 2005), both of which use the same 1947 photograph, angled somewhat differently, on the book cover.
47. The review appears among Boder's papers but does not bear a date or a name of the periodical in which it appeared. I have thus far not been able to locate the data on the review. YAP.
48. John T. Winterich, Review of *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, by David Boder, *Saturday Review of Literature* 33 (May 6, 1950), 20.
49. Letter from Karl Dallenbach to Boder, November 23, 1950. UCLA, Box 23.
50. Books and journals that have cited *I Did Not Interview the Dead* in the past five decades include Cornelius Krahn, *Mennonite Life* (1951); *Social Change: Latvian Society at Home and in Migration* (1952); David Reisman, *Individualism Reconsidered* (1955); H. G. Adler, *Theresienstadt* (1955); Joseph Tennenbaum, *Race and Reich: The Story of an Epoch* (1956); *Social Problems* (1957); *Yad Vashem Bulletin* (1957); Martha Wolfenstein, *Disaster: A Psychological Essay* (1957); *Books for College Students' Reading* (1958); Donald Ray Cressy and Johan Galtung, *The Prison* (1961); Seymour Martin Lipset, ed., *Culture and Social Character* (1961); Albert Biderman, *March to Calumny: The Story of American POWs in the Korean War* (1963); Stephen Spitzer and Norman Denzin, *The Mental Patient* (1968); Polsky, Claster, and Goldberg, *Social System Perspectives in Residential Institutions* (1970); Kurt Wolff, *Trying Sociology* (1974); Earl Rubington and Martin Weinberg, eds., *Deviance: The Interactionist Perspective* (1978); Jerome Manis and Bernard Meltzer, eds., *Symbolic Interaction* (1978); Reeve Brenner, *The Faith and Doubt of Holocaust Survivors* (1980); Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jewish Response to German Culture* (1985); Richard Harvey Brown, *Society as Text: Essays on Rhetoric, Reason, and Reality* (1987); Steven Weine, *When History Is a Nightmare* (1999); Ewa Geller, *Warschauer Jiddich* (2001); and Phillip Bean, *Crime: Critical Concepts in Sociology* (2003).
51. Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York: Anchor, 1961).

52. Eugen Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell: The German Concentration Camps and the System behind Them*, trans. Heinz Norden (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1950); Elie Cohen, *Human Behavior in the Concentration Camp*, trans. M. H. Braaksma (New York: Norton, 1953). Cohen, a survivor of Auschwitz, was actually a physician whose books and articles dealt with the psychological and sociological rigors of the concentration camps.

53. The manuscript with this title and dated 1948 can be found in Boder's papers: "The D.P. Story: A Story of Tales of Displaced Persons." AHAP, M17. A similar strategy appears in other titles dealing with the Holocaust from this period, most notably the Yiddish poet H. Leivick's 1945 book, *In Treblinka bin ikh nicht geven* [I was not in Treblinka]. Though Boder does not refer to Leivick's book, it is suggestive to think of Boder following Leivick in searching for the appropriate idiom to acknowledge his position as a non-witness. Not everyone, however, chose a strategy of restraint. Writing also in 1945, Milton Steinberg authored "A Voice from the Grave," arguing in the words of a fictional murdered Polish Jew why a postwar return to Poland was folly and the only option lay in emigration to Israel.

Decades later, Wladyslaw Szlengel's Warsaw Ghetto poems were posthumously published as *What I Read to the Dead* [Co cztalem umarlym], in another way inverting (likely unwittingly) Boder's restraint.

54. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xix.

55. "The Tale of Anna Kovitzka: A Logico-Systematic Analysis or an Essay in Experimental Reading." UCLA, Box 6.

56. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, 8–9.

57. "The Tale of Anna Kovitzka: A Logico-Systematic Analysis," 51.

58. Ibid. In the context of the essay, Boder modifies the phrase to read, "I have not interviewed the dead."

59. In other respects as well, the two books are fundamentally different in conception. Niewyk excerpts material from thirty-four interviews, culled exclusively from Jewish DPs. He organizes the interviews according to country and, while assembling a compelling set of narratives and providing helpful introductions, he abridges the material substantially, both in length and in character. For instance, he almost entirely omits Boder's questions and comments, edits out usually more than half the interview, leaves out some narrator's comments within the narrative (without ellipsis), sometimes changes the order and sequence, and, finally, smoothes out the unidiomatic phrases, improving the grammar and syntax but eliminating the "evidence of trauma" embedded in the DPs' language.

Let me give as an example Niewyk's rendering of a section of Boder's first chapter, the interview with Anna Kovitzka. Niewyk begins his excerpted narrative (under the heading Anna K.) on what is p. 4 of Boder's text:

They arranged two ghettos, one in Slobodka and one in the yard of the synagogue. When we came, the fences were not ready, and it did not make such a terrible impression. But the next day everything was fenced up, there was an inscription on the gate: "From here one does not return." I was in my ninth month. We used to live like affluent citizens, my father-in-law, my husband, and my sister-in-law. Now we were given a [single] room. And there I was to give birth to my child. Then my father-in-law went back to his home, and he saw the

destruction of the home for which he had been working for thirty years, and he returned gravely ill. He saw how it was ransacked and ruined.

*Who ransacked and ruined it?*

*I Did Not Interview the Dead* (I have put in bold what Niewyk omitted):

MRS. KOVITZKA: In Grodno, into the ghetto. They arranged two ghettos, one in *Slobodka* and one ghetto in the yard of the synagogue. At the beginning, the day when we came to the ghetto, the wires [for the fence] were not ready, and it did not make such a terrible impression. But the next day everything was fenced up and there was an inscription on the gate—"From here one does not return." (*She is very much upset and for the next two sentences the recording is not clear.*)

We have learned that the Jew should never give up hope, and his spirit should never falter. But the heart was heavy. It was hard to bear. I was in my ninth month. We used to live like affluent citizens, my father-in-law, my man, and my sister-in-law. Now we were given a room of eight and one-half cubic meters—no—squares. I don't know how many cubic meters there were. And there I was to give birth to my child. One day they opened the ghetto, and every Jew was permitted to go into his home to fetch some things. Then my father-in-law went back to his home, and he saw the destruction of the home for which he has been working for thirty-years, and he returned gravely ill. He never got well again.

QUESTION: What do you mean—"he saw the destruction"?

MRS. KOVITZKA: There was his home, and he saw how it was ransacked and ruined.

QUESTION: Who ransacked and ruined it?

Even though Niewyk is frank about his editing the interviews, prominent historians have drawn on his collection rather than on the tapes or on Boder's own transcriptions. See for example Christopher Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 62–63 and notes thereon. Despite citing Boder's interview and transcript in tandem with Niewyk's edited version, Browning clearly uses the latter's rendition—a strategy that leads to a misreading of the testimony in question. See also Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007), 145, where his invocation of a few Boder interviews cites only Niewyk's abridged edition.

60. Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). See in particular chapter 1, "Homecomings: The Return of the Dead."
61. Elie Wiesel, "A Plea for the Dead," *Legends of Our Time* (New York: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1968), 177–178.
62. Steven Clay and Rodney Phillips, *A Secret Location on the Lower East Side: Adventures in Writing, 1960–1989: A Sourcebook of Information* (New York: New York Public Library and Granary, 1998).

63. The evolution of nineteenth- and twentieth-century print technologies in relation to sound technologies has been the subject of a number of studies. See for instance Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. G. Winthrop-Young and M. Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999) and Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). See also the “sound culture” citations in Chapter 5.
64. See Gordon Allport, *The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1942), 76. I discuss the conventions and importance of topical autobiographies at greater length in chapter 6.
65. Boder nevertheless processed at least some of the interviews in 1952 while still in Chicago. See Boder’s notes to the interviews with Leon Shachnovski and Polia Bisenhaus.
66. Letter to Bill Hyde, Librarian, IIT, March 13, 1956. UCLA, Box 22.
67. For further discussion of Wolf’s contribution, see chapter 7.
68. A June 17, 1957, sheet with a heading “Incomplete Translations & Transcriptions” lists ten interviews; annotations specify the degree of incompleteness. A second sheet, dated June 18, 1957, and with the heading “Completed Interviews (at least in pencil form) but not in volumes 1–16” lists seven additional interviews. AHAP.
69. The June 17 list notes that two manuscripts—those of David Hirsch and Yanusch Deutsch—were “missing.”

## Chapter 5

1. Although prompted by concerns other than Boder’s project or the status of audio testimony in general, Simone Gigliotti, focusing on the genre of video testimony, has raised some pointed questions about its taken-for-granted status: “But how do we classify the approach and agenda of the videotestimony genre? Is it a response to the failure of previous narrative practice to enter the epicentre of suffering declared unreachable by historians and survivors? Or is it a more accessible form of representation, possible of communicating the everyday and extraordinary experiences of survivors, and capable, in its very visuality, of speaking to a hyper-imaged society more effectively, simply and quickly, than literary autobiography (205)?” Having raised the issue of the visual, however, much of Gigliotti’s essay discusses the history and nature of “oral testimony,” a category that includes (though most of the time implicitly) audio testimony. See Simone Gigliotti, “Technology, Trauma and Representation: Holocaust Testimony and Videotape,” in *Temporalities, Autobiography and Everyday Life*, ed. Jan Campbell and Janet Harbord (Manchester, VT: Manchester University Press, 2002): 204–218.
2. Interview with Malka Tor, Director of Oral History, Yad Vashem, January 2006.
3. The Visual Center, funded mainly by a gift from Steven Spielberg, was dedicated in late 2005.
4. These priorities have even influenced access to the Boder material: as a research fellow in 2006, there was no place at Yad Vashem where I could

listen to the audio interviews on the “Voices of the Holocaust” Web site, since access to the Internet was blocked.

