In memoriam of my family who were killed during the Holocaust with the six million:

> my great-grandmother Meryl Farber and my great-uncle Yehuda Farber, who were shot and killed in mass graves in a forest near Janova, Lithuania;
>
> my great-grandfather Shimon "Yuri" Diner and my great-grandmother Channa Diner, who were killed in the Dvinsk Ghetto in Latvia.

I honor the memory of my beloved grandfathers Dave Farber and Max Diner, who suffered these tragic losses.

I was their firstborn grandchild and I carry their stories told and untold.

My younger brothers were their pride and joy, a reminder of their younger masculine selves who survived pogroms and antisemitism.

They are remembered with love, and their legacy lives on in their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

—Tracey Farber, first author

To say that survivors were fortunate would not be fair. In not perishing with their family members, friends, and fellow Jews, these survivors were destined for what can, at the very least, be described as an uncertain future. More accurately, they were to live a life sometimes filled with boundless happiness, bottomless sadness, torturous guilt, an urge to die, and an urge to strive; destined to live with only death marking the end of their suffering.

Tracey's work opens our eyes to the suffering of so many, ensures that their suffering was not in vain, and documents the importance of the resilience that enables people to transcend incredible trauma. In recent years, I have seen how much energy Tracey has expended on seeing that good comes from evil, and that her years of pain gathering up stories of suffering contribute to a pool of knowledge that can help others overcome emotional challenges and live more functional lives. Just as Tracey's work has given me the opportunity to understand the processes that so many endured, I hope that this book will do the same for others.

Our Jewish history is littered with an endless stream of perpetrators of antisemitism who inflicted tremendous suffering on victims. Amongst these victims were my grandparents Jack and Rose Shankman and Shmuel and Sora Musikanth, who arrived in South Africa in the 1930s having preemptively escaped the Lithuanian pogroms that predated the arrival of the Einsatzgruppen. While my recollections of my grandparents are in some ways limited, they are always of happy times. In hindsight, my grandparents likely masked the terrible suffering of living with memories of childhoods destroyed by the sudden disappearance of parents. Only recently have I come to understand the incredible mental sacrifices they made to give me a stable foundation—as well as the bravery and strength they drew upon to protect me from their traumas.

They arrived in South Africa defeated, desolate, and for all purposes orphaned. Against all odds, and without the benefit of psychologists, social workers, or therapists, they made new lives for themselves and, one has to imagine, buried the past beneath their new lives. While I was fortunate to unearth remnants of their memories of Lithuania, the culture and traditions of their early years, although recreated to an extent in South Africa, was seldom mentioned. While

I regret having been spared the details of their loss, Tracey's work has shown me the value of their suffering and the extent of their bravery and strength in charting new lives.

Against incredible odds, my grandparents made lives worth living, as did millions of others. In building families on solid foundations, they made certain that their experience meant something. We, and generations to come, sit in their dust. May we forever remember their courage—and the anguish they must have felt—in allowing us our opportunities and freedom. May the memories of my grandparents, and all those who made similar journeys, be forever blessed.

—Jeff Shankman, community leader, Johannesburg

Figure 1. Rose and Jack Shankman.

Figure 2. Shmuel and Sora Musikanth.

This book is based on a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy in clinical psychology, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

A qualitative study was conducted into the long-term impact of the Holocaust on nine child survivors who were interviewed in their old age with a focus on how their life trajectory had shaped their engagement with the life tasks associated with "integrity versus despair." The survivors comprised a community rather than a clinical sample of individuals and consisted of those who volunteered to take part in the study on the basis of an invitation from a Jewish community leader. All of the participants had been interned in concentration camps for periods during their childhood or adolescent years and all were resident in South Africa at the time that they were interviewed. A case study method was employed to examine the experiences of aging survivors and extended, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were used to generate data on the following features: pre-Holocaust life and family of origin; Holocaust and concentration camp trauma exposure, impact, and coping; life post-liberation; and experiences of aging. Thematic analysis, informed broadly by psychodynamic theory, was used to extrapolate themes relating to trauma and resilience, and to understand how participants appeared to be navigating old age specifically in relation to Erikson's (1965) formulation of the life stage of "ego integrity versus despair."

Aspects of each participant's developmental trajectory were explored in order to better understand the impact of Holocaust trauma as experienced during the life stages of childhood or adolescence. Both within-case and across-case features were identified. Findings demonstrated that survivors who had stable attachments in early life seemed to be more resilient in their coping after liberation. Participants varied in their capacity to function adaptively for a range of reasons, but significantly many of those who had led apparently productive lives had employed repression, suppression, or compartmentalization to keep Holocaust-related recollections at bay. Responses to negotiating ego integration and despair fell on a continuum, with some participants evidencing the capacity to view their lives with a sense of acceptance and retrospective appreciation, and others experiencing extreme despair.

