

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

One might think that writing a book on train journeys in the Holocaust would be a reliable conversation stopper. That has not been the case. Who would have that the trauma of “cattle cars” would be enduringly fascinating and appealing to so many different people? The anecdotal history behind the history of this book remains unwritten. For now.

Colleagues from universities in Australia were the first audiences for the topic of train journeys. I owe Mark Baker, Tony Barta, Krystyna Duszniak, Donna-Lee Frieze, Roger Hillman, Konrad Kwiet, and Steven Welch much gratitude for their advice and input on the themes of trains, survivors, and writing. Tony Barta and Roger Hillman were particularly vigilant in tracking the book’s progress once I was immersed in writing it, and both read draft chapters, as did Omer Bartov, Berel Lang, Dirk Moses, and Alan Rosen. I am very grateful to all of them for their detailed commentary and encouragement.

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In August 2002, I took up a temporary appointment at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica. I could not have anticipated a more profound experience of ambivalence and ultimately, growth and professional reorientation of my interests. Jamaica has complex and fascinating histories of displacement and dispossession, histories that were inevitably recalled in the classroom whenever I taught the Holocaust to Caribbean students. James Robertson and Swithin Wilmot were welcoming and generous colleagues,

and were very supportive of my research into the transit histories of German and Jewish refugees in the region.

Additional visits to the USHMM in Washington, DC, allowed further exploration of train journeys and transit. In 2003, I co-coordinated a Summer Research Workshop on “Interpreting Testimony,” and in 2007, participated in another Summer Research Workshop, “Geographies of the Holocaust.” Both workshops generated further avenues of research and validated a geographical and socio-cultural approach to journeys and transit. Robert Ehrenreich and Suzanne Brown-Fleming of the University Programs Division at the CAHS supported both workshops, and Tim Cole, along with other participants in the “Geographies of the Holocaust” Workshop, provided a benchmark of intellectual collaboration.

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The publication of this book concludes a journey that began in Melbourne, Australia, and ends in Wellington, New Zealand. The latter is a place that does not typically feature as a home for Holocaust refugees and survivors. On occasion, the country’s European Jewish refugee history resurfaces, as do its remaining survivors. In writing this book, I have been inspired by three women in the Wellington Jewish community—Hanka Pressburg, Clare Winter, and Inge Woolf.