5. Though the Survivors of the Shoah Foundation’s digitized archive is as yet restricted in its circulation to a few predetermined academic locations, it promises to provide an important aid for scholarly and popular research.
6. See [Shoahfoundation.org](http://Shoahfoundation.org).
7. On newsreel images and the predominant role of the “image as witness” in the United States in the months following the war’s end, see Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5–22; on the photographic image, see Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera’s Eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
8. Boder also incorporates these words in his “Addenda” to *Topical Autobiographies*, 3161.
9. Auerbach cited these numbers in a 1965 report on the period 1955–1964, YV, P16/59. See Boaz Cohen, “Rachel Auerbach, Yad Vashem, and Holocaust Memory,” *Polin* (2007): 202–203, where he reviews Auerbach’s formation of the Department of Testimony in the mid-1950s and notes her conviction “that the most complete and useful means for writing down testimony is the ‘tape recorder.’” Yad Vashem archivist Nomi Halpern has confirmed Auerbach’s figures. See also Joseph Kermish’s introduction to the Hebrew edition of Auerbach’s memoir, *Tva’ot Varshaw* (1985), 12–13, where he cites “upwards of 1000 recorded interviews” through the late 1960s.
10. Other than Boder’s interviews and then Yad Vashem’s, the earliest recorded survivor interviews are listed as having taken place in 1954 at the Institute for Contemporary Jewry and in 1959 at the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oswiecim. Early survivor testimony was also recorded for radio and at court trials. Most audio interviewing of Holocaust survivors began in the 1970s or 1980s. See Joan Ringelheim, *A Catalogue of Audio and Visual Collections of Holocaust Testimony*, 2nd ed. (New York: Greenwood, 1992). The Catalogue has been updated and made available online at [www.ushmm.org/research/collections/oralhistory/](http://www.ushmm.org/research/collections/oralhistory/).
11. Dozens of tape archives exist throughout the world. The University of Michigan–Dearborn continues to maintain an online audio tape archive with transcriptions. Books based on audio archives include Sylvia Rothchild, ed., *Voices from the Holocaust* (New York: New American Library, 1981), which drew on the 250 audio recorded survivor interviews conducted in the 1970s by the William E. Wiener Oral History Library of the American Jewish Committee; and Yaffa Eliach, *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), which was based on audio recorded interviews conducted by Eliach and her staff at the Brooklyn Holocaust Center, also during the 1970s.
12. Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991). Others who base their studies on this archive include James Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony* (New York: Routledge, 1992); and Robert Kraft, *Memory Perceived: Recalling the Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002). See also Geoffrey Hartman’s essays cited below. Michael Rothberg and Jared Stark reviewed

the conference marking the archive's twentieth anniversary; see "After the Witness," *History and Memory* 15 (2003): 85–96.

13. Anita Shapira, sensitively chronicling the shift in Israel from survivors' "private memories" to "public memory," nevertheless makes the same occlusion. Books, she notes, first made private memory legitimate. "Yet written records of private memories were not sufficient, because they contain an element of distance and concealment. The documentation of private memory was extended to visual exposure, on video tapes and film, to reveal the ways in which survivors were coming to terms with their pasts." Anita Shapira, "The Holocaust: Private Memories, Public Memory," *Jewish Social Studies* 4 (1998): 52. It is as if audio interviews simply never were or played no significant role.

14. Geoffrey Hartman, "Preserving the Personal Story: The Role of Video Documentation," in *The Holocaust Forty Years After*, ed. Marcia Littell, Richard Libowitz, and E. B. Rosen (Lewiston, ME: Edwin Mellen, 1989), 54. Hartman's later reflections intensify the idea of audio's disembodiment: "Video is important because the voice as such, without a visible source, remains ghostly. That is, when you take away the visual, when you just hear the voice, the effect is that of disembodied sound, as if from the dead, from an absence." Geoffrey Hartman, "The Ethics of Witness," in *Lost in the Archives*, ed. Rebecca Comay (Cambridge, MA: Alphabet City, 2002), 494. Hartman thus unwittingly ends up inverting Boder's proclamation, "I did not interview the dead," since the audio recordings ("as if from the dead") do almost that.

15. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*, 169.

16. Joan Ringelheim, "Intervention," *Du Temoignage audiovisuel/From the audiovisual testimony* (Brussels: La Fondation Auschwitz, 1996), 82.

17. Michelle Hilmes, "Is There a Field Called Sound Culture Studies? And Does It Matter?" *American Quarterly* 57 (2005): 249. I am indebted to Lawrence Roth for bringing this article to my attention. For historical studies of sound culture, see Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Michael Bull and Les Black, eds., *The Auditory Culture Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); Veit Erlmann, ed., *Hearing Cultures* (Oxford: Berg, 2004); and Mark M. Smith, ed., *Hearing History: A Reader* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004).

18. David Boder, "The Displaced People of Europe: Preliminary Notes on a Psychological and Anthropological Study," *Illinois Tech Engineer* (March 1947). The reprint, copyrighted by Boder but without a date, was apparently self-published with the support of IIT's Department of Psychology and Education and the Psychological Museum.

19. David Morton is considered the leading authority on the wire recorder's history. See David Morton, *Off the Record: The Technology and Culture of Sound Recording in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000); David Morton, *Sound Recording* (New York: Greenwood, 2005). In conversation, Morton said that he was unaware of Boder's work but, when I described Boder's project and its results, Morton generously agreed that it may well have been the most important use of the wire recorder. Phone interview, March 2005.

20. Letter from Gay B. Shepperson, Acting Director, Welfare Division, UNRRA, to Harry Greenstein, Baltimore, August 7, 1945: "It appears that

in view of the use of the wire recorder by the Office of War Information and other sources that UNRRA will not at this time take any steps to provide this type of service [as offered by Boder]. If anything further develops I will be [be] glad to get in touch with Professor Boder." UCLA, Box 1.

21. See John Gimbel, *Science, Technology, and Reparations: Exploitation and Plunder in Postwar Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 72, 96–97.
22. David Morton chronicles Camras's persistence with the wire recorder in "Armour Research Foundation and the Wire Recorder: How Academic Entrepreneurs Fail," *Technology and Culture* 39 (1998): 213–244.
23. Gordon Allport, *The Uses of Personal Documents* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1942). Allport based his own catastrophe study, which had a profound influence on Boder, on written materials. In this respect, Boder was clearly not afraid to draw on but deviate from authoritative models. I comment at greater length in chapter 6 on Allport's view of audio recording and his overall influence on Boder.
24. Carl Rogers, *Counseling and Psychotherapy: Newer Concepts in Practice* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942); Carl Rogers, "The Nondirective Method as a Technique for Social Research," *American Journal of Sociology* 50 (1945): 279–283.
25. Bernard Covner, "A Comparison of Counselors' Written Reports with Phonographic Recording of Counseling Interviews," dissertation Ohio State University, 1942, and "Studies in Phonographic Recordings of Verbal Material: I. The Use of Phonographic Recordings in Counseling Practice and Research," *Journal of Consulting Psychology* 6 (1942): 105–113, and "Studies in Phonographic Recordings of Verbal Material: II. A Device for Transcribing Phonographic Recording of Verbal Material," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 6 (1942): 149–153, and "Studies in Phonographic Recordings of Verbal Material: III. The Completeness and Accuracy of Counseling Interview Reports," *Journal of General Psychology* 30 (1944): 181–203, and "Studies in Phonographic Recordings of Verbal Material: IV. Written Reports of Interviews," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 28 (1944): 89–98.
26. A counselor who listened to a session with a client would have a fresh perspective: "he was amazed at what he hears and might comment that he had no idea that he was using a particular approach or was making a serious blunder."
27. Rue Bucher, Charles E. Fritz, and E. L. Quarantelli, "Tape Recorded Interviews in Social Research," *American Sociological Review* 21 (1956): 359–364, and "Tape Recorded Research: Some Field and Data Processing Problems," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 20 (1956): 427–439.
28. Boder, *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xii.
29. Interview with Avraham Kimmelman, Ramat Gan, Israel, February 2006; personal communication from Jean-Marc Dreyfus, Paris, March 2006, based on his interview with Adam Krakowski.
30. In *Off the Record*, David Morton discusses how vendors would deal with customers' discomfort at hearing their voice for the first time.
31. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xii.
32. *Topical Autobiographies*, vol. 6, chapter 20, 952–954.
33. "The Displaced People of Europe," 2.
34. Letter from Robert Lewis to David Boder, August 12, 1946. YAP.

