CARTIER BRESSON'S LE RETOUR, OR, WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE

Stuart Liebman

Henri Cartier-Bresson's well-known theorization of his photographic practice - what has since become branded by the shopworn phrase "the decisive moment" - proposes the image as a geometric spatial construction in which gestures, persons and narrative congeal in a quantum of time virtually without temporal extension. On the flat surface of such a photograph all pictorial elements - shapes, spaces, tones, postures, gazes, demeanors - converge in a compelling structure to articulate and illuminate the crucial heart of an event. The pregnant indexical image suspends the "before" and "after" of historical time in a continuous present; history nevertheless continues to haunt the picture from just outside its margins. The triangulated transaction between the photographer, the world and the spectator is completed when a viewer perceives the print in a glance, in a flash of recognition itself existing almost outside time¹.

In this conception, the unfolding of a plastic configuration of spaces and bodies in time into an anecdote, can only appear as a fall from the state of tense, but graceful equilibrium which is the decisive moment. That is certainly the implication one often encounters in comments by the great photographer's epigones, who unfortunately use it as a criterion to diminish the stature of the films Cartier-Bresson made. Consider, for example, remarks by Pierre Assouline, Cartier-Bresson's principal biographer, when he invidiously compares a scene Cartier-Bresson's camera team recorded in Dessau, Germany for his 1945 film, Le Retour, and the celebrated still the master himself shot as the action was taking place. The circumstances are these: A female collaborator is being interrogated at a Displaced Persons camp while a large crowd of former inmates looks on. A woman presumably a former victim - sullenly listens; suddenly, she lashes out in rage while the audience silently watches. Cartier-Bresson captured the moment of maximum intensity with his Leica, while his colleagues filmed the scene as the drama mounted, then exploded, over several minutes from a few different vantage points. Many appear in the final, edited version. The photograph, Assouline observes,

is striking to start with because of its composition, superbly structured by an invisible diagonal that runs from the cold expression of the interrogator below right, through the shifty look of the suspect in the centre, to the accusing stance of the internee above left. Then there is the violence that leaps out of the picture. The whole image possesses absolute clarity, with each figure fixed in his or her pose, which accentuates the movement of the avenging woman's arm. Finally, there are the expressions of the people themselves: the grimace of the avenger, the instinctive self-protection of the one who is being attacked, the mixture of joy, fear and indifference in the crowd. All these things rush past too quickly in a film to be seen properly, but a photograph freezes them forever [...]. The two forms can scarcely be compared...²

Cartier's powerful photograph of this wrenching moment is deservedly famous. But one need not even have seen the film Assouline treats so summarily to notice that he does not make the slightest effort to describe what this sequence in Cartier-Bresson's film looks like or how the several shots work in context. Why, then, his unexplained, disparaging critical comments and the breezy declaration that the two versions cannot be compared? He is remarkably vague, moreover, about the complex goals pursued by the film, and the circumstances in which it was conceived and produced get surprisingly short shrift. Quite astoundingly, despite the fact that Cartier-Bresson worked assiduously on Le Retour for more than six months, Assouline even goes so far as to suggest that Cartier-Bresson was indifferent to the way his film was shot and structured. "As he had a team of technicians at his disposal", Assouline notes, "he left it to them to implement his instructions, which allowed him the freedom to take his photographs" (ASSOULINE, 2005: 138). His casual dismissal leaves unexplored the film's history, its importance as a historic document and work of art in its own right3, the photographer's commitment to his project, and, finally, the more important problems compromising his cinematic achievement. In account such as Assouline's, we can never reach a decisive moment of judgment of this still under-researched and underestimated film.

hed into the borders of the foundering Reich, and his offer was accepted. On September 2, 1944, he was recognized as a member of the Mouvement National des Prisonniers et Deportés. By September 8, he received authorization to work on a film about returning prisoners from the Syndicat des Techniciens de la Production Cinématographique. On September 12, the Director General of the Ministère des Prisonniers, Deportés et Refugiés (hereafter MPDR) issued "Ordre de mission no. 56" which permitted the photographer to travel unhindered in the liberated territories so that he could take still and moving pictures of returning POWS, forced

Cartier-Bresson captured the moment of maximum intensity with his Leica, while his colleagues filmed the scene

Le Retour's history may be said to begin with Cartier-Bresson's own experience as a long-term POW. Captured in the late Spring of 1940, he escaped a German labor camp in February, 1943. Eighteen months later, after he had clandestinely resumed his photographic work, Paris was liberated in late August. Present during the giddy celebrations, Cartier-Bresson volunteered to accompany Allied troops as they pus-

and voluntary laborers, and deportees⁴. Paillole, the Director of (French) Military Security, as well as the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces had no objections.

