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Orphaned Treasures: Libraries and the Disposition of Ownerless Jewish Books in the Aftermath of the Holocaust

1. Introduction

I would like to thank the RAS division of AJL for inviting me to deliver this year's Feinsein Lecture. I'm particularly pleased and honored to be included among its distinguished roster of speakers. The first Feinsein Lecture was by the late Herb Zafren, the Director of Libraries at the Hebrew Union College, and I remember his lecture as though it were yesterday. His title for the lecture started off with the question: *Was Gutenberg Jewish?*—a provocative title if ever there was one. I'm pretty sure the answer was “no.” The title of my talk, *Orphaned Treasures: Libraries and the Disposition of Ownerless Jewish Books in the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, is considerably less provocative, but more personal.

During my twenty-plus years at the Library of Congress, I worked on a host of projects, most notably a number of Judaica exhibitions and, of course, collection building. But, starting in the mid-1990s, I became deeply enmeshed – both personally and professionally—in another more urgent and pressing endeavor: learning as much as I could about the fate of orphaned Jewish books and manuscripts in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust. The reason it was personal was because I have many family connections with the Holocaust; and the reason it became part of my professional portfolio was that, starting in the mid-90's, I found myself frequently traveling to Eastern Europe on behalf of the Library of Congress. Seemingly everywhere I turned, in that vast Jewish graveyard, I encountered the cultural and religious artifacts that had defined Jewish life in Europe for hundreds of years: Torah Scrolls, Hebrew manuscripts, printed Hebraica, Judaica, and Yiddica, and a vast array of journals and newspapers that testified to the vibrant intellectual and spiritual life of Europe's pre-war Jewish communities. I encountered them all over -- in libraries

and in museums; in ethnographic institutes and in archives; in flea markets and in bookshops; and even in churches and monasteries.

2. The National Library of Lithuania

My first personal encounter with looted books came in connection with a cooperative newspaper and periodicals microfilming project between the Library of Congress and the National Library of Lithuania in 1995. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Library of Congress quickly moved to establish joint microfilming projects with various scholarly and research institutions that had not previously been accessible to the West—including the National Library of Lithuania in Vilnius. In the agreement that was negotiated between the two national libraries, microfilming equipment belonging to the Defense Department was placed on long-term loan to the National Library of Lithuania. There, the Library of Congress set up two cameras, one, in the National Library building itself, to film materials in Lithuanian, and a second, in an annex located in a Church, to film a selection of early twentieth-century Hebrew and Yiddish periodicals, from a list that was put together with the help of Zachary Baker, then at YIVO.¹

Within a year of the agreement, this collection of books in the National Library of Lithuania became an international cause célèbre, and what had been old news to many specialists in the field about these particular books, became well-known to the general public. That's because on November 24, 1996, The New York Times published a front-page story describing a collection of thousands of rare and valuable Jewish books stacked in piles on the floor of a de-commissioned Vilnius monastery and church that had been serving as an annex to the National Library of Lithuania -- the very site that housed the Hebrew and Yiddish periodical collection that the Library of Congress was filming.

The origins of this twice-looted collection—first by the Nazis and then by the Communists—can be traced to the activities of the special Nazi troops assigned to confiscate Jewish cultural and religious property. By 1942, the great Jewish libraries of Vilna – including the library of the YIVO, the Strashun Library, the Ansky Historical-Ethnographic Society, the Hevreh Mefitse Haskalah, and numerous synagogue, school, and private collections – were in Nazi hands. The looted materials, which were concentrated by the Nazis in the Vilna YIVO building, were earmarked

either for incorporation into the various Nazi anti-Semitic institutes or for destruction. The job of sorting the mountains of material was assigned to a team of forced laborers made up of Jewish intellectuals. Under the very noses of their overseers, these individuals managed to smuggle books, paintings, manuscripts, and other cultural artifacts to safety. Known in the ghetto as “The Paper Brigade,” the group included YIVO scholar Zelig Kalmanowic and Yiddish literary greats Abraham Sutskever and Shmerke Kaczerginski.²