All survivors reported some symptoms consistent with complex traumatic stress. It was significant that all the participants have suffered with significant post-traumatic symptoms, such as depression and continuous PTSD, over their

lifetimes. These symptoms were visceral and deeply haunting. A ubiquitous finding was that all survivors expressed catastrophic grief for the loss of their parents and siblings enduring into the present, many decades after the Holocaust. This catastrophic grief had consequences for the structure of the self, for the quality of their interpersonal relationships, and for their spiritual relationship with religion and God. This impacted aging child survivors' experience of despair in old age in a profound way—the continuous unresolved grief led to a sense of existential loneliness. The findings of this study indicated that the burden of catastrophic grief was a defining theme in the life trajectories of child survivors and the present research identified a "trauma trilogy" that linked catastrophic grief to anger and survivor guilt contributing to their sense of despair in old age. Finally, the study examined the process of reflexivity, as this proved very significant in conducting the research, and also recommended potential interventions to better support aging child Holocaust survivors.

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Finally, we thank our beloved families and friends for their support during the writing of this book.

Foreword

This book finds itself placed within the ever-increasing data collected on various aspects of the Holocaust, its impact on survivors, perpetrators, and witnesses, both immediate and long-term, conveyed in numerous accounts, documentaries, film footages, movies, photographs, memoirs, biographies, and various forms of fiction. The Holocaust remains a significant and relevant topic with aspects still not fully recorded and/or the implications and impacts yet to be described. At this time, almost eighty years since the end of World War II, the generation of survivors, even those who were very young, are now dying out, adding to the poignancy and urgency of still collecting their stories and eyewitness experiences. Needless to say, engagement in this material remains extremely difficult by the nature of the horrors that were perpetrated. This is more particularly so in the light of the fact that this is not a product of imagination or fiction but reflective of true accounts of events that continue to amaze and shock generations who came afterwards, generations who were often fortunate not only to have escaped, but to be far from the survivors in time and space. It is nearly eighty years since the full horror of the mass extermination of six million European Jews became widely known. This crime, planned and executed largely during World War II by Hitler and his allies, has come to be known as the "Holocaust." There are and have been other mass murders of ethnic and religious populations but there are a number of reasons why this atrocity still burns and lives on in the minds

and memories of so many survivors and their children, across now at least four generations, as well as holding emblematic status in modern history. One of the horrors is not only the number and the scale of death, but the systematic, cold-blooded, planned, and ruthless nature of execution using modern methods on an industrial scale. Following on from this fact is that the survivors, near survivors, and the generations that came after them are spread throughout the Western World. These groups, of mainly European Jewish extraction, are largely articulate, sophisticated populations, who are psychologically aware, well-educated, and recognize the impact and long-term effects directly and indirectly in themselves and those who are near to them, as well as in those who more widely identify with the victims of the Holocaust.

The particular value of the work elaborated in this book is that it can be seen from both a research and a clinical lens, producing findings by way of eyewitness testimony and reports of profound personal experience. The accounts of child survivors find resonance with theories of lifespan development and the long-term effects of early trauma and the nature of resilience, and in addition, the findings of this research have produced relevant clinical and practical outcomes for survivors and their families. The book is written and produced by three talented, well-informed psychologists, all recognized for their clinical acumen and experience. Going deeper than the immediate brief of describing the nature of this particular horror of child Holocaust survivors, they provide valuable guidance and support for ongoing professional intervention with those who experience early and massive trauma by demonstrating the lifelong effects of this kind of traumatization. The individual case histories make moving and poignant stories. Herein lies the importance of, and difficulty with, the material. The strength and courage of the authors in exposing themselves to a number of years of immersion in these accounts and in engaging with the participants' current lives and their aging situation, with its own sets of emotional impact, is to be highly commended. Also, to be commended are the research assistants, who undoubtedly must have been deeply impacted in helping process the material. In reading these cases it is clear that the authors were sensitive to the individuals and able to hold them and their emotional reactions as they reexperienced, remembered, and described some of their ongoing nightmares, guilt, and terrible sadness at the loss of close family and communities, and in many cases of belief and hope in human nature and trust in the world. The writing shows that the interviews proved to be largely beneficial, or even therapeutic for the participants through the processing and containment of the material often previously never spoken of or told to others, even if therapy as such was not the aim of the project.

Once a clear picture has been drawn showing how the experiences of the children and adolescents would fit into current understandings of trauma, including the symptoms of trauma known as PTSD and those associated with complex and ongoing trauma (CPTSD), the authors further consider the lifelong consequences within an Eriksonian framework. Erik Erikson's theory of child and adult development, although developed and described shortly after World War II, remains one of the best-established theories of lifespan psychology. Using Erikson's theory as a base provides a well-established foundation from which to describe the participants' life courses, both clinically and in comparison, with normal expectable life trajectories in the context of the developmental crises individuals are usually required to navigate. One is thus able to compare how these participants were affected and irrevocably changed by their traumatic early life experiences.

