

Black Book of Soviet Jewry, the

A book, originally compiled during World War II by well-known Soviet Jewish writers Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman, about the crimes committed by the Nazis in the Soviet Union. The *Black Book* includes personal statements and documents such as letters, diary excerpts, and descriptions that were contributed by Soviet writers and poets who were either Jewish survivors of the Holocaust or non-Jewish eyewitnesses. According to the book's subtitle, the book deals with "the ruthless murder of Jews by fascist German invaders throughout the temporarily occupied regions of the Soviet Union and in the extermination camps of Poland during the war of 1941 to 1945."

In 1943 Ehrenburg decided to publish a book of testimony about the Nazi persecutions of Soviet Jewry. By late 1944 the book's first draft was complete; at that time Ehrenburg published pieces of the book in a two-volume work called *Merder fun Felker*, which translates as *Murder of Peoples*. In early 1945 he gave the composition to the Soviet Jewish Antifascist Committee, which modified the manuscript and made additions. In 1946 copies of the revised manuscript were sent to The United States, Romania, and Israel. Parts of the manuscript were published in English in the United States in a book called *Black Book*, which dealt with the extermination of all of European Jewry. Parts were also published in Romania in 1946. According to Ehrenburg, the book was also printed in the Soviet Union, but the manuscript and the entire edition were destroyed in 1948 when the Jewish Antifascist Committee was dissolved.

The copy of the manuscript that had been sent to Israel (which was missing the chapter on Lithuania) was given to Yad Vashem in 1965. The book was published in Russian in 1980, in English in 1981, in Yiddish in 1984, and in Hebrew in 1991. The Yiddish version included a redone chapter on Lithuania. In the mid 1980s Ehrenburg's daughter passed on his archive to Yad Vashem which included most of the material on which the Black Book was based and much material that Ehrenburg did not include in the book.

