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But There Was Love: Shaping the Memory of the Shoah: Introduction to the English Edition

Never Again Is Now

The English edition of *But There Was Love—Shaping the Memory of the Shoah* proposes a new paradigm for Shoah memory and remembrance. It is derived from the four-year workings of a group of researchers and artists that met at The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. The group sought to rethink Shoah memory and its ramifications in Israel and in today's global cultural, social, psychological and political reality after 80 years (1945–2025). The research group was formed by Shoah survivors and members of the second and third generation. Its activities included lectures, interviews, discussions, an exhibition, the publication of a book, and the establishment of a global Jewish project based around the *Hitkansut* remembrance ritual.

The group calls for a new conceptualization of Shoah remembrance. It presents a new epistemology centered around the undoing of the long-held attitude seeing the Shoah through Jewish victimhood as the sole, ultimate, and legitimate position. Instead, the group positions the extraordinary Jewish and human struggle in facing dehumanization and extermination as the essence of the Shoah. In the midst of the Nazi systematic mass murder, the multiple modes of resistance of women, men and children stand as unique expressions of humanity. Shifting the focus of remembrance from victimhood to human resistance and resilience supports a call for an active mode of remembrance—to remember with responsibility—that confronts our present time with profound ethical challenges.

The sacrificial and victimhood-oriented attitude toward the Shoah was embedded in its naming by a Latin term, Holocaust, that semantically and culturally anchors the event in a sacrificial context and tradition. Accordingly, we preferred to use the term Shoah rather than Holocaust in the title of this volume.

The global collective effort to gather archival documents and written testimonies of the Holocaust continues. Sadly, as the last survivors of the Shoah pass away, we are fast approaching the end of the first generation's oral (face-to-face) testimonial endeavor. The dark reality of genocides and attempted exterminations perpetrated around the world since the Holocaust up to the third decade of the twenty-first century, once again teaches us the importance of respect for

human dignity and integrity as the ethical challenge and the core legacy of the Shoah.

We hope that *But There Was Love—Shaping the Memory of the Shoah* will contribute to a worldwide recognition that the Shoah, as a formative event of Western civilization, should pave our way for responsibly re-empowering the decree “Never Again Is Now.”