

**Wiesenthal, S 1992 — Every Day Remembrance Day: A Chronicle of Jewish Martyrdom**

American Interfaith Institute. Translated from the French edition of 1987. xv & 320 pages. Price: unknown

**Reviewer: Dr G J Swart**

This book is not a chronicle in the ordinary sense of the term, nor is it a calendar. It is a catalogue of atrocities, arranged by date (from January 1 to December 31, according to the Gregorian Calendar for all events later than 1582). Each of these 366 entries is subdivided into sections covering events that occurred in a particular year. This arrangement has the effect of severing the historical links between different statements. In the end the only unifying aspect that remains is the fact that in every case Jews were the victims of the horrifying acts described. Despite the author's effort to define an underlying pattern by indicating six 'Leitmotifs' (hatred, dictatorship, bureaucracy, technology, crisis or war, and minority as scapegoat), the reader is left baffled — shocked or shattered, perhaps even with a sense of collective guilt, but without deeper understanding of the historical processes which produced a reality as repulsive as that depicted in this catalogue. In more ways than that to which the author refers in the introduction (p.30), 'the book has no end'. A reader could start reading at any given date and complete the annual cycle. There is no concluding chapter. A single entry, chosen at random, may suffice to exemplify the type of reading experience which this book provides:

*August 19*

- \* 1287 Two young Jews, Eleasar and Mose ha-Levi, are massacred in Braubach on the Rhine, Germany, following the alleged ritual murder of a Christian child in the nearby town of Oberwesel.
- \* 1338 The Jewish community of Wolfsberg, Carinthia, Austria, is accused of host desecration and in the aftermath more than 70 Jewish men, women, and children are massacred.
- \* 1919 One Jew is killed and 5 are injured during a three-day pogrom in Jivatov, district of Kiev, Ukrainian S.S.R., by units under the command of Zelenovtsy, an ally of Petlyura's Ukrainian National Army.
- \* 1941 In the area of Szumowa, the Nazis murder 1,500 Jews from Zambrov, a town in the province of Bialystok, Poland.
- \* 1942 During the large-scale extermination campaign against the Jews of Otvoek in Warsaw province, Poland, 7,000 Jews are deported to the Treblinka extermination camp. The Jews in Otvoek put up fierce resistance and 2,000 Jews are shot by the SS on the spot, but 700 Jews manage to escape into the forest.

The Nazis deport 2,400 Jews from the ghetto of Grodek, province of Galicia, Poland (today Ukrainian S.S.R.), to the Belzec extermination camp in Poland. About 50 Jews are shot and the wounded are buried alive by the SS.

## Boekbesprekings / Book Reviews

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Over three days, 17,000 Jews from Lutsk and the surrounding area in Poland (today Ukrainian S.S.R.) who are living in the Lutsk ghetto, are taken out to the hills of Polanka and shot by the SS.

- \* *1943* In four days, the ghetto of Bialystok, Poland, is liquidated.
- \* *1944* The last convoy leaves the Haidar transit camp, a police detention camp in the Haidar quarter in Athens, Greece, taking mainly Greek but some foreign Jews to Auschwitz.

Two interrelated questions arise from reading a section like this: First, to whom is the book directed — to Jews, or to Christians, or to humanity in general? Second, how is the reader to respond to these horrors? With reference to Masada, the author states on page 4: 'There will always be Jews as long as they remember. There is no greater sin than to forget'.

The road to better Jewish-Christian relations, to communication and understanding, is no easy path. It requires that the painful events of the past be remembered, every step of the way, so that the pitfalls may be avoided, the errors not repeated. The Jewish people gave birth to the Saviour of Christianity. They gave us part of our Bible. If we are to live according to the message of that Book, the message of this book should be perpetuated, so that anti-Judaism may not. We who profess faith in Jesus Christ, should never forget that we are indebted to the Jews.

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