35. "The Displaced People of Europe," 3.
36. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xiii.
37. See Boder's assistant Vin Rosenthal's summary of the Kansas City interview process. AHAP, M19.
38. Boder sent transcriptions to selected world libraries and institutions as he completed each of the five series: 1950, 1953, 1955, 1956, and 1957. Both Yad Vashem and Hebrew University were on his list. Yad Vashem's library has the sixteen-volume collection, but is missing volume 5.
39. The National Institute of Mental Health was formally established in 1949 "to support the best research in any and all fields related to mental illness." Jeanne Brand and Philip Sapir, "An Historical Perspective on the National Institute of Mental Health" (Prepared as sec. 1 of the NIMH Report to the Woolridge Committee of the President's Scientific Advisory Committee), mimeograph (1964). Boder got in on the ground floor, receiving a grant in the institute's first year. His grant was renewed over the next eight years, providing him with his main source of income and enough funding to pay a small staff of collaborators. Although the \$70,000 that he received was considerably lower than the top figures, his award was for a longer period and at a higher figure than most recipients. See *Mental Health Research Grant Awards, Fiscal Years 1948–1963* (Washington, DC, 1964). In Chapter 6, I describe in greater depth the NIMH's support of Boder's project.
40. According to Boder, Israel would be the best place to enable original language transcription because of the linguistic resources available and because the cost of such transcriptions would not be prohibitive.
41. Letter to Dr. Izhak Ben Zwi [sic], October 29, 1958. AHAP, M16.
42. Boder wrote five letters to Hebrew University faculty: sociologists Shmuel Eisenstadt and Louis Guttmann; director of the National Library, C. Wormann; the (unnamed) Psychology Department chair; and university president Benjamin Mazar. The sixth letter was sent to ben-Zvi. AHAP, M16.
43. Letter from B. Mazar to David Boder, January 5, 1959. YAP.
44. Letter from Melkman to Boder, October 3, 1959. YAP.
45. Memorandum from P. S. Shurrager to IIT President John T. Rettaliata, June 15, 1961. YAP.
46. IIT Archives. I am indebted to Ellen Mitchell for bringing the memorandum to my attention and providing me with a copy.
47. Phone interview with Bernard Wolf, July 2005.
48. The Archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is the second locale and the "Voices of the Holocaust" Web site, where most of the interviews can be listened to, is the third.
49. Letter from Lawrence Kolb to David Boder, June 8, 1948. AHAP, M11.
50. Letter from David Boder to Lawrence Kolb, June 16, 1948. AHAP, M11.
51. LOCSD. The file on Boder in LOC's Sound Division contains envelopes addressed to the NIMH with dated lists of contents.
52. See Benis Frank, *Marine Corps Oral History Collection Catalogue* (Washington, DC: US Marine Corps, 1973).
53. Memorandum ("Interim Report on World War Two Wire Recordings Project") from John Howell to David Francis, June 7, 1995. LOCSD. In addition to the Howell memorandum, I base my chronicle on interviews with past and present personnel of LOC's Sound Division: Sam Bryslawski, Robert Carniel, Gene Diena, Jen McKee, and Mike Turpin.

54. Phone interview with Robert Carniel, June 2005. Carniel was the head of the Sound Division in the 1950s.
55. Howell's memorandum does not go into detail regarding the technical problems, but present-day specialists in transferring wire recordings spell out the historical circumstances that led to Howell's impasse: "Up until 1946 or so, wire recorder spool sizes weren't standardized. Armour, early Pierce [sic] and GE machines used a larger size than later to come machines.... Most popular during this early period was the 3 3/4"" diameter Armour reels that were 1 1/4"" thick.... Later, when Armour licensed the technology to companies such as Webster, Silvertone, and others, a smaller reel size [2 3/4"" in diameter and 3/4"" thick] was adopted as the new industry standard." The process is not simple, but "recover[y]" of the early Armour wires is possible, "by means of a fabricated jig to mount the larger wire spool." See "[Wire Recorder] Spool Sizes-Webster-Armour-Pierce [sic]-GE Wires-Minifon," *Video Interchange* (May 26, 2008) [http://www.videointerchange.com/wire\\_recorder1.htm](http://www.videointerchange.com/wire_recorder1.htm). The Web site narrative gives some sense of what Howell, expert though he was, was up against.
56. LOC Sound Division director Gene Diena bases this later date for when the transferring began on an allocation order. Personal communication, July 2005.
57. "Transcript of wire spool No. 9.60—Interview with Mrs. Bondy (in English)," LOCSD.
58. Boder sent the LOC the microcard transcriptions of series 3 in December 1955. The present LOC lists 122 "microopaque" cards under the title "Topical Autobiographies of Displaced Persons." Boder's September 30, 1954, letter to Dale Lindsay of the NIH notes that Boder has sent the LOC "by now, six typewritten volumes of the same material," that is, series 1 and 2 completed in 1950 and 1953 respectively. Boder goes on to say that he "shall continue to send the material in form of typewritten copies, microcards and microfilm, to Library of Congress [sic]." AHAP, M11. Series 3, containing Bundy's interview transcribed by Boder, was then slated to be sent.
59. John Hersey, "The Mechanics of a Novel," *Yale University Library Gazette* 27 (1952): 5.
60. It is worth noting Dawidowicz's recollection of her training for this role. "The events of the Warsaw ghetto burned into my consciousness. At times they seemed to replace the placid realities of my everyday life. They even pushed aside my real memories of Vilna. The Warsaw ghetto became a constant part of my internal life. I used to imagine myself there, test myself as to how I would have behaved. Would I have had the courage to fight? Would I have had the stamina against despair? When I was cold and reached for a sweater, I thought of winter in the ghetto. I developed a secret moral code of human behavior that depended on options open only to those imprisoned in the ghetto. A few years later, in 1948, when I was asked to do research for John Hersey on a novel he was writing about the Warsaw ghetto, *The Wall*, I was ready for the task." Lucy Dawidowicz, *From That Place and Time: A Memoir, 1938–1947* (New York: Norton, 1989), 243–244.
61. Hersey, "The Mechanics of a Novel," 5.
62. *Ibid.*, 5–6.
63. *Ibid.*, 5.

64. The echo between the two kinds of “wires” in English is present in many if not all of Boder’s languages.

## Chapter 6

1. Phone interviews with former IIT students Audrey Emily Uher, Vin Rosenthal, and Charles “Arch” Pounian in July 2005. Two memoirs also describe Boder’s influence as a psychology professor: Jerome Y. Lettvin, *Talking Nets: An Oral History of Talking Networks*, ed. James Anderson and Edward Rosenfeld (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 1–2; and James Sedalia Peters, *The Memoirs of a Black Southern-New Engander* (Pittsburgh: Dorrance, 1994), 85.
2. I chronicle Boder’s professional path in psychology—including his visit to Wundt at Leipzig, study with Bekhterev in St. Petersburg, innovations while residing in Mexico, doctorate at Northwestern University, and founding of the Psychological Museum—in chapter 1.
3. For Boder’s statements, see *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xiii, and “The Displaced People of Europe,” 3. At least one interviewee recalls that he and Boder sat “across the table from each other.” Interview with Jack Bass (formerly Juergen Bassfreund) by Allison Denton and Carl Marziali, March 2001. “Voices of the Holocaust,” <http://voices.iit.edu/>.
4. See Carl Rogers, *Counseling and Psychotherapy: Newer Concepts in Practice* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942); and Carl Rogers, “The Nondirective Method as a Technique for Social Research,” *American Journal of Sociology* 50 (1945): 279–283. In this period, Rogers used “non-directive” (sometimes with a hyphen and sometimes not) interchangeably with “client-centered.” For a late 1940s attempt to trace the psychological lineage of “nondirective” thought and method, see Nathaniel Raskin, “The Development of Non-Directive Therapy,” *Journal of Consulting Psychology* 12 (1948): 92–110.
5. Rogers, “The Nondirective Method,” 279, 283.
6. While still in the planning stages of his expedition, Boder spoke of using Rogers’s technique: “You could best describe my material,” he wrote in a letter to Dael Wolfe, “as records of non-directive Psychological counseling, as developed by the Rogers’ technique.” June 19, 1945. UCLA, Box 23.
7. Interview with Abram Perl, September 2, 1946. See “Addendum,” *Topical Autobiographies*, 3161.
8. I discuss this shift and the evolution of Boder’s interview protocol at length in chapters 2 and 3.
9. Purdue speech, January 15, 1948, 2. AHAP, M19.
10. Martin Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology: Institutionalization, Diversity, and the Rise of Sociological Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 46.
11. *Ibid.*, 56.
12. John Dollard, *Criteria for the Life History: With Analysis of Six Notable Documents* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935).
13. On Weinreich’s participation and the significance of the seminar more generally, see Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Marcus Moseley, and Michael Stanislawski, “Introduction,” in *Awakening Lives: Autobiographies of Jewish Youth in Poland before the Holocaust*, ed. Jeffrey Shandler (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), xi–xlii.

14. Robert Redfield, "Foreword," in *The Use of Personal Documents in History, Anthropology, and Sociology*, Louis Gottschalk, Clyde Kluckhohn, and Robert Angell (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1945), viii.
15. *Ibid.*
16. See Jennifer Platt, *A History of Sociological Research Methods in America: 1920–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). As Kenneth Craik summarizes when discussing the ebb and flow of interest in the personal document and related material: "the use of biographical and archival approaches in personality research was largely interrupted during the post-World War II era." Kenneth H. Craik, "Personality Research Methods: An Historical Perspective," *Journal of Personality* 54 (1986): 27.
17. For the most recent full-length treatment of Allport's contribution, see Ian Nicholson, *Inventing Personality: Gordon Allport and the Science of Selfhood* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2003). Nicholson, however, chronicles Allport's career only up until 1938, leaving beyond his scope the period in which Allport authored his monograph on the personal document. See also Richard Evans, *Gordon Allport: The Man and His Ideas* (New York: Dutton, 1970); and Nicole Barenbaum, "The Case(s) of Gordon Allport," *Journal of Personality* 65 (1997): 743–755.
18. Gordon Allport, *The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1942). On Allport and the personal document, see Nicole B. Barenbaum and David G. Winter, "Personality," in *Handbook of Psychology*, ed. I. Weiner, Vol. 1 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2003). Barenbaum and Winter suggest that Allport's interest in the personal document "may have been encouraged" by his study in Germany with psychologist William Stern, who used biographical methods and published an analysis of his own diary (185–186).