A further strength of the research elaborated in the book is that it explores the Holocaust-related experiences and life trajectories of a group of nine participants, who met broad criteria in the sense that they were all exposed to similar Holocaust-related trauma, encompassing, massive, widespread, and most severe degrees of loss and horror. Within this collective group of nine child survivors, both individual differences and similarities can be shown. This highlights the understanding and provides confirmation that, although there are things in common across the group, each participant is also an individual. Their unique history, circumstances, and particular episodes of luck, as well as of misfortune, can be shown to play a part in their subsequent lives and how they were able to process their situations and attempted to make sense of what had happened to them. Furthermore, there are other findings of interest, which corroborate well-reported clinical facts. As an example, very few of the survivors sought professional psychological help after the war. It has been previously reported that often, rather than the direct survivors, it is the second or even the third generation of survivors who seek psychotherapy as they still find themselves plagued by parents' and grandparents' histories. This fact powerfully supports the clinical and theoretical understanding of the transgenerational transmission of trauma.

Publishing the body of a doctoral thesis in the form of a book makes the material available to a wide audience. As indicated, the text also includes some practical outcomes that may inform clinical practice, further research, and comprehension of the impact of other genocides. The book may assist in the training of clinical psychologists and mental health workers to work in more depth, with greater empathy, and hopefully with more containment, guided by the theory and backup provided from this work.

It is a privilege to write this foreword to an important contribution to the ever-accumulating worldwide literature on Holocaust and genocide impact and for a book that helps us to move forward in the recognition of past and prevention of future tragedies.

—Professor Diana Shmukler, PhD, associate professor (Wits.) and visiting professor of psychotherapy (UK), senior clinical psychologist, supervisor, and trainer (SA Medical and Dental Council), UKHPC (Health Professions Council, UK)

Preface

Tracey Farber

This book is based on PhD research that explored the experiences of aging Holocaust survivors who were children or adolescents during the Holocaust and who had been interned in concentration camps at least for some period. Since the study was retrospective in nature, aging survivors were interviewed about their pre-Holocaust life as young children and special focus was given to the loss and trauma that they endured during the Holocaust. Their adjustment post-liberation was of interest, most specifically the way in which the Holocaust appeared to have impacted them in the final developmental phase of "integrity versus despair," as described by Erikson (1982). "Integrity versus despair" is the developmental stage whereby aging people look back at their lives and seek to integrate their experiences and make meaning. This retrospective view leads to a sense of wisdom and acceptance, or a sense of despair. At the time of the research interviews all of the child survivors interviewed for the purposes of the study were in this eighth stage of "integrity versus despair," and the impact of Holocaust trauma was understood within this context.

I completed the doctorate on which the book is based in Johannesburg in 2019. I worked full time as a psychologist in private practice while completing this research. Working as a clinical psychologist in Johannesburg, I had specialized in practicing as a psychodynamically oriented individual psychotherapist and also in the treatment of trauma. This included seeing victims of car hijacks,

house invasion, rapes, and robberies. I also worked on a long-term basis with victims of child abuse and second-generation Holocaust survivors. My choice to embark on Holocaust research was influenced by being Jewish and of Ashkenazi lineage. I grew up in Johannesburg with two traumatized grandfathers who had left Eastern Europe before the Holocaust; I was interested in the Holocaust on a personal and professional level.

The seeds of this book were sown many decades ago in Johannesburg. As a young child I watched my two grandfathers playing cards at the dining room table and I heard them speaking Yiddish, as they sipped on black tea with strawberry jam. I watched them speaking in an animated way, in a language that had a beautiful sound but I didn't understand a word. They both called me "Trace-kela," a Yiddish diminutive of my name that no one has called me before or since. I knew I belonged—they had put their stamp and the sounds of their Eastern European accents—on my English name. I felt connected to them and to their culture, and this sense of identification made me want to know about their families. My journey to understand my lost great-grandparents who had been killed in the Holocaust led me to this research. In an effort to prepare for this research I met survivors in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Tel Aviv, and Buenos Aires. In addition, I went to visit Warsaw, and Auschwitz and Majdanek concentration camps in Poland.

After completing my PhD research on child concentration camp survivors, I felt compelled to write a book so that their stories could be widely read. It was a privilege to meet with nine elderly child survivors who had endured the horrors of the concentration camps in their childhood/adolescence. They shared their stories with me with such honesty, intensity, and generosity. I collected seventy-four hours of taped testimony and was deeply disturbed by the horror and loss that they had endured. However, I was also greatly inspired by the stories of love and connection that they shared about their families who had been killed by the Nazis. Many also shared the compassionate humanity of the righteous gentiles who saved them. I found myself to be a witness to their trauma and loss and their stories will forever be etched on my soul. At the same time, I was also a witness to their capacity to adapt and survive and rebuild their lives after the Holocaust. It was a testament to their resilience and fortitude; their stories were deeply moving and I was absorbed in understanding their resilience. As aging people looking back at their lives, I was able to hear both the wisdom that they had gleaned and the sense of meaning they had salvaged as well as their despair about their losses, particularly of family members, whom they continued to mourn for several decades after the Holocaust. I felt I wanted to share the wealth of knowledge and wisdom as well as the stories so that this knowledge could be