Judy Baumel
Tabenkin 4
Ramat Gan, ISRAEL

Mr. Edwin Black
USA

Dear Edwin,

Re: An Open Letter about IBM and the Holocaust

In a summer issue of *the Jerusalem Report,* I wrote an article about Edwin Black and his book *IBM and the Holocaust* (Crown, 2001). This article was to be based on interviews and my own historical expertise. The editorial process is complex, involving many drafts. Unfortunately, my final published article included errors and misstatements, which need to be corrected and/or clarified. The publication itself has already pulled this article from its website and archive. This letter should be my final word on my article.

1. First and foremost, quotes in my article from historian Peter Hayes and Omer Bartov respectively dismissed *IBM and the Holocaust* as "padded and sloppy," and "undocumented conjecture." I added other narrative comments asserting the book contained "factual inaccuracies" and "imprecise accounts."

To clarify: I have never found any evidence or documentation that *IBM and the Holocaust* contains any "padded or sloppy" content, "undocumented conjecture," "factual inaccuracies" or "imprecise accounts" regarding Hollerith machines. While my article only quoted negative reviews, the majority of historian comments have indeed been laudatory.

2. My article stated: "And when critics of his best-selling book charge that he bases his case on sloppy research, **he counters that they're just jealous.**" Later in the text, "… Are scholars who are panning the book actually just jealous of his success, **as he would like us to think**…" My article also quoted Edwin Black as saying, **"Of course they [historians] hate me, it's a bestseller."**

To clarify: The first sentence -- the "introduction" to the review -- was written by a *Jerusalem Report* editor, based on the sentence in my review that reads "Are scholars who are panning the book actually just jealous of his success, as he would like us to think..." Mr. Black never stated of his critics "they're just jealous." Moreover, Mr. Black never stated to me that historians are jealous of him or hate him and emphasized that he has many excellent day-to-day social and professional relationships with historians.

3. My article stated: "In agreement with Crown, his publishers, during the months before publication, Black had his IBM manuscript sent to 35 readers throughout the world, some of them historians, others research experts, to get pre-publication feedback."

To clarify: there was no such agreement with Crown. Edwin Black undertook the widespread international pre-publication review process on his own initiative with no input from Crown, and at his own expense.

4. My article stated: Among the dozens of experts who agreed to join the secrecy pact surrounding the book, **why was there only one world-caliber expert on the history of Nazi Germany - Prof. Shlomo Aronson, of the** Hebrew University … and **the glaring absence of most of the prominent Holocaust scholars - both in Israel and abroad - among his list of advance readers."**

To clarify: For any author to submit his book to literally dozens of historians and experts for pre-publication scrutiny is exceptional. Clearly, among his publicly available list of pre-publications readers, there are indeed several historians world-caliber in their field including but not limited to Gerhard Hirschfeld, President of the International Committee for the History of the Second World War; Robert Wolfe, former Chief National Archives expert for captured German records and Nuremberg documentation; Franciszek Piper, historian, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum; and Shlomo Aronson, Hebrew University. In addition, there were many internationally respected niche historians and experts, including but not limited to Greg Bradsher, Holocaust-Era assets expert, National Archives; Bob Moore, University of Sheffield, author of *Victims and Survivors: The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands, 1940-1945;* Erik Somers, historian, Netherlands Institute for War Documentation; Robert Paxton, professor emeritus, Columbia University author with Michael Marrus of *Vichy France and The Jews*; Henry Mayer, chief archivist, US Holocaust Museum. More names, as well their endorsements, can be found on the author's website and in the book's Acknowledgements. In addition to the 35 who agreed to read the manuscript, the author telephoned or emailed many others offering them the same opportunity. Among them was Christopher Browning, Peter Hayes, Michael Marrus, and Yoav Gelber, but these Holocaust historians were either unwilling, or did not have the time. The author required each reader to scrutinize every page of the manuscript involving weeks and sometimes months of review—which all his readers did.