After the Second World War, the Soviets converted a Vilnius church into a giant warehouse and crammed it with confiscated literature, including many of the Jewish books that were first seized by the Nazis and rescued by “The Paper Brigade.” In the Church, where there had once been pews, stood thirty-foot high book shelves, packed with all manner of books and pamphlets; the large window wells were filled in with “bricks” made of tied up bundles of newspaper; and the narrow aisles between the book shelves contained books and other printed materials piled waist-high. In the aisles, on the shelves, and in the window-wells were Hebrew and Yiddish books, periodicals, and newspapers – doleful witnesses to the war waged against the Jewish spirit, first by the Nazis and then by the Soviets.

But this collection was also a melancholy reminder of the greatness that was “Vilna.” Among Jews, Vilna was known as the “Jerusalem of Lithuania,” testimony to the exceptional erudition and piety of its inhabitants. At the core of Vilna’s intellectual life were its great community libraries and research institutes. The Jewish books that were piled on the floor of the church in Vilnius were all that had survived *in situ* from the scores of great private and public collections that made Vilna Europe’s preeminent seat of Jewish learning.

Five days after the initial story on the collection, an editorial ran in the Times on stating that:

“Vilnius was a remarkable center of Jewish Culture for several centuries until the Nazi conquest and the Soviet occupation that followed. The city ... was home to dozens of synagogues, Yiddish newspapers and theater groups and notable Jewish scholarship Some are trying valiantly to revive Jewish life in their city, but they lack the financial and scholarly resources to do so on their own. Preservation of the aging Hebrew and Yiddish texts is a first necessity. Institutions of Jewish scholarship in Europe, Israel, and America

should provide financial and technical assistance to relocate the materials to a more suitable setting in Vilnius where they can be restored, copied, and catalogued.”

The editorial directly addressed a pressing need to catalog the Vilnius collection, helping to preserve and make known the remarkable Jewish heritage of Vilna, in the city where it was produced, where it flourished, and where it was extinguished. These books, in a library setting, where, in the words of The New York Times, “they can be restored, copied, and catalogued,” could be both instruments of memory and scholarship – potent symbols of both the enormity of the catastrophe and the promise of rebirth.

In 1997, the Council of Archives and Research Libraries in Jewish Studies, with funding from the Andrew Mellon Foundation, gathered a team of Judaica librarians to examine and survey these materials for a coalition of American Jewish organizations. The team of three, which, by the way, included three Feinstein lecturers – the late Herb Zafran, Pearl Berger, and Zachary Baker – undertook to evaluate the composition of the collection, its condition and conservation needs, and to recommend a course of action consistent with the above. In his report on the site visit published in *Spoils of War* (August, 1997), Zachary Baker described a collection of some 50,000 Hebrew and Yiddish printed books, virtually all of which were readily available in Western libraries. In addition to bearing stamps from a large number of extinct Polish and Lithuanian Jewish owners, the books also included ownership marks of two Jewish organizations that had re-established themselves in the United States after the war, YIVO in New York, and the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland. Not surprisingly, the Lithuanians were reluctant to relinquish these books to their original owners because in their view, these books – especially the ones produced in Lithuania – were part and parcel of their national patrimony. Instead, the Lithuanian government expressed its interest in keeping the material in Vilnius, possibly as part of new research center.

A direct outcome of the site visit was an ambitious plan devised by CARL-JS to catalog the books and, in the process, memorialize their owners. What was contemplated was no less than an international cooperative cataloging project that would make these long suppressed materials available to researchers, while at the same time recording the provenance of each book in the collection. With owners’ names recorded, the catalog record would function both as an access tool

and as a virtual memorial to those individuals whose lives were extinguished in the Holocaust. Alas, for a number of reasons, this plan was never realized.

But the notion of using the online catalog as tool for both access and memory did indeed come to fruition – not in Europe (or in Israel for that matter) but in the United States – at the Library of Congress.