The term "testimony," a later characterization of certain kinds of autobiography, does not figure in the literature on the personal document. But the personal document was clearly the rubric under which testimony, before it was generally known as such, was considered. Jacob Robinson and Philip Friedman's important 1960 bibliography on the Holocaust, *Guide to Jewish History under Nazi Impact*, does not include Allport's study, despite its discussion of his work on refugees from Nazi Germany, which I deal with below. It does, however, list the 1945 Gottschalk, Kluckhohn, and Angell volume, *The Uses of the Personal Document in History, Sociology and Anthropology*, under the heading "Problems of Mass Documentation" (p. 162).
19. See John Scott, ed., *Documentary Research: Volume Two. Personal Documents* (London: Sage, 2006) for a recent compendium of reprinted essays (including several by Allport and Redfield) dealing with the personal document. The volume also contains new contributions that update the notion of the personal document for the social sciences and humanities.
20. Allport, *The Use of Personal Documents*, 76, 81, 82.
21. *Ibid.*, 82–83.
22. *Ibid.*, 76, 77.
23. *Ibid.*, 81.
24. *Ibid.*, 94.
25. *Ibid.*, 90–91.
26. *Ibid.*, 84.

27. These precepts also come to be shared by the mainstream community of oral history scholars. See Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). Thompson, chronicling in the late 1970s the evolution of oral history, sets forth a guide to "the art of transcription" in terms reminiscent of Boder's. Thompson comes down hard in favor of no cutting: Ultimately, "there can be no substitute for a full transcript....Nor can the historian today know what questions will be asked by historians in the future, so that any selection results in the loss of details which might later prove significant." Moreover, he not only urges including the details provided by the interviewee but also recognizes the contribution of the interviewer: "The full transcript," writes Thompson, "should include everything....All questions should go in." One cannot, Thompson implies, read and understand an interview properly without being aware of the questions asked and responded to. The questions asked by the interviewer may shape the questions asked by historians (or other researchers) in the future.

Like Boder, Thompson believes commitment to a full transcript must be complemented by a fidelity to the spoken word, a fidelity that acknowledges and even celebrates the distinctive "character of speech": "The grammar and word order must be left as spoken," argues Thompson, hoping to ensure restraint on the part of the transcriber. The problem comes when trying to give the text the readability of artful written prose rather than be willing to maintain the less "spare" nature of speaking. There is

distortion when the spoken word is drilled into the orders of written prose, through imposing standard grammatical forms and a logical sequence of punctuation. The rhythms and tones of speech are quite distinct from those of prose. Equally important, lively speech will meander, dive into irrelevancies, and return to the point after unfinished sentences. Effective prose is by contrast systematic, relevant, spare. (198–199)

Starkly contrasting the "character" of the written and the spoken, Thompson might be seen as being pedantically prescriptive, not taking into account the diversities of written forms, for instance, that contain meandering strategies and repeating patterns. Nor does he leave much room for the meaningful interrelation between the two, for perceiving changing notions of spoken eloquence not distinct from but shaping standards of written prose. Yet Thompson, much in the spirit of Boder's caution regarding his "verbatim transcriptions," wants to urge a conservative principle of intervention, seeing the art of transcription as the capacity to tolerate a less polished text than scholars usually condone.

This art nevertheless has a active dimension, for "the real art of the transcriber is in using punctuation and occasional phonetic spelling to convey the character of speech" (198). Writing does, in other words, have the means to "convey" speech—the heavy weight borne by the word "convey" in Thompson's formulation implying a kind of sleight of hand, a technique, almost novelistic, by which writing declares that it is being used to represent speech.

28. Allport, *The Use of Personal Documents*, 91.

29. G. W. Allport, J. S. Bruner, and E. M. Jandorf, "Personality under Social Catastrophe: Ninety Life-Histories of the Nazi Revolution," *Character and*

*Personality* 10 (1941): 1–22. I am indebted to Nicole Barenbaum for providing me with a copy of the original journal version of the study.

30. For background to the contest and an annotated list of essays, see Harry Liebersohn and Dorothee Schneider, eds., *"My Life in Germany Before and After January 30 1933": A Guide to a Manuscript Collection at Houghton Library, Harvard University* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001). Excerpts of essays appear in Margarete Limberg and Hubert Rübsaat, eds., *Germans No More: Accounts of Jewish Everyday Life, 1933–1938*, trans. Alan Nothnagle (New York: Berghahn, 2006); Andreas Lixl-Purcell, ed., *Women in Exile: German-Jewish Autobiographies since 1933* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1988); and Monika Richarz, ed., *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland*, vols. 2 and 3 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1979, 1982).

Recent studies of the Harvard-based project include Wiebke Lohfeld, "Fight for Recognition: The Portrait of the German Physician Paula Tobias (1886–1970). A Reconstructive Biographical Analysis," *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* [Online journal] 6 (2005); Wiebke Lohfeld, *Im Dazwischen: Porträt der Judischen und Deutschen Ärztin Paula Tobias* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 2003); Detlef Garz, "Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach dem 30 Januar 1933": Das Wissenschaftliche Preisaußschreiben der Harvard Universitaet und seine in die USA emigrierten Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmen aus den Gebiet von Literatur," in *Deutschsprachige Exilliteratur seit 1933*, ed. John Spalek and Joseph Strelka (Münich: Sauer, 2004), 305–333.

31. *American Psychological Association Directory*, 1958. The title of a 1952 thesis supervised by Boder almost precisely echoes Allport: "The Psychological Impact of Unprecedented Social Catastrophe." The thesis's author was Audrey Emily Uher.
32. Allport et al., "Personality under Social Catastrophe," 2.
33. *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, ed. Clyde Kluckhohn and Henry Murray (New York: Knopf, 1950), 348. "The following paper," write the editors at the close of the introduction to the essay, "illustrates another method used by students of personality—that of the personal document." Thomas Blass has discussed the role of the Kluckhohn and Murray anthology in aiding the rise of social psychology and articulating its interdisciplinary premises. See Thomas Blass, *The Man Who Shocked the World: The Life and Legacy of Stanley Milgram* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).
34. This is the gist of Nicholson's argument in *Inventing Personality*.
35. See Louis Gottschalk's letter to John Howe of the Department of State, July 1, 1946, asking for help in obtaining permission for Boder to "enter the occupied zone." He notes, "Dr. Boder tells me that he is prepared to make 200 half-hour recordings." UCLA, Box 1. Given that Lohfeld puts the number of contest manuscripts at 270, Allport's tally of 200 may have been simply an estimate of the number of manuscripts received at the time of the contest. Liebersohn and Schneider put the number at "approximately 230" but include the caveat that "the exact number of authors could not be determined with certainty." *My Life in Germany*, 1, n. 1.
36. Allport et al., "Personality under Social Catastrophe," in the copy of the announcement for the contest appended to the essay.

37. Boder, "The Displaced People," 4; in "Personality under Social Catastrophe," Allport et al. devote a page to "the psychological plight of the persecutor" (364-365).
38. Allport et al., "Personality under Social Catastrophe," 365.
39. At the conclusion of a June 19, 1945, letter in which Boder petitioned government contact Dael Wolfle for aid in getting to Europe, Boder notes, "Professor Gordon Allport of Harvard University has spoken personally and transferred my memorandum [citing the reasons why Boder had undertaken the expedition] to Capt. Donald V. McGranahan of SHAEF." UCLA, Box 1.
40. The letter, dated February 6, 1949, was actually addressed to Boder's Harvard-connected friend, Abraham Alper, who in turn transmitted it to Boder. AHAP, M11.1.
41. Letter from Boder to Abraham Alper, March 16, 1949. YAP. Boder refers to "Alper's letter" as the one that did the tipping, but he clearly meant "Allport's letter."
42. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, dust jacket. The authors' of the other two blurbs were General James Galvin and psychologist O. Hobart Mowrer.
43. Murray formally introduced the test in 1935. See C. D. Morgan and H. M. Murray, "A Method for Investigating Fantasies: The Thematic Apperception Test," *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* 34 (1935): 289-306.
44. Projection was, said Murray, "the best way of learning about somebody next to his being aware and anxious to tell you." James William Anderson, "Henry A. Murray and the Creation of the Thematic Apperception Test," in *Evocative Images: The Thematic Apperception Test and the Art of Projection* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1999), 26.
45. "The distinguishing feature of the TAT is that it involves making up dramatic stories, and that activity has no counterpart on the Rorschach test." *Ibid.*, 29.
46. Murray first published the official manual for the test in 1943. See Henry A. Murray, *Thematic Apperception Test: Manual* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943). It was also then that he standardized the pictures. Strikingly, Murray claimed that the war compelled him to finalize the selection of the cards that he would use. James Anderson interprets the reference to the "war" as referring to Murray's obligation to leave Harvard and work for the OSS ("Henry A. Murray," 32). But in the context of Boder's work, Murray's reference to the war and the TAT suggests an impulse toward organizing the stories that could be told at a time of chaos.

Though he published the official manual in 1943, Murray had apparently used the test at the Harvard Psychological Clinic, of which he was the director, from the mid-1930s. An unofficial manual was privately circulated by Murray's student and colleague, Nevitt Sanford, in 1939. After 1943, Murray and others occasionally modified the test instructions and procedure. One change in particular merits mentioning in reference to Boder. A 1968 version recommends that the respondent face the tester rather than, as the original manual had advised, away from the tester. See D. Rappaport, M. M. Gill, and R. Schafer, *Diagnostic Psychological Testing* (New York: International Universities Press, 1968). Boder's statement that

he interviewed with his back to the narrator would have been in harmony then with Murray's original TAT technique.