This rapid sequence of approvals was animated, no doubt, by the nascent French government's desire to document their efforts to assist the return of millions of French prisoners amidst the chaos while the Allies defeated





Nazi Germany. The reincorporation of French captives from Germany and Eastern Europe, in fact, lay at the center of its struggle to reconstitute and reconcile the nation. The sense of urgency was particularly acute in the MPDR headed by Henri Frenay, who sought to allay the anxieties of hundreds of thousands in France who were awaiting the return of their loved ones from Germany and beyond⁵. Lacking sufficient resources and personnel, Frenay appealed to Les Services Americains d'Information, a section of the Office of War Information, for its support of a film that would convey French repatriation initiatives to home audiences. An American producer, Noma Ratner, was appointed to secure the funding. These were evidently late in coming, and the start of principal filming seems to have been delayed until at least April, 1945, after many of the Western camps had been liberated and prisoners were already streaming toward France⁶. This late start decisively shifted the film's focus away from the detainees' treatment in the camps to the governmental measures to bring them home.

Two Americans - a Captain Krimsky and Lt. Richard Banks - as well as additional support staff were hired to assist Cartier-Bresson. The available documents I have seen do not make clear precisely when these individuals joined the team or what roles they played during production7. Nor do we know when the journalist, poet, Communist Party member, and former internee Claude Roy was hired to write the script. A statement he had published on September 9, 1944, however, clearly expressed sentiments in keeping with the spirit of Cartier-Bresson's project as well as the thrust of the French government policies the film was intended to dramatize. Roy supported what he called a "liberated cinema" that would leave its ivory tower and the constraints of the Occupation. "What freedom will perhaps allow us would be [...] a cinema of reality [...] in which we could find the image of our adventures and our challenges, of our struggles and our joys". No current struggle or potential joy was more pressing than ensuring the safe return of France's sons and daughters from captivity.

Undoubtedly, preliminary conversations about the themes and shape of the film began even before the arrival of production monies. Although Cartier-Bresson always insisted on his complete independence, certain ideas probably emerged following discussions with the sponsoring agencies (DRAME, 2007: 50). The general aim was to portray prisoners and forced laborers not primarily as abject victims, but as returning heroes. However, it is unlikely any script could have been completed until Cartier-Bresson edited a rough cut

Still frames (screenshots) of Le Retour. / Courtesy of Fondation Henry Cartier Bresson



over the summer of 1945. Their inability to film the liberation of the camps, must have led to an early decision to sketch the vile conditions in which prisoners had lived by using Allied pooled footage of the camps freed in April and early May9. Some of these shots had already been shown in newsreels. Such representations, however, were highly controversial and had to be treated delicately so as not to offend the sensibilities of French families still awaiting loved ones or already dealing with the psychological and social consequences of their return¹⁰. The images Cartier-Bresson chose, however painful they surely must have been (and still are) to watch, were therefore among the more anodyne available11. The initially grim mood of the opening shots, however, was quickly dispelled by the next sequence, derived from the same filmed sources, in which prisoners at several different camps rapturously greeted their liberators. The emotional rhythm then shifted again with shots of limping or emaciated figures but these, in turn, give way to images of ill victims smiling stoically from their hospital beds as they are tended by physicians¹². This first and shortest section of the entire three-part, thirty-two minute film lasts nine minutes.

The second section begins with columns of prisoners jauntily ambling down German roads on their way home. It was here that Cartier-Bresson's team attempted at first hand to capture, in Roy's words, "the image of our adventures and our challenges". Most prisoners, however, were simply too physically depleted to complete the journey; they were forced to established unsanitary, makeshift rest sites the voiceover narrator insensitively likens to Gypsy encampments. They offered little support for ill or weak individuals. From the Allies' point of view, moreover, the prisoners' impulsive treks created a major, potentially embarrassing crisis: the former prisoners' haphazard wanderings not only jeopardized their health, they threatened widespread disease and also impeded the movement of troops and

war materiel to the front. The governments needed to take control of the repatriation process for these reasons as well as for very real security concerns.

