

An Annotated Bibliography

Pursuant to the Requirement for LEAD535: Principles of Academic Writing

by

Steven D. Reece

November 16, 2012

Annotated Bibliography

Braiterman, Z. (1998). *(God) after Auschwitz: Tradition and change in post-Holocaust Jewish thought*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Zachary Braiterman's book focuses on the subject of God and the Holocaust (or Shoah – destruction, as Jews refer to it). In it, he considers how technological developments regarding mass exterminations have greatly impacted Jewish religious thought in the aftermath of Auschwitz. His book examines three important Jewish theologians: Richard Rubenstein, Eliezer Berkovits, and Emil Fackenheim and their treatment of theodicy (justifying God in the face of evil) in a post-Holocaust world. Braiterman analyzes why liberal, moderate and conservative Jewish religious scholars reject the contemporary understanding of theodicy and embrace what he calls "Antitheodicy," which refuses to justify or admit that a relationship exists between God and such cataclysmic evil and suffering, basically asserting that God hid his face in the midst of the Shoah. The book is not for the average reader; nevertheless, it deals with an important theological issue and the Holocaust. Some readers may find the book offensive as it presents a postmodern and liberal assessment of Jewish theology, and offers a new approach that reconfigures Jewish thought and philosophy following the Holocaust.

Buergenthal, T. (2009). *A lucky child: A memoir of surviving Auschwitz as a young boy*. New York: Back Bay Books.

This book is a biography (memoir) of Thomas Buegerthal, who was a child survivor of Auschwitz, one of the most heinous Nazi concentration and death camps established during Germany's brutal occupation of Poland. Through the eyes of a child and in an extremely personal view, the book deals and plainly with the events associated with the

Holocaust. Buegerthal details what Holocaust survivors experienced, what it took for them to survive, and how they coped as survivors in the aftershock of the Holocaust following World War Two. Buegerthal juxtaposes the idyllic joys of childhood against the harsh reality of the Holocaust. He provides a compelling picture of emotional struggles and how he overcame his hatred and his desire for revenge against the German people, eventually learning to forgive, so that the cycle of hatred and violence would end. The book is an easy read and it is not a technical, nor historical treatment of the Holocaust; it places events in context but sees them as a child experienced them.

Davies, N. (2005a). *God's playground: A history of Poland, vol. 1: The origins to 1795* (Vol. 1 Revised). New York: Columbia University Press.

Norman Davies is an Englishman, who has become the most notable historian concerning Polish history. In his two volumes of *God's Playground*, Davies provides the most complete examination of Polish history, which is critical for understanding not only Polish history but Polish-Jewish history as Jews have lived in Poland for nearly a thousand years. In volume one, Davies covers the history of Poland from its inception, and its embrace of Christianity in 966 A.D. Davies also includes early Jewish immigration to Poland and how King Kazimierz (Casimir) the Great invited Jews to settle in Poland during the fourteenth century, leading ultimately to Poland becoming a sanctuary for European Jews. Although extensive in its scope, Davies presents key facts and themes concerning Poland's diverse, multicultural heritage and includes within Poland's historical, economic and political development, the establishment of Jewish, German, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian communities up until the end of the eighteenth century. This is a key historical resource for understanding Polish and Jewish history.

Davies, N. (2005b). *God's playground: A history of Poland, vol. 2: 1795 to the present* (2 ed. Vol. 2). New York: Columbia University Press.

Following Poland's partition by Germany, Austria, and Russia in 1795, Davies picks up the narrative of Polish history and continues to the present. He provides detail and insight into Poland's rebirth as a nation after World War One and the run-up to World War Two. In this volume, he discusses the events of the Holocaust and both Jewish and Polish resistance movements and their subsequent uprisings against the Nazi occupiers. Davies covers post-war Poland and the collapse of communism and the ascent of Poland's Fourth Republic, which was the first democratically elected government to emerge from behind the Iron Curtain and the shadow of the Soviet Union in 1990. This book is scholarly and an authoritative source on Polish history.

Gross, J. T. (2002). *Neighbors: The destruction of the Jewish community in Jedwabne, Poland*. New York: Penguin Books.

Historian, Jan Gross wrote this powerful although controversial book describing the shocking events of a pogrom in the summer of 1941 against Jews executed at the hands of their Polish neighbors in Jedwabne, a small town in northeast Poland. The book opens the wounds of a painful past when Poles both Catholic and Jewish, were victims of their Nazi German occupiers during the Second World War. Through eyewitness accounts and physical evidence, Gross peels back the layers and examines the tragic slaughter of innocent people – 1,600 Jewish men, women, and children by Poles allowed and welcomed by the Nazis. The book is brutally frank and describes in strong, graphic detail the atrocities of Jedwabne. The purpose of the book is not to explain the horrible event

but to identify the criminals who perpetrated these murders as a means to ensure a truthful treatment of the history of the Holocaust.