3. The Library of Congress

For the most part, the Library of Congress' collection of displaced Hebraica could be traced to the distributions of non-restitutable books that were originally gathered at the Offenbach Archival Depot (OAD), the central collecting point for Judaica in Germany at Offenbach am Main that was established in early 1946 by the American occupation forces. The first head of the OAD was Seymour Pomrenze – who delivered the 2002 Feinstein lecture on his work in the depot.³ The OAD's primary purpose was to return looted cultural materials to their countries of origin. Gathered for sorting and distribution on the six floors of the depot were Torah Scrolls, Hebrew books and manuscripts, periodicals and newspapers, pamphlets and broadsheets, and assorted religious objects ranging from Torah shields to embroidered textiles.

Here are historian Lucy Dawidowicz's impressions of the OAD. She worked in the depot in 1947, selecting books for use in the displaced persons camps.

“The smell of death emanated from these hundreds of thousands of books and religious objects – orphaned and homeless mute survivors of their murdered owners. Like the human survivors, these inanimate remnants of a once-thriving civilization had found temporary and comfortless shelter in the land of Amalek. The sight of these massed inert objects chilled me.”⁴

By the time the depot closed its doors in 1949, it had processed more than three million items. Of these, approximately 2.5 million were returned to their countries of origins. An exception to this rule was the deposit in 1947 of some 70,000 materials that had originally been housed in Vilna's libraries that were sent to YIVO in New York, which was the legal successor to the

destroyed Vilna YIVO. It was the ubiquitous Seymour Pomrenze, by then a civilian archivist at the National Archives, who returned to Germany to facilitate the transfer of these books to YIVO in New York.

On completion of the OAD's work, approximately 500,000 books remained that could not be returned to their owners. In 1949, the U.S. turned over these "orphaned materials" to Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR), which undertook to distribute them to libraries, religious institutions, and museums throughout the world. In addition to American institutions and agencies, JCR's board included representatives of international Jewish organizations (such as the World Jewish Congress and the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem) – as well as various organizations representing the remnant European Jewish communities. The head of the JCR was the distinguished Columbia University historian Salo Baron. He was assisted by the well-known political philosopher, Hannah Arendt, who handled the day-to-day work of JCR, including the correspondence with libraries and European research institutions.

From 1949 through 1952, JCR distributed these 500,000 ownerless books to institutions and libraries in Israel, the United States, Europe, South Africa, and Latin America. The distribution formula was 40 percent to libraries and institutions in Israel; 40 percent to U.S. organizations, and 20 percent to other parts of the world. The most important and rare items were set aside or selected for Israeli institutions, who were accorded first choice from among the ownerless collections of books, manuscripts, and artifacts.

In the United States, more than 150,000 books were allocated to university and research libraries, as well as yeshivot and other educational organizations. The U.S. distributions were summarized in a memorandum issued by JCR in early 1952, which listed dozens of libraries broken down by category, with first and second priority for book distributions accorded to institutions under Jewish auspices. Academic institutions and research libraries not under Jewish auspices were relegated to the lowest priority. In Baltimore, for example, Baltimore Hebrew University received 4,554 items, of which 132 were characterized as rare by JCR; Ner Yisroel received 4,689 books, of which 101 were considered rare; and Johns Hopkins, a university under secular not Jewish auspices, received only a handful of books (45), none of which were designated as being rare. Some other institutions besides for the Library of Congress that received JCR books were Yeshiva University,

Jewish Theological Seminary, Hebrew Union College, Brandeis University, New York Public Library, Harvard University, and Yale.⁵

Non-rare JCR materials were selected by the receiving libraries in one of two ways: (1) they could complete a form that provided JCR with a list of subjects of interest and JCR could make the selections; or (2) representatives of the receiving libraries could choose to visit the JCR warehouse in person and select materials off the shelf. The latter method was favored by Lawrence Marwick, who was then the newly appointed head of the Library of Congress' Hebraic Section. He traveled to the JCR warehouse in Brooklyn in 1950 and selected some 1,200 Yiddish items produced in the Soviet Union --- testimony to the U.S. government's interest in the treatment of minorities in the Soviet Union in the early days of the Cold War.