5. My article stated: "**Black's advance publicity raises a number of questions that historians have already addressed. Finally there is the ongoing high-profile publicity campaign, which has seen his book go through nine printings since its debut."** My article also stated there were: "**dozens of publishers in 40 countries prepared for the February 12 publication date."**

To clarify: There was no advance publicity. All the scholars working with the author for years before publication were sworn to secrecy and the book was embargoed by the publisher. This is well-known. The publisher therefore sacrificed all the benefits of advance publicity and retail placement. In addition, there is no "on-going publicity campaign." Crown issued a single press release, and provided the author a publicist for one week in February. The author does not solicit interviews and did not solicit the interview with me. Crown went to press with a single 100,000 run, not nine reprints. There were of course not dozens of publishers involved in 40 countries, but only nine, which are named in the Acknowledgements. Since publication of my article, two more have been added: Japanese and Hungarian.

6. My article stated: "A closer look at the furious historical debate over Black's book deals not with the publicity backdrop but with the contents and conclusions**. A**

major point involves Black's insinuation that the Final Solution could not have taken place without IBM technology…"

To clarify: I reviewed this very issue with the author in a telephone call. The author denied this misreading and read aloud to me the following phrase from p.11 of his Introduction. *"Make no mistake. The Holocaust would still have occurred without IBM. To think otherwise is more than wrong. The Holocaust would have proceeded—and often did proceed—with simple bullets, death marches, and massacres based on pen and paper persecution. But there is reason to examine the fantastical numbers Hitler achieved in murdering so many millions so swiftly, and identify the crucial role of automation and technology."* This same point can be read on the author's website. Several reviewers have taken special note of this stance in Black's book—so it is well-known. When the author read his p.11 statement to me over the phone, I acknowledged to him that any claim that Black asserted, "the Final Solution could not have taken place without IBM technology" was indeed a misreading of his book, adding "That clears it up."

7. My article stated: **These and other historians go on to claim that Hollerith machines may have existed in several camps, but they were usually used to calculate wages for SS personnel.**

To clarify: Claims that IBM machines were used in a concentration camp to calculate SS wages has actually only appeared in one place, a New York-area newspaper, and this was claimed by a single historian Omar Bartov, not several historians. Bartov wrote not about plural camps but only one camp, Dachau. Edwin Black disputed this assertion—and several others made by Bartov, when the review came out, saying there was not a shred of Nazi-era documentation anywhere even suggesting that machines in the massive Hollerithbunker at Dachau were used for SS wages. The managing editor of the newspaper asked for documentation on the Dachau claim and received none. Thereupon the newspaper published the author's letter of correction without rebuttal or reply. The published letter of correction in the newspaper stated: "*We have been unable to locate a single historian, survivor, archivist, or editor anywhere who can produce even one Nazi-era document, oral testimony, or memoir to support many of Bartov's assertions. Indeed, we found new documents, which only strengthen the book's documentation and make Bartov's statements even more impossible to justify. For example, Mr. Bartov flatly states that the Hollerith machines at Dachau were used only for payroll. No one at Dachau's archives—nor anyone else we contacted—knows of any document to support this notion."* When this letter used the word "editor," it included the editors of the newspaper. Nor do I have any documentation that supports the claim that IBM machines at Dachau were used to calculate wages.

9. My article stated: **In both the introduction and his rebuttals**, Black reminds readers and critics **that he draws heavily on an earlier article dealing** with IBM's Holocaust involvement, written by **technological expert David Luebke** and the late historian Sybil Milton, and appearing in 1994 in the IEEE Annals of the History of Computing. A closer look at the Luebke-Milton article, though, shows a somewhat different set of conclusions. **Agreeing that Watson was not an ideological Nazi sympathizer but more a greedy capitalist**, the authors state that the Holocaust was not truly facilitated by the availability of IBM census-taking technologies, as Black would

like to have us think, and that Hollerith technology was only incidental to the Final Solution.

