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Prologue – *Non omnis moriar*

(Not everything is doomed to die)

Dr. Israel Milejkowski, the Head of the Public Health Department in the Warsaw *Judenrat*, concluded his introduction to the results of the Hunger Disease research with the Latin – “Non omnis moriar.” Jewish physicians in the Warsaw Ghetto discussed this secret research report in the summer of 1942, just before many of them were dispatched to the gas chambers of Treblinka.

This act of defiance, along with maintaining an underground School of Medicine in the ghetto, was possibly the finest example of Jewish intellectual resistance in the medical realm during the Holocaust.

Still today, not enough is known of the efforts of Jewish doctors to uphold the tenets of medical ethics and help their brothers in need (and indeed others, such as the Gypsies in Auschwitz) in the face of death.¹ Both doctors and patients operated in what Primo Levi calls “the gray zones,” left to them in the Nazi camps and ghettos.

My main motive in writing this book, appearing originally in Hebrew, was to unveil, in a concise fashion, the attitudes and activities of the victims themselves against impossible odds.

Additionally, after I had been teaching at the Tel Aviv Faculty of Medicine for many years without a satisfactory text on the subject, I wished to provide students at long last with an introductory book.

My Hebrew translation (1992) of Benno Müller-Hill’s important book, **Murderous Science** (published originally in German in 1984), only partially served this purpose. Müller-Hill had bravely unmasked

1 See Etienne Lopicard’s English review of my book in **Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte** XXXVI (2008), pp. 358-361.

the participation of the German scientific establishment in the medical horrors of the Nazi period, but had hardly mentioned the deeds of Jewish physicians. Other excellent scientific publications such as the relatively recent companion book to the U.S. Holocaust Museum exhibition **Deadly Medicine** (2004), suffered from the same deficiency. This gap in our knowledge needed to be filled.

I have sought, however, not to “ghettoize” my account. Jews were not the only ones who suffered under the distorted Nazi Medicine. I have, therefore, tried to describe the effects of its criminal acts upon “ordinary Germans” as well. We should remember that the first 70,000 victims of the so-called “Euthanasia” program (1940-1941) were “Aryan” Germans. And up to a quarter of a million were murdered, even after the formal end of this action.

The origin of my Hebrew book was a series of 13 prestigious “Broadcast University” lectures sponsored by the Israel Ministry of Defense (MOD). The book based on these lectures, which appeared a short while later (2006), contained a new chapter devoted to “proper” medicine in the Third Reich, including its undoubted achievements in the struggle against cancer. My feeling was that a scientific book should not ignore the positive aspects of German medicine, even in the racist and totalitarian surroundings of Nazi Germany.

The brief text of the radio broadcasts (exactly 22 minutes per lecture!) dictated to a large extent the scope and appearance of the book that followed. No footnotes were necessary, and only a short selective bibliography, mainly in Hebrew, appeared at its end. Those constraints were relaxed somewhat in the English edition. A few notes were added and a brief bibliography in English and German was appended to each chapter. An effort was made, however, to preserve the survey-like character of the whole book, still intended to serve as an introduction for both students and educated people wishing to engage with an as yet neglected field of knowledge.

I have had the good fortune of enlisting my close friend, Elan Galper, to do the translation. Having studied medicine and taught English literature and history at Canadian and Israeli universities, he seemed an ideal man for the task. A modest stipend from the Yoran Sznycer Fund of Tel Aviv University, directed by Prof. Dinah Porat, allowed us to realize the plan.

Many other friends and colleagues in Israel and abroad have lent a helping hand and allowed me to use some of their findings in the Hebrew book. I would like to thank them again in the English edition:

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Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust Memorial and Documentation Authority, accorded important help to me. A research fellowship from Yad Vashem enabled me to spend a whole semester in its archives in Jerusalem under the auspices and guidance of its International Institute. The Institute's Director, Prof. David Bankier, did everything possible to assist me in enriching the quality and quantity of the sources needed to write some of the chapters in the book. These resources were particularly useful in compiling the chapters dealing with the Jewish "prisoner-doctors" in Auschwitz and with the criminal medical experiments. I would also like to mention the good advice given me by Prof. Yehuda Bauer, Prof. Israel Gutman, and the Chief Historian of the Institute, Prof. Dan Michman. In addition, Yad Vashem put at my disposal most of the photographs used in this volume.

It should be said, however, that the views expressed in my book, concerning the "Medicalization of the Holocaust" for example, do not necessarily reflect those of Yad Vashem.

I want to thank Magnes Press and its General Manager, Mr. Hai Tsabar, for their splendid work. They did their best to maintain the high standards which made this academic Institution famous in the last eighty years.

The book is dedicated to the memory of my beloved mother, Edith Lowitsch [born Margolinski] (1913-2008), who witnessed the beginning of Nazi barbarism, but was fortunate enough to leave Germany for Palestine in 1935 together with my future father, Helmut Fuss.

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