Soviet Yiddish selected by Dr. Marwick included translations of Nikolai Gogol's *Revizor* [=The Government Inspector], published in Minsk in 1937 and Lenin's *Di kinderkrankayt fun "linksbaft" in komunizm* [=Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder], which appeared in Moscow in 1927. Other titles included: H. Kadushin's *Vos is Azoyne Radio* [=What is Radio?], Kaunas, 1934; A. Krivonosov's *Richtig Oystnutzen di Mist* [=How to Properly Use Fertilizer], Minsk, 1932; A.V. Keyoska's *Elektrische Eizzenbanen un Tramvayen* [=Electric Trains and Trolleys], Kharkov, 1933; and A.A. Kirilov's *Vi Azoy me Koyft un me Farkoyft Tevuch in Ratenfarband* [=How to Buy and Sell Grain in the Soviet Union], Moscow, 1929.

Some 6,000 of the 500,000 non-restitutable items in JCR's custody were designated as "rare" by JCR. These were primarily pre-1850 rabbinic, liturgical, and biblical imprints. Rare book lists were circulated to the recipient libraries, which were given an opportunity to select individual titles from the lists.

Rare books selected by Dr. Marwick from the JCR rare book lists included: Johann Christoph Georg Bodenschatz's *Kirchliche Verfassung der Heutigen Juden* [=Ceremonies of Contemporary Jews], Frankfurt, 1748-49; Aaron ben Jacob ha-Kohen of Lunel, *Sefer Orbot Hayim* [=Book of the Paths of Life], Florence, 1750; and Yom Tov Lipmann Muelhausen's *Sefer Nitsabon* [=The Book of Victory], Noribergae, 1644.

These distributions were the culmination of a complicated series of negotiations between the competing constituencies within JCR itself, and then between JCR and the U.S. government. It was complicated because the prevailing international law mandated that the U.S. military government return stolen materials to the countries from which they were looted. For JCR, this approach was anathema and unacceptable, especially when applied to ownerless Judaica because “returning materials to their country of origin” meant, in the case of Germany, that the very country that had caused these books to become ownerless stood to inherit the property of its victims.

Instead of returning the Jewish books to their countries of origin, JCR proposed that the United States apply to these heirless cultural materials the principle of “beneficial” ownership. In a 1946 letter to the General J. Hildring, the State Department official in charge of restitution affairs, Professor Jerome Michael, Acting Chairman of the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (the precursor of JCR) gave a powerful justification for removing orphaned books from Europe and transferring them to Palestine and America. Professor Michael argued that ownerless Jewish cultural objects, as well as communally owned objects that “exceed the religious and cultural needs of Jews who still reside in ... Central Europe ... must be taken from Europe” He went on:

“The great centers of [Jewish spirituality and cultural activity] are now, and will continue to be, Palestine and the United States, where so many thousands of the survivors of European Jews have found refuge Not only must the excess of these Jewish cultural and religious treasures be removed from Europe, but they must also be distributed among Jewish communities throughout the world as best serve the spiritual and cultural needs of the Jewish people as a whole.”⁶

The primary purpose of the JCR distributions would be to look after the beneficial interests of the Jewish people as a whole. Though JCR emphasized the collective rights of the Jewish people to determine the fate of the ownerless books, it also sought to reassure the authorities that it would continue to seek out original owners whenever possible and practical. In a letter to an American official assisting in the transfer of the non-restitutable materials from Germany to JCR warehouses in the United States, Hannah Arendt wrote:

“In all cases in which one owner possesses six or more books, we shall make every effort to locate the former owner or his heirs. We shall type out the list of all the persons, photo-stat them, [and] deposit them in major Jewish organizations and institutions all over the world. We shall not touch this category until a reasonable time has elapsed for claims.”⁷

Indeed, when all was said and done, JCR did successfully return some 19,400 volumes to individuals and institutions.⁸

Very early in the process, the notion surfaced that making these materials available in libraries and other institutions of learning could also serve a powerful memorial function. In 1946, Professor Michael described alternatives to the distribution of the ownerless books, including the possibility of establishing a memorial library at the Hebrew University “to pay tribute to those victims who did not survive ... as a memorial to these martyrs for their faith.”⁹

