How did British Jewry respond to the Holocaust, how prominent was the Holocaust on the communal agenda and what does this response tell us about the values, politics, fears and identity of the Anglo-Jewish community? This book studies the priorities of that community, and thereby seeks to analyse the attitudes and philosophies which informed actions. It paints a picture of Anglo-Jewish life and its reactions to a wide range of matters in the external, Gentile world.

Richard Bolchower charts the transmission of the news of the European catastrophe and discusses the various theories which have thus far been posited regarding reactions in these exceptional circumstances. He investigates the structures and political philosophies of Anglo-Jewry during the war years and covers the reactions of Jewish political and religious leaders as well as prominent Jews acting outside the community’s institutional framework. Various co-ordinated responses, political and philanthropic, are studied, as are the issues which dominated the community at that time, namely internal conflict and the fear of increased domestic anti-semitism: these preoccupations inevitably affected responses to events in Europe. The latter half of the book looks at the ramifications of the community’s socio-political philosophies including, most radically, Zionism, and their influence on communal reactions. This is the first and only published work on this subject, and it raises major questions about the structures and priorities of the British Jewish community.
BRITISH JEWRY
AND THE HOLOCAUST

RICHARD BOLCHOVER
To my parents and brothers.

With love.
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Preface

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