47. Samuel Jurado Cárdenas, Victor Colotla, and X. Gallegos, "David Pablo Boder: Su Breve Estancia En La Psicología Mexicana (David Pablo Boder's Brief Stay [*sic*] in Mexican Psychology)," *Revista Mexicana de Psicología* 6 (1989): 205–209.

48. Murray's directives include an explanation about how a picture can suggest a story and a recommendation that the story refer to the past (what led up to the events in the picture), the present, and the future (what will happen after the scene). Respondents are also asked to comment on what the people in the scenes are not only doing but thinking and feeling. Perhaps because of the impromptu setting and because of Boder's ambivalence about using the TAT with the DPs, he sought to minimize the explanation's length and detail.

Boder was not alone, however, in seeking to use projective testing in the field. For some time, ethnography had been using projective testing and reflecting on its contributions and limitations. See William Earl Henry, *An Exploration of the Validity and Usefulness of the Thematic Apperception Technique in the Study of Culture-Personality Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944).

49. *Benign* may not do full justice to the sometimes oppressive mood, if not events depicted, in the TAT's pictures. Murray himself spoke of choosing depressing examples of artwork to elicit stories of "abnormal states of existence." Anderson, "Henry A. Murray," 33.

50. Dori Laub has suggestively spoken of Boder's response here (and elsewhere in the interviews) as "countertransference"—"that he couldn't take in what the TAT was telling him." Such an interpretation views Boder as overwhelmed by what he was hearing and resorting to strategies to control "what he couldn't take in." Personal communication, November 2007.

51. *Topical Autobiographies*, Mendel Herskovitz.

52. Tadeusz Grygier, *Oppression: A Study in Social and Criminal Psychology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954). Grygier's treatise was published in the "Social Psychology and Psycho-analysis" section of the International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction, founded by Karl Mannheim.

53. *Ibid.*, 43.

54. "More painful than death" is one characterization of deculturation, a term central to Boder's analysis of his interview project, about which more is said below. The line appears in the closing two sentences of Boder's 1949 lecture, "Specters of Damnation":

We must attempt to study and teach the scope of human potentialities, toward good and evil under pressure of catastrophe, and become well aware of the diabolic danger of *deculturation* which may take its toll from the victor and vanquished alike. There are *methods of injury much more painful than death*—and that is the gradual reduction of man to a state of existence in which he may step by step divest himself of all virtues claimed for him by science, art, and religion. (emphasis mine)

"Specters of Damnation," 22. AHAP, M16.

The word "trauma" appears only once in the transcripts—and even that once comes in a note that Boder added later, at the conclusion of the

interview with Valerius Michelson. There Boder speaks of the “traumatic level of expression.”

55. If Boder usually highlights the concentration camps as the nexus of persecution, his comments in this lecture make clear that he understood there to be continuity between the ghettos and the concentration camps, each of which brutalized its prisoners.

56. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xviii.

57. I am indebted to Dr. Jeffrey Shapiro for this formulation.

58. “The Impact of Catastrophe,” 33.

59. *Ibid.*, 12.

60. *Ibid.*, 5.

61. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xviii–xix.

62. Transcriptions of the interviews used in “Impact of Catastrophe” appeared in the first, 1950 series of *Topical Autobiographies*. They are also among the interviews listed in the table of contents to an earlier manuscript version of *I Did Not Interview the Dead*; the published version of the book halves the number of interviews.

63. “The Impact of Catastrophe,” 4ff.

64. On the emergence of the term “bystanders,” see chapter 4, n. 23.

65. “Memorandum,” May 1, 1945. UCLA, Box 1.

66. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xii.

67. Herbert Blumer, then chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Institutions at UC Berkeley and major proponent of the personal document, wrote to Boder after reading “The Impact of Catastrophe” that he was not impressed with the general effort made by social scientists to translate the qualitative data of human experience into a quantitative form. “Nevertheless,” he continued, “I think that in your instance the task has been carried out with ingenuity.” The traumatic inventory made a particular impression: it was “a real contribution,” . . . “superior to anything else” of its kind. April 6, 1954. UCLA, Box 21.

68. Boder characterizes this extraordinary endeavor in vastly understated terms: “In reading and listening to the wire recorded interviews we have endeavored to formulate a sufficient number of themes and sub-themes to cover any of the specific traumata found in the interviews” (emphasis mine; “The Impact of Catastrophe,” 33).

69. Bella Brodzki, “Teaching Trauma and Transmission,” in *Teaching the Representation of the Holocaust*, ed. Marianne Hirsch and Irene Kacandes (New York: Modern Language Association, 2004), 133. Key studies that include reference to the Holocaust include Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); Dori Laub, “Bearing Witness; or, The Vicissitudes of Listening” in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Robert Lifton, *The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979); Henry Krystal, ed., *Massive Psychic Trauma* (New York: International Universities Press, 1969). For a critical overview of the study of trauma, see Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

70. “Traumatic Index,” *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, entry 10, xix. Cf. “Traumatic Inventory,” *Topical Autobiographies*, entry 10, 3144–3145, where Boder details that the violation to dignity is bound up with suspending the conventions of privacy and the separation of the sexes.

71. Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Vintage, 1989), 111. To be sure, Boder writes of what is abolished, Levi of what is inflicted. They thus differ in the kind of action that traumatizes “human dignity.”
72. Like “*trauma*,” the term “*deculturation*” (or its variants) also appears only once in the transcriptions. See the interview with Lena Kuechler, *Topical Autobiographies*, vol. 15, chap. 58.
73. These are the closing two sentences of the January 15, 1948, Purdue lecture, p. 19. The “swamps of concentration and extermination camps” rightly indicate that Boder generally but not always used the term to refer to the Holocaust. In another venue, Boder takes as a different example the history of Poland and the tribulations of conquest, particularly under Russia. The Russian sector of Poland was “compelled to undergo not only an assimilation but to a certain degree a process of deculturation. I have coined the term deculturation to designate the process of stripping an individual of his mode of life without substitution of new values for the abstracted ones. It is characterized by compulsory disacquisition of habits connected with the business of living.” “Lecture on International Tensions,” 3–4. AHAP, M19.
74. Time or duration played a role as well. Dollard was concerned with life events “extensively protracted in time.” In contrast, Boder dealt with events that struck rapidly: “it is the rapid shock-like eruption of deculturating forces striking unexpectedly with unprecedented impact from and in a multiplicity of directions which furnish in our observation the main manifest attributes of catastrophes” (“The Impact of Catastrophe,” 7).
75. Ibid. 35. Boder’s fullest characterization suggests the interplay between environment and personality:

A decultured environment such as a concentration camp, slums, lock-ups of police stations, bombed-out cities or any makeshift installation in substitution of standard conditions and attributes of existence is bound to evoke manifestations of subcultural behavior in its victims. On the other hand, deculturation of personality manifests itself not in the physical submission but in the intellectual and affective acceptance of the materially and ethically decultured mode of existence. The problems of diagnosis of deculturation and the technique of *reculturation* of personality stand far beyond their purely theoretical significance in a world which counts about twelve million displaced persons.
76. For a similar linguistic gesture in relation to study of the Holocaust, see Lawrence Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 2–3, where he argues that the proper term for referring to artistic representation of the Holocaust is not the usually employed aesthetic term transfiguration of reality, but its *disfiguration*. In his study of Holocaust testimony, Langer again uses the same terms to contrast the everyday notions of self and morality (“transfigurative”) with those emerging from oral testimony of the Holocaust (“disfigurative”). Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 198ff. Boder would, I think, have resonated with the negative turn of the prefix, but not with Langer’s sharp division between written and oral testimony.

77. See Donald Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Carl Marziali, "Before It Had a Name: Part I," *This American Life* [radio program], October 26, 2001; and the "Voices of the Holocaust" Web site, <http://voices.iit.edu/>.
78. As I set out in my introduction, the case for disinterest is made by Peter Novick, *The Holocaust and American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999). Hasia Diner and Lawrence Baron convincingly present an American response to the legacy of the Holocaust much more in tune with the extended support that Boder received from the NIMH. Hasia Diner, "Post-World War II American Jewry and the Confrontation with Catastrophe," *American Jewish History* 91 (2003): 439–467; Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654–2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 264; and most comprehensively, Hasia Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945–1962* (New York: New York University Press, 2009); Lawrence Baron, "The Holocaust and American Public Memory, 1945–1960," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 17 (2003): 62–88.
79. See Wade Pickren, "Science, Practice and Policy: An Introduction to the History of Psychology and the National Institute of Mental Health," in *Psychology and the National Institute of Mental Health: A Historical Analysis of Science, Practice and Policy*, ed. Wade E. Pickren and Stanley F. Schneider (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2004).
80. *Ibid.*
81. See Boder's correspondence with Lawrence Kolb, Research Projects Director, Mental Hygiene Division, U.S. Public Health Service, June 8, 16, and 21, 1948. AHAP, M11.
82. Boder's summary of funding is corroborated by NIMH's listing of its grants. See *Mental Health Research Grant Awards, Fiscal Years 1948–1963* (Washington, DC, 1964).
83. See again Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds*; Marziali, "Before It Had a Name: Part I"; and the "Voices of the Holocaust" Web site, <http://voices.iit.edu/>.
84. For the context of the discussion that follows, see Charles Rice, "The NIMH Research Grants Program and the Golden Age of American Academic Psychology," in Pickren and Schneider, eds., *Psychology and the National Institute of Mental Health*. Wade Pickren generously provided me with a longer unpublished version of Rice's paper. Professor Rice elaborated on the issues discussed therein in a telephone interview, August 2005.
85. His association with IIT likely did not hurt his chances but neither did it help them; most of the NIMH's grants flowed to researchers at the major universities. Boder's eventual move to Los Angeles and affiliation with UCLA probably helped his cause, even though the psychology department at UCLA in the early 1950s was not yet considered a major research center. I am indebted to Wade Pickren for his assessment of Boder's affiliations.
86. Letter from Boder to Philip Sapir, Chief, Research Grants and Fellowship Branch, NIMH, April 26, 1956; "Addenda," *Topical Autobiographies*, 3160.
87. Charles Rice, "Early NIMH Funding of American Psychology," paper presented at the American Psychology Association Conference, 2003.