Ultimately, the memorial function mentioned by Professor Michael took the form of a special bookplate bearing the logo of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, which was to be inserted into each volume received by the participating repositories. In a 1949 letter to the receiving libraries, Hannah Arendt wrote:

“[W]e feel that it will be of great importance to have each volume marked, so that present and future readers may be reminded of those who once cherished them before they became victims of the greatest Jewish catastrophe. Without such a distinctive mark it will also be impossible for present and future scholars to retrace the history and whereabouts of the great cultural treasures of European Jewry which once were the pride of scholars, institutions and private collections. We therefore are sending you today bookplates which should be pasted into each of the volumes which you received from us. We trust that you will understand the historic significance of this request and will gladly comply with it.”¹⁰

The JCR bookplate is well-known to Judaica librarians: its central emblem is a large Star of David, ringed with the name of JCR in Hebrew [= *Tekumah le-Tarbut Yisrael*] and labeled at the bottom: “Jewish Cultural Reconstruction.” There are tens of thousands of books in libraries throughout the world that bear this distinctive bookplate. But the bookplate itself marks only the volume’s most

recent provenance, i.e., that its acquisition source was the JCR. It doesn't explicitly mention the "victims of the greatest Jewish catastrophe" – Hannah Arendt's rationale for inserting the bookplate into each JCR volume. And today, some sixty years later, it is highly unlikely that users who happen on a JCR book in the course of their research will associate the bookplate with the victims of the Holocaust.

Other organizations involved in the book distributions chose more explicit references to the Shoah. The Canadian Jewish Congress, which managed the JCR book distributions in Canada inserted a bookplate in each volume received that read:

"This book was once the property of a Jew, victim of the Great Massacre in Europe. The Nazis who seized this book eventually destroyed the owner. It has been recovered by the Jewish people, and reverently placed in this institution by the Canadian Jewish Congress, as a memorial to those who gave their lives for the sanctification of the Holy Name."¹¹

The Library of Congress' copy of *Midrash Shmuel Rabati* (Shtettin, 1860), which it acquired from the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem, bears a bookplate issued by the Library of the Central Committee of Polish Jewry dated 1947. The bookplate marks this volume as "a gift from among the Jewish books of Poland that were saved from destruction during the years of the annihilation, 1939-1945."¹²

In August 1999, representatives of the Presidential Advisory Commission on U.S. Holocaust Assets met with Library of Congress officials to discuss materials acquired by the Library of Congress in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust that may have belonged to Jewish victims. The Commission, which came into existence in June 1999, was part of an international effort to examine how individual countries had handled Holocaust-era assets, including gold, insurance, property, and cultural artifacts. One area that the Commission focused on was the identification of cultural materials that had belonged to Holocaust victims that might have passed into the possession of U.S. governmental agencies such as the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, and the National Gallery. The Commission worried that some of these items might have bypassed the restitution process. In addition, the Commission's work was intended to drive home the point to similar newly established Commissions in Europe, that the United States was committed to

examining its own record in connection with how it handled the Holocaust-era assets that came into its possession. In other words, America would not be asking the Europeans to do something that it was not prepared to do itself.

With the Commission's assistance, the Library of Congress undertook to closely examine what had happened to the JCR and other Holocaust-era books that had come into its collections some fifty years before. To find these works, Library of Congress specialists devised a computer program that identified Hebrew books in its collection that were published before 1945, but cataloged after that date. The program generated a list of some 17,000 titles in this category. Each of the 17,000 titles was examined for acquisition stamps, JCR bookplates, or Nazi institute property stamps, that marked the work in question as a Holocaust-era acquisition. From these 17,000 titles, approximately 1,500 individual monographs and serial titles were identified and pulled from the shelves. A sample of the titles showed them to be primarily Yiddish books (85%), with the remaining titles in Hebrew, divided between literature (10%), rabbinics (3%), and liturgical texts (2%).

