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# Review of "Remembering to Forget: The Holocaust Through the Camera Eye" by Barbie Zelizer

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destruction was also a result of their losing all land east of the Oder-Neisse. In temporal terms, the rural middle-class "Haves" were more likely than the lower-class "Have nots" to win more land, but the winners in 1945 were the losers in collectivization by 1961.

This research strengthens the developing interpretation that the Soviets were seriously resisted. The post-1989 oddity is that only this loss of property may not be reversed, as though being Soviet made it sacrosanct.

E. N. PETERSON, *University of Wisconsin, River Falls*

Barbie Zelizer. *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. Pp. viii, 292. Cloth $27.50.

In probing the impact of the Holocaust on postwar Western culture, scholars have examined a wide range of cultural realms, ranging from the representation of the Nazi genocide in art and film to its commemoration in monuments. Barbie Zelizer's insightful book takes its place among such works by examining how photography has been used and abused in the process of documenting and remembering the Holocaust.

*Remembering to Forget* focuses primarily upon the production and postwar reception of "atrocity photographs"—photos taken by the Anglo-American liberators of German concentration camps in the spring of 1945. From the outset, Zelizer makes the important point that the very images of the Holocaust that have come to hold iconic status in popular memory came into existence almost by default. With photography and photojournalists enjoying scant prestige during the war, it was only the liberation of the camps, and the stunned recognition of the unimaginable horrors contained within them, that elevated photography to an unprecedented level of importance. Given the limits of language that plagued even the most veteran print journalists who tried to report their impressions of the camps, words were soon surpassed by images as crucial aids to the act of bearing witness to Nazi crimes. Zelizer is at her best in describing this process, especially where she formally analyzes atrocity photographs to show the different ways—from their choice of subject matter to their strategies of composition—in which they depicted Nazi atrocities.

*Remembering to Forget*, however, has certain problems linking the production of such images to the memory of the events they depict. Zelizer, who is a professor of communications, discusses the subject of memory in a more elusive manner than most historians who write on the subject. Memory, indeed, takes on a highly disembodied form in Zelizer's writing, as is illustrated by her tendency to refer to the act of remembering as an independent subject—"Memory work responded" (188), "remembering... drew strength" (141)—rather than to the agents of memory

as specific persons or groups. Zelizer's impressive empirical evidence comes mostly from American and British sources, but she avoids drawing specific conclusions about American or British memory of the Holocaust. Instead, she largely explores how photography has shaped memory in a general sense, yet one wishes that she had explored this relationship more fully. For it remains unclear to what extent it has been the atrocity photographs themselves or other (social, political, or cultural) factors that have been responsible for the problems of Holocaust memory she discusses. The main problem Zelizer provocatively identifies and which gives the book its title—namely, that the postwar proliferation of "Holocaust photos [has] helped us remember the Holocaust so as to forget contemporary atrocity" (13)—is not convincingly proven by the evidence. Her more persuasive argument, presented at the beginning of her study, that photographs cannot shape public opinion until a society is prepared to call atrocities by name (11), suggests that the West's failure to halt recent atrocities in Africa and the Balkans is ultimately more rooted in a broader inability to forge a political consensus on behalf of intervention than in any putative state of paralysis caused by the ubiquity of Holocaust photographs. For this reason, Zelizer's concluding assertion that "we may need to remember [the Holocaust] less so as to remember contemporary atrocities more" (227) seems questionable. These reservations notwithstanding, Zelizer's book is a thought-provoking study that provides a useful exposition of an important dimension of Holocaust memory.

GAVRIEL D. ROSENFELD, *Fairfield University*

David Scrase and Wolfgang Mieder, eds. *The Holocaust: Introductory Essays*. Burlington: Center for Holocaust Studies, 1996. Pp. iv, 264. Paper $10.00.

Conscious of the risk in their undertaking, the editors of *The Holocaust: Introductory Essays* acknowledge the overwhelming nature of their topic. They direct their volume of fifteen brief essays to a "broad general audience... rather than at the scholar or the specialist." Organized in three clusters, the essays address the history of, cultural responses to, and lessons derived from the Holocaust. A chronology of significant events, a glossary, and an index help justify the claim that this collection can serve as both introductory text and reference work.

Unfortunately, many of the individual essays are too general to be of much use in university courses. The need for a brief historical overview is better served by Rita Botwinick's 1996 *A History of the Holocaust*, and the essays on *Lessons and Legacies* collected by Peter Hays in 1991 are unquestionably more substantial than those in the Scrase/Mieder text.

But such comparisons ask more of this volume than it promises and probably more than any attempt to give the general (and specifically the younger general)