## Chapter 7

1. On languages and the Holocaust, see Primo Levi, "Communicating," in *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Vintage, 1989), 88–104; David Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); and David Roskies, "Ringelblum's Time Capsules," in *The Jewish Search for a Usable Past* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 26–40; Sidra Ezrahi, *By Words Alone: The Holocaust in Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); and Sidra Ezrahi, *Booking Passage: Exile and Homecoming in the Modern Jewish Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Sander Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Antisemitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); and Sander Gilman, *Jewish Frontiers: Essays on Bodies, Histories, and Identities* (New York: Palgrave, 2003); Shoshana Felman, "The Return of the Voice: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*," in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992). On English in relation to Yiddish in wartime America, see Anita Norich, *Discovering Exile: Yiddish and American Jewish Culture during the Holocaust* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); on English in the context of multilingualism, see Alan Rosen, *Sounds of Defiance: The Holocaust, Multilingualism, and the Problem of English* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

On German during the war, see Victor Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1947); Nachman Blumental, "On the Nazi Vocabulary," *Yad Vashem Studies* 1 (1957): 49–66, "Action," *Yad Vashem Studies* 4 (1960): 57–96, and "From the Nazi Vocabulary," *Yad Vashem Studies* 6 (1967): 69–82; Shaul Esh, "Words and Their Meaning: Twenty-Five Examples of Nazi-Idiom," *Yad Vashem Studies* 5 (1963): 133–168; Haig Bosmajian, *The Language of Oppression* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1974); Christopher M. Hutton, *Linguistics and the Third Reich: Mother-Tongue, Fascism, Race and the Science of Language* (London: Routledge, 1999).

On German's postwar literary legacy, see George Steiner, "The Hollow Miracle," in *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New York: Athenaeum, 1977); Alvin Rosenfeld, "The Immolation of the Word," in *A Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980); Shoshana Felman, "Poetry and Testimony: Paul Celan, or the Accidenting of Aesthetics," in *Testimony: The Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 25–42; Sara Horowitz, "The Night Side of Speech," in *Voicing the Void: Muteness and Memory in Holocaust Fiction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 157–180.

2. These remarks appear in "Discussion: The Holocaust and Concentration Camps in Literature," *The Nazi Concentration Camps: Proceedings of the Fourth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference, Jerusalem, January 1980*, ed. Yisrael Gutman and Avital Saf (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1984), 715–717.
3. Boder rendered this judgment when persuading Friedrich Schlaefrig to stick with his native German rather than proceed in English. I cite Boder's remarks below.

4. "Memorandum [proposing to interview European displaced persons]," May 1, 1945. UCLA, Box 1.
5. Letter to Archibald MacLeish, July 11, 1945. UCLA, Box 1.
6. Interview with Lena Kuechler. The shift here is from Yiddish to Polish, the latter being a language that, as I discuss below, Boder knew only passively.
7. Geoffrey Hartman, "Preserving the Personal Story: The Role of Video Documentation," in *The Holocaust Forty Years After*, ed. Marcia Littell, Richard Libowitz, and E. B. Rosen (Lewiston, ME: Edwin Mellen, 1989), 53.
8. In a more recent, longer meditation on "the ethics of witness," Hartman reiterates the "restitutive" dimension of witness: Holocaust victim testimony "restore[s], partially, belatedly, the speech and embodiment of which the persecuted were deprived." He does not, however, here mention Boder nor comment on witness and languages. "The Era of Witness: An Interview with Geoffrey Hartman," *Lost in the Archives*.
9. Memorandum, May 1, 1945.
10. A later version drops "Mongol" but adds "French." "Addendum," *Topical Autobiographies*, 3161.
11. If so, Boder was operating according to a common bias that, for many years, kept Greek Jews, and Sephardic Jewry in general, on the periphery of Holocaust study and commemoration. Then again, since Boder ended up interviewing seven Greek Jews, he apparently had no doubts as to the value of their testimony. Three of these Jews Boder addressed in Spanish while they responded in Ladino. Hence, Niewyk's statement is misleading when he implies that Greek Jews were not among the "category of survivor" that Boder interviewed. See Donald Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 6. What may have given rise to Niewyk's mistaken impression is the puzzling fact that none of the seven interviews with Greek Jews were transcribed by Boder.
12. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xiii–xiv. Boder's observations on "depriv[ation] of all reading matter" were echoed elsewhere. The Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the American Zone in Germany, for instance, petitioning the authorities in August, 1946 to allow more newspapers for DPs, stated pointedly: "We had nothing to read for 6 years. For that reason the hunger for something to read is greater today compared to the situation of other nationalities..." Quoted by Tamar Lewinsky, "Dangling Roots? Yiddish Language and Culture in the German Diaspora," in "We Are Here": *New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany*, ed. Avinoam Patt and Michael Berkowitz (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 312.
13. References to the special language emerging in the concentration camps abound in memoir literature. More systematic discussion appears in Levi, "Communicating," 88–104; and Sander Gilman, "Primo Levi: The Special Language of the Camps and After," *Midstream* 35 (1989): 22–30. See also the titles listed under "Protective Language of the Jews" in Jacob Robinson and Philip Friedman, *Guide to Jewish History under Nazi Impact* (New York: Ktav, 1973), 98–99.
14. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xiv.
15. "The Adjective-Verb Quotient: A Contribution to the Psychology of Language," University of Chicago, 1927. It was published under this title in *The Psychological Record* 3 (1940): 310–343. I refer in what follows to the published version.

16. *Ibid.*, 326.
17. The article's first sentence reads: "The present study was completed in 1927 but somehow the publication of it was delayed."
18. Counting solely interviews with DPs, I arrive at the following figures: German, 55; Yiddish, 33; Russian, 13; English, 7; Spanish/Ladino, 5; Polish, 5; French, 4; Lithuanian, 2; Latvian, 1. The totals include interviews in which multiple languages were spoken at some length.
19. The prologue to the interview with Friedrich Schlaefrig exemplifies Boder's two-sided response to a situation where, in Boder's estimation, the interviewee's chosen language will lessen the quality of the interview:

Paris, August 23, 1946, at the offices of the American Joint Distribution Committee. The interviewee is Mr. Friedrich Schlaefrig, 71 years old. He is here with his wife planning to go to South Africa, and is expecting at this moment a telephone call from Lisbon for clearance on the ship. He graciously agreed to be interviewed. /From here the interview begins in German/. And so—in English/Oh!, he says he may speak /in English—continued in German/, but it goes better in German, is that not so? Let us better do that. /Note: Many DP's had some English lessons at school, many have studied or improved their English after liberation. They are very proud of their accomplishments and insist on speaking English. However, the results were, in most cases, highly unsatisfactory, since the effort and search for words would result as a rule in curtailment, straining, and oversimplification of content. However, to please them, one had to permit at times that at least portions of an interview proceed in English.

20. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xii–xiii.
21. Another Boder interviewee, Nelly Bundy, relates a similar story of facility in a language (in this case, English) occasioning her transfer from an outside work detail in Birkenau to an office job with better conditions in Auschwitz. See *Topical Autobiographies*, chapter 33, 9: 1500–1580, and my analysis of the significance of language in general and English in particular in Bundy's interview in *Sounds of Defiance*, 25–31, 172–173.
22. *Topical Autobiographies*, chapter 53, 14: 2591.
23. As the tape makes clear, Zgnilek says "hard time," but the transcript mistakenly reads "hell." Whatever the reasons for the error, the word "hell" dramatizes the distinction between the plight of European and American Jews, a distinction that Boder, transcribing "hell," may have assumed. I am grateful to Joan Ringelheim for pointing out the discrepancy between voice and transcript.
24. The translation from Polish that appears in Boder's transcription, evidently rendered by Bernard Wolf, is accurate except for leaving out the intensifier, "strongly"/*mocna*. I am indebted to Clare Rosenson for her assistance with Boder's Polish-language interviews.
25. Rosen, *Sounds of Defiance*, 127–129.
26. Polish is the language of over 75 percent of the Jewish Historical Institute interviews conducted with survivors from 1945 to 1949. Riki Bodenheimer, archivist, Yad Vashem, e-mail, February 12, 2007.
27. Zygmunt Bauman, "Assimilation into Exile: The Jew as a Polish Writer," in *Exile and Creativity: Signposts, Travelers, Outsiders, Backward Glances*, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 347.

