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## Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood

The ghost of the Holocaust is ever present in Israel, in the lives and nightmares of the survivors, and in the absence of the victims. In this compelling and disturbing analysis, Idith Zertal, a leading member of the new generation of revisionist historians in Israel, deals with the ways Israel has appropriated and used the memory of the Holocaust in order to define and legitimize its existence and politics. Drawing on a wide range of sources, many of them new, the author exposes the pivotal role of the Holocaust in Israel's public sphere, in its project of nation-building, its politics of power, and in its perception of the conflict with the Palestinians and military occupation of their territories. Zertal argues that the centrality of the Holocaust in Israeli life has led to a culture of death and victimhood which permeates Israeli society, its rituals, and its self-image. This is an important and penetrating book which offers an entirely new perspective on Israel, its history, and the construction of national identity.

IDITH ZERTAL was for many years a cultural and political journalist and essayist in Israel. She is now teaching history and cultural studies at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her previous publications include *From Catastrophe to Power* (1998) and *The Lords of the Land* (in Hebrew: 2004).

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# Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood

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Idith Zertal

*Translated by*

Chaya Galai



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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 2RU, UK  
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa  
<http://www.cambridge.org>

Originally published in Hebrew as "Ha'Umah ve Ha'Mavet, Historia, Zikaron, Politika", Dvir Publishing House, 2002 and © Idith Zertal 2002.  
English translation © Idith Zertal 2005

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This edition first published 2005

Printed in the United States of America

*Typeset* in Plantin 10/12 pt. *System* Advent 3B2 8.07f [PND]

*A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library*

ISBN 0 521 85096 7 hardback

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## Acknowledgments

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It is a special pleasure for me to thank all those – individuals and institutions – who helped in the process of creating this book.

I am grateful to the International Center of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem for the period I spent there. During my fellowship at the Center I began reflecting about the book's main themes.

In 1997–1998, as Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington DC, I researched and wrote about the effects of the Eichmann trial on Israeli politics and discourse, and especially on the sequence of events that led to the 1967 war. This work found its way into chapter 3 of the present book. I thank the Institute's staff for their generous support.

Parts of my work have been presented over the years at the University of Chicago, New York University, Yad Vashem, the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, Ben-Gurion University in Beer Sheva, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I thank these institutions for the opportunity to discuss the ideas behind this book.

I thank my students at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya and the Hebrew University who took part in my seminars and contributed by their openness and intellectual curiosity to the shaping of this book.

Adi Ophir, Shulamit Aloni, Lior Barshack, Guy Ben Porat, and the late Martin Strauss read the original manuscript or parts of it. Their comments were especially pertinent and precious to me. Shlomo Ben Ami and Avi Shlaim supported my work with rare generosity. I am grateful to each one of them.

I owe special thanks to the late Michael Rogin and *Representations'* editorial board for their enthusiastic reception of my article "From the People's Hall to the Wailing Wall: A Study in Fear, Memory and War," published in the winter of 2000.

I am indebted to research assistants at various institutions: Guy Ben Porat (today a colleague and friend), Chagai Vered, Orit Ziv, and Shlomit Gur. Research for this project was generously supported by the Rich

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x Acknowledgments

Foundation and its director, Avner Azulai. My deep gratitude goes to him and to the Foundation.

I would also like to thank my friend Ziv Lewis at my home publishing house, Kinneret-Zmora-Dvir in Israel, for his support and help with the book.

I thank Chaya Galai for an excellent translation of my sometimes untranslatable Hebrew.

Working with Cambridge University Press, especially with its Asia and the Middle East Editor, Marigold Acland, has been an amazing experience: swift, demanding, punctual, and graceful, for which I am very grateful. I also thank Linda Randall for her meticulous copy-editing.

Finally, this book was from its inception closely followed and magnanimously assisted by my friend and mentor Ohad Zmora, whose untimely death is a terrible loss. I dedicate it to his memory, with love.