Hoffman, E. (2007). *Shtetl: The life and death of a small town and the world of Polish Jews*.

New York: Public Affairs.

In *Shtetl*, Eva Hoffman masterfully writes and gives an interesting perspective of Polish-Jewish history that stretches for over more than eight hundred years through the story of Brańsk, a small town in northeast Poland. Shtetl is an apt title as it is a Yiddish word that means a small town and provides a distinctive context for developing the historical narrative of Polish and Jewish interaction, which at times was productive and harmonious and at others bleak and dissonant. In the dark days of the Holocaust, Hoffman examines two cultures in turmoil and delineates the forces that influenced Polish Christians to either provide sanctuary and hide or betray and hand over their Jewish neighbors to their mutual Nazi oppressor.

Johnson, C. E. (2012). *Meeting the ethical challenges of leadership: Casting light or shadow*.

United States of America: Sage Publications, Inc.

This is an invaluable book as it deals with evil academically by outlining the work of major researchers. In Chapter 4, Johnson addresses evil and provides sound academic research to discuss his argument that evil exists, how it expresses itself in its various forms, and how to combat it. He considers administrative evil in the Holocaust and its hidden impact upon participants. He discusses additionally forgiveness and how acts of loving-kindness are able to overcome evil. Citing research, he describes how to break evil's vicious cycle. Positively, Johnson puts ethics, morality and ethical leadership in perspective. He deals with a leader's character and what might tempt just leaders to

become corrupt. Unfortunately, he does not often consider the role of followers as seen in most treatments of leadership theory (leader, situation, follower). His main emphasis in the book is that leaders must do the right thing when confronting evil and not be fearful but be guided by ethics and morality.

Perchodnik, C. (1996). *Am I a murderer?: Testament of a Jewish ghetto policeman* (F. Fox, Trans.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Calel Perechodnik was a Jewish Policeman during the days of the Otwock Ghetto. This is a unique book and possibly one of the only complete eyewitness account of what happened in a Jewish Ghetto written by a Jewish collaborator. This book gives a better understanding of the history of the Holocaust centered on Otwock, a suburb of Warsaw, Poland. Perechodnik placed his wife and two-year-old daughter along with 10,000 Jews on the train going to Treblinka knowing that certain death awaited them. The Otwock Ghetto was liquidated in August 1942. Perechodnik survived the Jewish Ghetto, but later died in hiding in Warsaw before the end of World War II; however, his diary survived bearing witness to the horrors of the Holocaust.

Rees, L. (2005). *Auschwitz: The Nazis & the 'Final Solution.'* London: BBC Books.

Set against the backdrop of the Holocaust, Laurence Rees provides an authoritative analysis of the development of Auschwitz beginning as a Nazi concentration camp to that of a perfect factory for the mass extermination of European Jewry. Rees' book is one that needs to be read as it is a superbly written and offers a concise history of the Holocaust, containing material from victims, offenders and so-called bystanders. Rees also examines critically existing conditions before the onset of World War Two and rather astoundingly concludes that Nazi policies only reinforced existing prejudices among the German

people, which ultimately led them to follow where they were willing to go. The primary weakness of the book is that it uses Auschwitz as a vehicle to examine a limited albeit critical aspect of the Holocaust, as Auschwitz was only one location among hundreds of labor camps and one of five death factories associated with Aktion (Operation) Reinhard, Hitler's plan for providing "the final solution of the Jewish question."

Telushkin, J. (1991). *Jewish literacy: The most important things to know about the Jewish religion, its people, and its history*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.

Even though Rabbi Joseph Telushkin's book is not a scholarly text, it is useful and provides a preparatory course for those who may lack knowledge about Jews and Judaism. The book is easily readable and contains 352 short entries that index Jewish topics and concepts much like an encyclopedia, making it a handy reference guide that gives readers a starting point for understanding the basics regarding Jewish ethics, religious terms, texts, major historical events, and personalities. One interesting feature that Telushkin provides at the end of each entry is a brief bibliography, which gives readers additional sources for further reading. Telushkin includes a good overview of the Holocaust and outlines primary players, events and outcomes.

Zimmerman, J. D. (2003). *Contested memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and its aftermath*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press.

Contested Memories is a scholarly text considered by many to be a "standard work" on the Holocaust. The book contains numerous essays written by Poles and Jews from three generations of researchers on topics concerning Polish-Jewish relations before, during and after World War Two. The book addresses six issues: the prewar years and its legacy, the break down of Polish and Jewish relations in the early days of the war, Polish

institutional responses to the Holocaust (Nazi Final Solution), the Jewish perspective on Poles and the Polish nation, European Jews and their destruction and popular Polish opinions, and the relationship between Poles and Jews following 1945. The essays found in the book address “commonly held views on both sides of the debates” regarding Polish and Jewish responses to the Nazi occupation of Poland. The purpose of the authors is to analyze “issues fairly” and to reach “mutual understanding” as Poles and Jews address the aftermath of the Holocaust collectively.