28. The four interviews were conducted with Boleslaw Czolopicki, Helena Neufeld, Lena Kuechler, and an UNRRA student who gave only the name "Bogaslav."<sup>36</sup>
29. Lena Kuechler's own interview with Meltzak (written in Yiddish "Rocha Melzak"), conducted apparently in Polish and then translated into Yiddish, "sounds" to my ear a less dissonant note. See chapter 4, *Meine Kinder* (Paris: Editions U.P.J., 1948), 257–280.
30. Comments on language issues appear in a number of other interview transcripts: Neufeld, Frydman, Weinberg, Wilf, Minski, Schwarzfitter, Kuechler, Stopnitsky, Guttman, and Kluver.
31. Paul Friedman, another psychologically oriented interviewer of DPs, claims that "emotional numbness" was the common element distinguishing (or afflicting) DPs. See "The Road Back for the DPs: Healing the Scars of Nazism," *Commentary* 6 (1948): 502–510. While Friedman's claim seems difficult to support—in relation to Boder's interviewees as well as with other DPs—it sets forth a vocabulary that was in circulation and that Boder may have been tacitly contending with.
32. In Chicago, he drew particularly (but not exclusively) on graduate students whose research projects were based on Boder's 1946 interviews or whose research Boder directed. Once Boder relocated to Los Angeles in 1952 and joined the psychology department at UCLA as a research associate, he apparently no longer directed graduate students. But he continued to make use of psychology department students to help him with processing the interviews.
33. Phone interview with Bernard Wolf, July 2005. Compare "Interview with Bernard, Giselle, and Peter Wolf," conducted by Bernice Scharlach, April 23, 1975, New York Public Library—American Jewish Committee Oral History Collection, where Wolf discusses his collaboration with Boder. The Shoah Foundation also interviewed Wolf on February 20, 1998, but since the interviewer was apparently not familiar with Wolf's 1975 interview and did not probe Wolf's postwar dealings with the Holocaust, the collaboration with Boder goes unmentioned.
34. On the fortunes of these children, see Judith Hemmendinger and Robert Krell, *The Children of Buchenwald: Child Survivors and Their Postwar Lives* (Hewlett, NY: Geffen, 2000).
35. Sixteen interviews had been translated while Boder was still in Chicago, predating the collaboration with Wolf. Other interviews were either in languages that did not require translation, that is, English, were in languages that Wolf did not know, or were those in which Boder had greater competence.
36. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xiii.
37. Susan Rubin Suleiman, "Monuments in a Foreign Tongue: On Reading Holocaust Memoirs by Emigrants," in *Exile and Creativity*, 403.
38. Samuel Isakovich, *Topical Autobiographies*, chapter 36, vol. 10. Eugen Kogon provides an overview of Buchenwald's "Kino" and its multiple functions in *The Theory and Practice of Hell: The German Concentration Camps and the System behind Them*, trans. Heinz Norden (1950; New York: Berkley, 1980), 138–139.
39. Adolf Heisler, *Topical Autobiographies*, chapter 46, vol. 12.
40. "From within" does not mean that by 1956, when Wolf commented on the march and arrival, he relies only on memory. The notoriety of the

march was great in the postwar years, which may account for the precision of Wolf's numbers. My assessment is indebted to an e-mail letter from the historian of the death marches, Daniel Blatman, December 11, 2007.

41. Series IV of *Topical Autobiographies* was compiled in 1956 and published in that year.
42. Berman's comment glosses Walter Benjamin's views of translation as set forth in his essay, "The Task of the Translator," and other writings. Quoted in Emily Apter, "Taskography: Translation as Genre of Literary Labor," *PMLA* 122 (2007): 1411.
43. Lena Kuechler, *Topical Autobiographies*, chapter 58, vol. 15. With Wolf's translations from Yiddish and German, Boder would usually add a prefacing note stating that "Bernard Wolf was responsible for the first-draft of the translation"—the "first-draft" indicating that Boder would go back over the translation and take ultimate responsibility for it. With the Polish, he had to forego this option.
44. Personal communication from Myra Sklarew, July 2005.
45. "Notes on Wire Recordings," UCLA, Box 3.
46. In his final interview, Boder refers to his working (with interviewee Dimitri Odinetz) at the Dimitriev Gymnasium in St. Petersburg in 1912; one biographical sketch identifies Boder's position as teaching German language and literature. "Biography of David Pablo Boder," *Voices of the Holocaust*, <http://voices.iit.edu>. With the revamping of the "Voices" Web site in summer 2009, this sketch of Boder's life and career is no longer available online.
47. Irving Howe, *Politics and the Novel* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1967), 241.
48. Irving Halperin, *Messengers from the Dead* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 66–67.
49. Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).
50. *Ibid.*, 41.
51. Letter from Boder to Maurice Jacobs, November 13, 1948. UCLA, Box 21.
52. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*.25.
53. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, 4:232.
54. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*; "The Survivor" originally appeared in Levi's collection *Ad orta incerta* (At an Uncertain Hour), the title of which was also drawn from the quoted stanza of Coleridge's poem. An English translation of "The Survivor" can be found in Primo Levi, *Collected Poems*, trans. Ruth Feldman and Brian Swann (London: Faber and Faber, 1984). Sara Guyer begins her study of Romanticism in light of the Holocaust with a sustained analysis of "The Survivor," focusing on Levi's adaptation of Coleridge's lines. Sara Guyer, *Romanticism after Auschwitz* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 1–13. See also Lisa Insana, *Arduous Tasks: Primo Levi, Translation and the Transmission of Holocaust Testimony* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).
55. Coleridge modified these lines in the poem's evolving versions, moving from "anguish" to "agency" to finally "agony." Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Complete Poems*, ed. William Keach (New York: Penguin, 1997), 504.
56. See Robert S. C. Gordon, *Primo Levi's Ordinary Virtues: From Testimony to Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 64–65, 249.

56. Geoffrey Hartman, "Testimony and Authenticity," *Scars of the Spirit: The Struggle against Inauthenticity* (New York: Macmillan, 2004), 88.
57. Boder, "The Tale of Anna Kovitzka A Logico-Systematic Analysis or an Essay in Experimental Reading," 1–2 Unpublished manuscript. AHAP/ M16.
58. *Ibid.*, 5.
59. *Ibid.*, 6.
60. *Ibid.*, 13.
61. *Ibid.*, 14–15.
62. *Ibid.*, 2.
63. See Joseph Blotner, *Robert Penn Warren: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1997), 216–218; James Grimshaw, ed., *Robert Penn Warren: A Documentary Volume* (Detroit: Thompson/Gale, 2006). Warren presented a version of the essay as the Bergen Foundation Lecture at Yale in April 1945.
64. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, illustrated by Alexander Calder, with an essay by Robert Penn Warren (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1946). The poem, according to poet Rosanna Warren, had a special meaning for her father as a kind of family myth. He would often recite it at home and had his children recite it as well. Rosanna Warren, personal communication, June 2005. Boder purchased an edition of Coleridge's *Rime* in 1947, which was likely this one; indeed, he cites this edition (with Warren's essay) in the bibliography of "The Impact of Catastrophe."
65. See for example Thomas Raysor and Max Schultz, "Coleridge," in *The English Romantic Poets: A Review of Research and Criticism*, ed. Frank Jordan, 3rd rev. ed. (New York: MLA, 1972), who call it "the most influential essay after Lowes's [in 1927]," p. 176. Warren's essay continued to guide Stanley Cavell's 1986 reading of the poem; see "In Quest of the Ordinary," in *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*, ed. Morris Eaves and Michael Fischer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986). And it still figured weightily in Ronald Paulson's recent reflections, *Sin and Evil: Moral Values in Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
66. John Burt, e-mail, November 15, 2006. For his view of the darkness in *Brother to Dragons*, see John Burt, *Robert Penn Warren and American Idealism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 199–218. Blotner, for his part, avers that Warren's "comments on Coleridge's [Ancient Mariner] were full of relevance to his own [work]"—however, not to *Brother to Dragons* but rather to Warren's 1946 novel, *All the King's Men*, a story of a "great fall shot through with many betrayals and much guilt before a final expiation" (p. 218).
67. The disparity between text and illustration, if there is one, cannot be ascribed to the two men's lack of familiarity. The Calders and Warrens were close friends and Warren had enlisted him in the project. Rosanna Warren, personal communication. His correspondence from the period calls the illustrations "charming."
68. Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1990), viii.

## Epilogue

1. Maria Ecker, "Verbalizing the Holocaust: Oral/Audiovisual Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors in the United States," in *How the Holocaust Looks*

Now: International Perspectives, ed. Martin Davies and Claus-Christian Szejnmann (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

2. Dori Laub, "The Evolution of Testimony," unpublished paper, Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin, June 2007.
3. Alessandro Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 14–15.
4. Letter to Francis and Maggie Coughlin, May 23, 1957. UCLA, Box 22.
5. A second letter that refers to *hazak* puts it in these terms: "The single word at the bottom of the last page of the addenda does reflect my spirit concerning this matter." Letter to Paul Annes, April 26, 1957. UCLA, Box 21. But Boder is here as cryptic as the word itself, alluding to *hazak* without mentioning it explicitly.
6. Gabrielle Spiegel, "Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time," *History and Theory* 41 (2002): 162.
7. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, 220.
8. AHAP, M18.
9. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, 125–126.

### Appendix 1

1. No date is specified in the Kahn home interviews. Coming between the interview with Oleiski on August 20 and that of Bundy on August 22, Boder's visit to the Kahns likely took place on the evening of August 21. But it is possible that the Kahn family interviews occurred on the evening of August 20, after his session with Oleiski.
2. This is the name as it appears on Boder's interview list. According to the recording, however, the interviewee "prefers not to give his full name"—an option taken by a few other interviewees who spent some of the war in the Soviet Union and likely feared repatriation. He is thus referred to simply as "Mr. Joseph from Poland."