Most of what the Library of Congress received from JCR had been cataloged and integrated into its holdings. Some of the original items turned out to be duplicates, which were sent on to other libraries in exchange for needed items; others, especially the newspapers and the serials, were microfilmed, and the embrittled originals were discarded.

Though many (but not all) of the JCR items that were left in the Library's collection bore the special JCR bookplate, there was no way to identify the titles as JCR books from the catalog records alone. That is, no tracing had been added to the bibliographic record identifying these books as JCR accessions, and no separate list existed of the individual titles that the Library of Congress received (or for any of the other recipient libraries for that matter)—not even the ones that JCR had considered rare. The only way to find a JCR book was to come across it by accident. Clearly, even with the bookmark in place and even if you knew what it stood for, it was not possible to realize Hannah Arendt's hope that "present and future scholars [would be able] to retrace the history and whereabouts of the great cultural treasures of European Jewry which once were the pride of scholars, institutions and private collections."¹³

So, together with representatives of the Commission, the Library of Congress worked out procedures to appropriately mark the special provenance of these works and memorialize their owners – in a way that made possible Hannah Arendt’s aspiration for these orphaned books. Each of the 1,500 items pulled from the shelves was reviewed for conservation treatments. Their bibliographic records were updated and access points were added to enable researchers to identify individual items acquired by LOC from JCR, as well from other sources, through a search by collection name: The Holocaust Era Judaic Heritage Library.

This virtual library dynamically aggregates a group of disparate books, pamphlets, periodicals, and newspapers under the assigned collection name in the online catalog. As of today, the virtual library includes more than 1,354 individual titles acquired primarily via JCR, as well a handful acquired directly from various Nazi anti-Semitic institutes that were removed from Germany by the Library of Congress Mission to Europe. Other libraries that have followed LC’s lead in memorializing the victims through their online catalogs include Baltimore Hebrew University and the University of Iowa.

4. Conclusion

In reflecting on the fate of displaced Hebraica in American collections, there is considerable understanding of the approach and efforts of JCR, as well as the achievements of the American officers who directed the work of the Offenbach Archival Depot. It should be noted, that the records of JCR, the OAD, and the Library of Congress’s European Mission were subjected to careful scrutiny both by the Justice Department’s Office of Special Investigations (OSI) and the Presidential Advisory Commission, and even with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight, only minor quibbles were raised about the operations of these three organizations in the reports of both the Commission and OSI. In the more than sixty years that have elapsed since the end of the war, the libraries that have received these books have, for the most part, preserved them and made them available to scholars, researchers, and the general public. In this way, the receiving libraries have made substantive and meaningful contributions to the “reconstruction” of Jewish life and learning – a renewal that JCR’s constituent members could only have hoped and dreamed would take place when they deposited these books in centers of learning throughout the world. In the process, these

receiving institutions have become sites Holocaust memory, helping to preserve and make available these literary witnesses to a Jewish world that is no more.

But there is much still to be done. Knowledge of the fate of displaced and looted Judaica is inextricably linked to its physical location at war's end. If the materials happened to be in a zone other than the Russian Zone of Occupation, their fate, if not fully known, can be surmised. On the other hand, we still know very little about what happened to many of the stolen materials that were located behind the iron curtain when the war ended.

Shlomo Shunami, the creator of the classic Hebrew "Bibliography of Bibliographies," spent much of the post-war period in an unsuccessful quest for orphaned Judaic treasures that had been held in European repositories but had vanished without a trace during the war.¹⁴ I'll mention here but one example from many – chosen for its connection to the Feinstein Lecture of Dina Abramowitz, who worked in the Vilna Ghetto library, and spoke of it and its chief librarian, Herman Kruk, so movingly in her 1998 Feinstein Lecture, *Guardians of a Tragic Heritage: Reminiscences and Observations of an Eyewitness*.¹⁵ Of Kruk, she wrote: "If Jews are called "the People of the Book," Kruk was the man of the book in Vilna." On September 8, 1941, Kruk recorded how Chaikl Lunski, the legendary librarian of Vilna's Strashun Library, had been dragged to prison by the Nazis, who demanded that he turn over the Strashun's incunabula. Lunski, writes Kruk, showed where the books were hidden and was then released. "Thus," concluded Kruk, "were six incunabula lost."¹⁶ To the best of my knowledge, the six incunabula are still among the missing.