To clarify: Edwin Black has never reminded any readers or critics, in his "Introduction or rebuttals" or in any other forum, that he drew heavily or relied upon the Milton-Luebke article. It's simply not true. His Introduction is at his website under Excerpts. The Milton-Luebke article is never mentioned anywhere in the book, except routinely in a brief bibliographical sketch at the end of the book. David Luebke is not a "technological expert," he is a professor of central European history at the University of Oregon, previously with USHMM. In their article, there is no mention of Watson—as a greedy capitalist or otherwise, and no such conclusion. For perspective sake, note what the authors say about their own very pioneering and highly speculative work: "*The precise role played by punched-card tabulation technology remains a matter of speculation."* This vanguard article was published not in a Holocaust journal but an electronics journal, that is the Journal of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. The full text of the authors' own summary appears online at the IEEE site http://www.computer.org/annals/an1994/a3025abs.htm. It states:

"This article shows how a variety of administrative tools - including two national censuses, a system of resident registration, and several special racial databases - were used to locate groups eventually slated for deportation and death, as well as the possible role played in this process by Hollerith tabulation technology. … While the 'final solution' was in no sense caused by the availability of sophisticated census-taking and tabulation technologies, concrete evidence suggests that Hollerith machines rationalized the management of concentration camp labor, an important element in the Nazi program of "extermination through work. "

It should be noted that the journal article co-author Luebke himself was one of Edwin Black's pre-publication readers. On publication of the book, Luebke issued the following public statement: *"IBM and the Holocaust is an important and path-breaking book. Edwin Black is the first to recount the full scope of IBM's many entanglements with the Nazi regime: its efforts to remain in Hitler's good graces despite his escalating persecutions of German Jews; IBM's efforts to retain control over its German subsidiary, Dehomag; and the corporation's campaign to preserve a near-monopoly over tabulation technology in Europe well after the outbreak of war in 1939. Just as important, Black exposes the many ways in which Nazi authorities abused Hollerith technology to facilitate the destruction of European Jewry-from the tabulation of racial census data to the exploitation of concentration camp prisoners and "Extermination through Work."*

It is also relevant that Sybil Milton, until her untimely death, herself was one of Edwin Black's leading supporters in his work. Indeed, during his research, Sybil Milton wrote a letter, that I have seen, to IBM chairman Lou Gerstner demanding the company open its archives to Edwin Black. In her letter, she described Edwin Black in these words: "I have known Mr. Black since the early 1980s. His previous studies have focussed on Holocaust era finances and Jewish affairs and speak for themselves. He is thorough and fair in his analysis and writing."

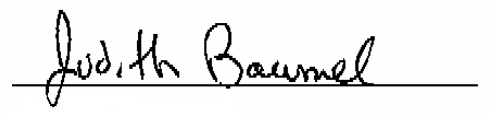
10. My article stated: "Finally, there is the veil of secrecy surrounding the procedure he used in providing advance review copies to historians, and **the glaring absence of most of the prominent Holocaust scholars - both in Israel and abroad - among his list of advance readers. This strange type of pre-publication "peer**

review," in which the readers are chosen by Black, raises more than a few questions about the book's reliability. <u>Having spoken to several of them after they had read the book, I found that they all overlapped on one point: that Black took an interesting subject and built it up beyond proportion, probably in order to tell a better story.</u>

<u>To clarify:</u> I did not speak to any of Edwin Black's pre-publication readers.