### Appendix 2

1. "Addenda," *Topical Autobiographies*, 3160.
2. See Donald Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 5; Alan Rosen, *Sounds of Defiance: The Holocaust, Multilingualism, and the Problem of English* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 21.
3. In the aftermath of the European expedition, Boder measured his accomplishment according to listening or interview hours. When he did refer to numbers of people or interviews, the number was dramatically lower than the number he actually conducted. What was distinctive was not the number of interviews but the recordings made of them. The emphasis on the recordings may be a result of Boder's psychological perspective, or may have proceeded from Boder's awareness of the great number of DP interviews that had been conducted by his contemporaries.
4. "The Displaced People of Europe," 3. Strangely, some recent commentators have reproduced the attribution of seventy interviews. See Donald Niewyk, "Holocaust: The Genocide of the Jews," in *Century of Genocide: Critical*

*Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, ed. Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons, and Israel Charny (New York: Routledge, 2004), 127–160.

5. *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, xiii.
6. “The Impact of Catastrophe,” 39.
7. See “Seventy” in Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols* (Northvale, NJ: Aronson, 1992). Suggestive associations include those with catastrophe (the seventy years of ruin following the destruction of the first ancient Temple in Jerusalem) and translation (the Septuagint, named after the seventy sages that miraculously first rendered the Hebrew Bible into Greek).
8. Two early extrinsic sources give a higher number of interviews. In what is perhaps the earliest written account of Boder’s interview, the *City Club Bulletin* reports on a presentation that Boder gave some three weeks after his return to the United States and puts the interview number at “hundreds”: “he went to record the first-hand stories of hundreds of inmates of Displaced Persons camps” (“Hear Boder on Displaced Persons,” *City Club Bulletin*, November 18, 1946). Boder spoke at the club on November 4. Puzzling is the fact that in Boder’s copy of the article he corrected a factual error related to the war but did not correct the exaggerated figure of “hundreds.”

The second source, a press release issued by the IIT News Bureau not long after Boder returned to the United States, puts the figure in more measured terms: “he interviewed nearly a hundred persons” (“Psychological Survey of the Displaced Persons of Europe,” *Illinois Institute of Technology News Bureau*, 3. YAP). Curiously, this source comes nearer the mark than Boder’s own travelogue.



## Bibliographic Note

Boder published three major contributions based on the DP interviews: a book containing eight interviews, *I Did Not Interview the Dead* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949); a sixteen-volume self-published series containing seventy English-language interview transcriptions, *Topical Autobiographies of Displaced People Recorded Verbatim in the Displaced Persons Camps, with a Psychological and Anthropological Analysis* (Chicago and Los Angeles: Author, 1950–1957); and a scholarly article, “The Impact of Catastrophe,” *Journal of Psychology* 38 (1954): 3–50. Most of the interviews are available online in audio, transcribed and translated formats at Voices of the Holocaust, <http://voices.iit.edu>. Boder’s first published description of the interview project—“The Displaced People of Europe: Preliminary Notes on a Psychological and Anthropological Study,” a shorter popular overview—appeared in March 1947 in the *Illinois Tech Engineer* and was also helpfully reprinted by him.

A number of Boder’s unpublished writings bear directly on the interview project. “The Tale of Anna Kovitzka: A Logico-Systematic Analysis or an Essay in Experimental Reading” submits a portion of one interview to a nearly 100-page psychological-literary analysis. Three lectures (two of which are untitled) delivered in the aftermath of the interviews dwell on them in whole or in part: (1) “Specters of Damnation” (1949); (2) on the scientific study of autobiographies (1948); (3) on the psychological aspects of political oppression (1948–1949).

Boder’s papers and correspondence are mainly located at two archives: Special Collections, Charles H. Young Research Library, UCLA; and Archives of the History of American Psychology, University of Akron. Two Washington, DC, archives are the repositories for the audio tapes of the interviews: the Music and Sound Division of the Library of Congress and the Archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

For commentary on Boder’s work and life, see Alan Rosen, “Early Postwar Voices: David Boder’s Life and Work,” “Voices of the Holocaust,” 2009, Paul Galvin Library, Illinois Institute of Technology, April 26, 2010, [http://voices.iit.edu/david\\_boder](http://voices.iit.edu/david_boder); Alan Rosen, “Evidence of Trauma: David Boder and Rewriting the History of Holocaust Testimony,” in *Holocaust Historiography in Context*, ed. David Bankier and Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008); Alan Rosen, “Préface. Comme si c’était hier,” and Florent Brayard, “Postface: Témoins à défaut,” in *Je n’ai pas interrogé les morts* [I Did Not Interview the Dead], by David Boder, a new edition and translation into French, ed. Florent Brayard and Alan Rosen, trans. Pierre-Emmanuel Dauzat (Paris: Tallandier, 2006); Alan Rosen, *Sounds of Defiance: The Holocaust, Multilingualism, and the Problem of English* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 21–33; Donald Niewyk, ed., *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Jürgen Matthäus, “The Boder Interview Project, 1945–57,” unpublished manuscript, author’s file; Maria Ecker, “Tales of Edification and Redemption? Oral/Audiovisual Holocaust Testimonies and Public Memory,” dissertation, University of Salzburg, 2005; Maria Ecker, “Verbalizing the Holocaust: Oral/Audiovisual Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors in the United States,” in *How the Holocaust Looks Now: International Perspectives*, ed. Martin Davies and Claus-Christian Szejnmann (Hampshire, UK:

Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). For two specific periods of Boder's career, see also L. T. Benjamin Jr., "David Boder's Psychological Museum and the Exposition of 1938," *Psychological Record* 29 (1979): 559–565, and S. Jurado Cárdenas, V. Colotla, and X. Gallegos, "David Pablo Boder: Su breve estancia en la psicología mexicana" [David Pablo Boder: His Brief Stay in Mexican Psychology], *Revista Mexicana de Psicología* 6 (1989): 205–209.

In a more popular vein, two radio programs have also chronicled Boder's interview project: Mark Burman and Alan Dein, "I Did Not Interview the Dead," Archive on 4, BBC July 4 & 6, 2009; and Carl Marziali, "Before It Had a Name: Part 1," *This American Life*, October 26, 2001.

For an example of one of the few social science studies based on Boder's interviews, see Peter Suedfeld et al., "Erikson's 'Components of a Healthy Personality' among Holocaust Survivors Immediately and Forty Years after the War," *International Journal of Aging and Human Development* 60 (2005), 229–248. For a case study of slave labor based on a single Boder interview, see Uwe Schellinger, "Sklavenarbeit in Offenburg: Der Weg des KZ-Häftlings Marko Moskowitz," in *Die Ortenau: Veröffentlichungen des Historischen Vereins für Mittelbaden*, ed. Martin Ruch (Offenburg/Baden: Verlag des Historischen Vereins für Mittelbaden, 2004): 383–394.

The wider engagement with Boder's interview project is signaled by the recent publication of a number of sophisticated essays: Shirli Gilbert, "Buried Monuments: Yiddish Songs and Holocaust Memory," *History Workshop Journal* (2008), 107–128; Simone Gigliotti, "Sensory Witnessing: Disorders of Vision and Experience," in *The Train Journey: Transit, Captivity and Witnessing in the Holocaust* (New York: Berghahn, 2009); Dalia Ofer, "The Community and the Individual: The Different Narratives of Early and Late Testimonies and Their Significance for Historians," *Holocaust Historiography in Context*, ed. David Bankier and Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008), 519–538; and Jürgen Matthäus, "Displacing Memory: The Transformation of an Interview," in *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor: Holocaust Testimony and Its Transformations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 49–72.

New scholarship on Boder's project has continued to appear since the original edition of *The Wonder of Their Voices* went to press. Boder's political activities in Omsk have recently been presented in a less conservative light. See Vadim Alekseevich Chernykh, "The Three Lives of Pavel Michelson [Russian]," *Proceedings of the Omsk State History Museum*, no. 15 (Omsk, 2009). C. Fred Alford mounts another study contrasting Boder's interviews with Holocaust survivor interviews videotaped decades-later, arguing (unconvincingly, to my mind) that the comparison urges a rethinking of the Holocaust's ties to modernity. See "What If the Holocaust Had No Name?" *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History* 15:3 (2009), 71–94. Unfortunately, both essays base their arguments in part on important factual errors. In a different key, Joseph Totz has begun to explore the ethnographic range of Boder's song and liturgy recordings. See his unpublished lecture, "Song is What Sets Everything in Motion," March 2, 2011, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. A German edition of Boder's book publishes, for the first time, the original language version of five interviews: David Boder, *Die Toten habe ich nicht befragt*, eds. Julia Faisst, Alan Rosen, and Werner Sollors, with afterword by Alan Rosen (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2011). My short academic memoir of research on Boder's project appears as "Research Report: *The Wonder of Their Voices*," *Journal of the History of Psychology* 115:2 (2012), 177–180. Finally, Boder's special focus on educating postwar America is taken up in Alan Rosen, "'We Know Very Little in America': David Boder and Un-Belated Testimony," in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, eds. David Cesarani and Eric J. Sundquist (New York: Routledge, 2011), 115–126.

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ALAN ROSEN teaches Holocaust literature at the Yad Vashem, Israel and other Holocaust study centers. His previous books include *Sounds of Defiance: The Holocaust, Multilingualism, and the Problem of English* and *Approaches to Teaching Wiesel’s Night*.

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