There is much yet to be done in connection with these lost treasures, including, compiling an inventory of displaced collections. In 1946, the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR's precursor) published a "Tentative List of Jewish Educational Institutions in Axis-occupied Countries," which identified and described Judaica collections throughout Europe.¹⁷ What happened to these collections? We just don't know. Of course, we do know of collections of displaced Judaica and Hebraica that are currently housed in dozens of repositories in Europe and the Former Soviet Union. Clearly, an especially important desideratum would be an inventory of these displaced collections, along with a close look at the provenance of the books and journals housed in these repositories.

This close look would entail surveying the materials for ownership marks and library stamps to identify the provenance of the individual books in these collections—much as CARL-JS hoped to do with the Vilnius collections.

And finally, in addition to being active reference and scholarly centers, our libraries, archives, and museums, are memory institutions par excellence. It would be especially meaningful to create appropriate sites of memory within the institutions holding JCR books. Whether via a special bookplate, through a virtual library, or through some other appropriate means, the unique provenance of these books should be memorialized within each repository that holds examples of these orphaned treasures. In this way, those repositories holding these books could recognize the special history of these unremarkable books with great moral resonance.

¹ A brief description of this project can be found at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/european/lithreels.html>. The Hebrew and Yiddish periodicals appear to have been incorporated in the Library of Congress' online catalog because they are no longer listed.

² See David E. Fishman's, *Shaytlekh aroysgerisn fun fayer : dos oprateven Yidishe kultur-oystres in Vilne* (New York, YIVO, 1996).

³ See Seymour J. Pomrenze *The Restitution of Jewish Cultural Treasures after the Holocaust* (37th Annual Convention, Denver, 2002), <http://www.jewishlibraries.org/ajlweb/resources/feinstein/pomrenze.html>.

⁴ Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *From That Time and Place: A Memoir 1938-1947* (New York: Bantam Books, 1989), p. 316.

⁵ See Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, "Distribution of Books in the U.S. from July 1, 1949-January 3, 1952," photocopy of document in author's collection.

⁶ J. Michael to J. Hildring, 5 June 1946. NARA. RG 260, Box 720. A copy of this letter may be viewed at <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/oad/main3.htm>.

⁷ H. Arendt to T. Heinrich, 21 January 1950. U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, OEA. A copy of this letter may be viewed at <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/oad/main3.htm>.

⁸ United States. Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States, *Plunder and Restitution: The U.S. and Holocaust victims' Assets: Findings and Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States and Executive Summary of the Staff Report*. (Washington, D.C.: Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States, December, 2000), p. SR-197.

⁹ J. Michael to J. Hildring, 5 June 1946 (<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/oad/main3.htm>)

¹⁰ H. Arendt to T. Heinrich, 21 January 1950. (<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/oad/main3.htm>)

¹¹ *Plunder and Restitution*, SR-194.

¹² *Midrash Shmuel Rabati* (Shtetin, 1860), Call no. BM 517.S4 1860. The bookplate bears the withdrawn stamp of the Jewish National and University Library (Jerusalem).

¹³ *Plunder and Restitution*, SR-195.

¹⁴ For Shunami's frustration in connection with these lost cultural treasures, see Dov Schidorsky, *G'vilim Nisrafim ve-Otiyot Porkhot* (Jerusalem, Magnes, 2008), pp. 280-284.

¹⁵ See <http://www.jewishlibraries.org/ajlweb/resources/feinstein/abramowicz.html> for the text of the lecture.

¹⁶ Herman Kruk. *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939 -1944* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 108.

¹⁷ Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction. *Tentative list of Jewish educational institutions in Axis-occupied countries, by the Research Staff of the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction*. (New York, 1946); and Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction. *Tentative list of Jewish publishers of Judaica and Hebraica in Axis-occupied countries* (New York, 1948).