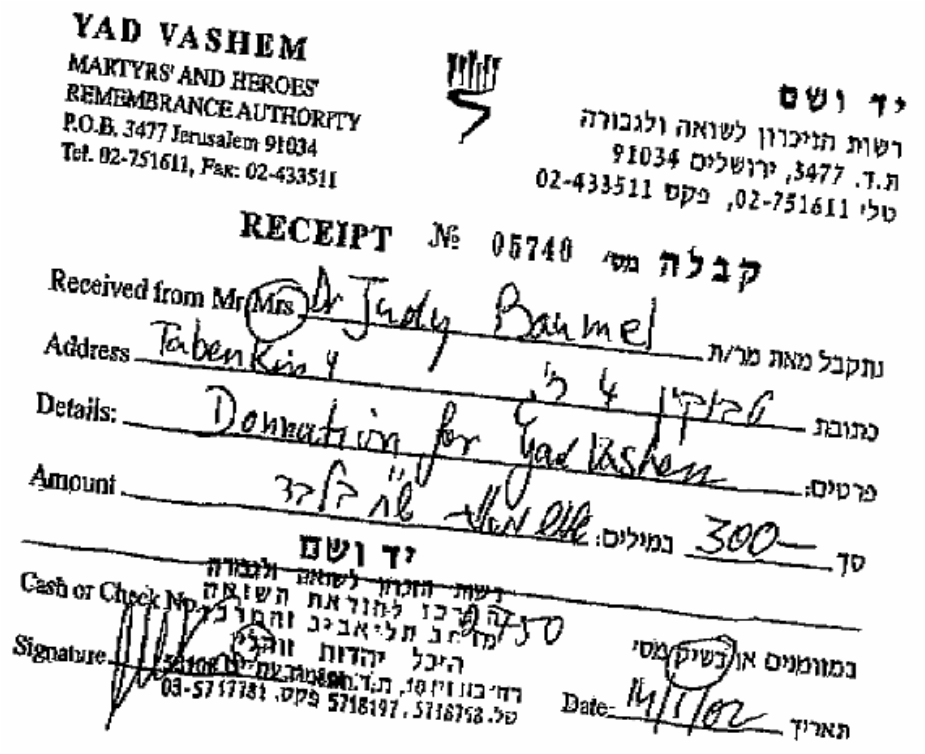
11. My sidebar to the article stated: "Black can move from being on the attack to sounding emotionally fragile, such as when his voice cracks when he speaks about the devastation caused by the Nazis. It is hard to know whether one is dealing with a mournful representative of the 'second generation' or a consummate performer who knows just when to cut from IBM statistics to tearful pathos."

I apologize: At no time did I ever have any intention of my phrasing being understood derogatorily and I apologize to Edwin Black if it was understood as such. No son of survivors deserves the unfortunate description of being called a "consummate performer", I should not have written it, it was surely misunderstood, and I do not believe Edwin Black is any way insincere when reflecting on the horrors of the Holocaust.



Judith Baumel
Tel Aviv
January 14, 2002

[Incidental to her retraction and apology Judith Baumel has donated 300 shekels to Yad Vashem, representing the editorial fee she received from the Jerusalem Report for the article. Attached is Yad Vashem receipt no. 05740, dated January 14, 2002 for $300 shekels. *--Edwin Black]*



YAD VASHEM
MARTYRS' AND HEROES'
REMEMBRANCE AUTHORITY
P.O.B. 3477 Jerusalem 91034
Tel. 02-751611, Fax: 02-433511

יד ושם
רשות הזיכרון לשואה ולגבורה
ת.ד. 3477, ירושלים 91034
טל' 02-751611, פקס 02-433511

RECEIPT № 05740 קבלה מס'

Received from Mr/Mrs Dr Judy Baumel נתקבל מאת מר/ת
Address Taben Kis 4 כתובת
Details: Donation for Yad Vashem פרטים:
Amount 300 סך במילים:

יד ושם

Cash or Check No. במזומנים או בשיק מס'
Signature
Date תאריך

The Jerusalem Report

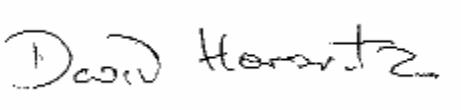
October 10, 2001

Attn: Edwin Black
From: David Horovitz
By fax

Dear Edwin,

I am glad we have been able to resolve this matter professionally and amicably. As soon as you expressed your concerns, we immediately removed the Baumel article from our website.

All my best to you in the future.



David Horovitz,
Editor, The Jerusalem Report

P.O.B. 1805, Jerusalem 91017, Israel

Edwin Black
www.edwinblack.com

October 10, 2001

David Horovitz, editor
Jerusalem Report
P.O. Box 1805
Jerusalem Israel 91017

Dear David:

Thank you for your prompt and professional response regarding Judith Baumel's article on my book, *IBM and the Holocaust*, and for publishing my letter of correction in your recent issue. I note that the article is no longer on your website. Thank you for resolving this issue between myself and the *Jerusalem Report*. I wish the *Jerusalem Report* well.

Best wishes,
edwin black