The central section of Le Retour, approximately ten minutes long, lays out these crucial messages, stressing the need for caution, prudence and patience by explaining the reasons for the delays government intervention would cause. Key scenes in Cartier-Bresson's film dramatize the wisdom of the creation of DP camps and strict quarantine policies, which were deemed essential to organizing more efficient forms of transportation home amidst the extraordinary chaos of Europe in the Spring of 1945. The sheer scale of the problems encountered emerges in a listing of the many millions of former prisoners - 2.4 million Russians, 1.5 million Poles, 1.75 million Balts, 2.1 million French, etc. - crisscrossing the continent on their ways home. They had to be nourished, receive medical attention and be disinfected with DDT. All these processes required enormous commitments from personnel who were learning on the job, working for a new bureaucracy that inevitably slowed, even as it guaranteed the safety of the repatriation process. As the voiceover narration insists, the camps and procedures created a "zone where thousands rediscovered hope".

Interestingly, this reassuring message is flanked by two sequences stressing the need for vigilance in unmasking former collaborators and criminal perpetrators mixing with the flood of their former victims13. The first is the scene at the DP camp in Dessau described above. The edited construction of this event contains eight shots and is in two parts. The first five establish the outdoor courtroom scene as various suspects are assembled in long shot. Then, a woman in mannish, military garb is escorted to a table in medium shot. The camera shifts to a higher angle and the next shot employs a longer lens to get even closer to the action. The shot's framing closely matches Cartier-Bresson's famous photo. A woman in a black dress glimpsed at the edge of the crowd in two prior shots has now drawn near to the suspect; rage clearly building in her eyes, she suddenly strikes her. Cut to a long shot of a dense line of witnesses watching intently. The first two shots of the second, three part section approach a male suspect being interrogated, although without the violent blow; it, too, concludes with a long shot of massed onlookers. The denouement in violence is present in both the still and the cinematic version but, pace Assouline, I find the filmed sequence in some ways even more compelling than the still. The cinematic syntax is disarmingly familiar as it proceeds in measured steps to the unexpected eruption of violence. With each step closer, the tension builds, especially since each shot reveals that the woman in black, as if via a jump cut, has moved closer to the accused. And because of the duration - albeit brief

Still frames (screenshots) of *Le Retour*. / Courtesy of Fondation Henry Cartier Bresson









Still frames (screenshots) of Le Retour. / Courtesy of Fondation Henry Cartier Bresson

- of the shot in which she strikes the alleged criminal, the audience - despite what Assouline asserts -is able to see, in a flash of real time, the rage welling up in her eyes that is only released in her blow14. The editing is sophisticated and assured in its subtle variation on standard editing practice. In the careful way it builds to a dramatic climax, the cinematic account is every bit as compelling as Cartier's Bresson's famous still image of the scene. A film, after all, is not simply a compilation of geometrically composed stills, nor should it be. It is a temporal art constructing events in a duration marked by varying degrees of tension. A film's artistic value is in no way diminished, certainly, by the lack of precise geometric compositions; indeed, such strategies may detract from the fresh sense of life caught unawares in its myriad variety that Cartier-Bresson prized so much and realized in his cinema.

As I have already suggested, many sequences in *Le Retour* may be said to continually build and release tensions rooted in supposedly impromptu events caught on the fly by the cinema-

tographers: the desperate condition of some prisoners gives way to joyous celebrations upon their liberators' arrival. Illness and desperation are sketched, then overcome. The cocky march of prisoners going home yields to their weakness, and so on. Many of these are forecast, amplified or ironized by the canny soundtrack composed by Robert Lannoy, another French former POW¹⁵.

The third section, approximately eleven minutes long, represents the film's emotional peak and culminates in the joyous return of the captives to France. The rappel à l'ordre imposed by government authorities has worked. Restored by their stays in the transit camps, prisoners by the thousands - the sick and the maimed as well as the merely haggard - are efficiently returned by trains and airplanes, to Le Bourget airport or the Gare d'Orsay. They are greeted by masses of cheering compatriots. Not insignificantly, Cartier-Bresson included an outsize portrait of General DeGaulle in one of the shots where the veterans registered. DeGaulle's image symbolized the watchful eyes of the French government as it carefully monitored the vital procedures shown in considerable detail. The climax is reserved for the very end, when families and friends nervously await a glimpse of their loved ones as they leave the station. Some ask timid questions and receive evasive shrugs. Stoic or weary expressions ultimately give way, however, to unbridled emotions. A lucky mother hugs her son; a man weeps in his friend's embrace; husbands, wives and lovers hug each other, cheek to cheek. These shots were taken in early April by Pierre Renoir, though it may be that Cartier-Bresson did specifically ask his old friend for certain kinds of shots with the conclusion of his film already in mind¹⁶. A viewer is left with an impression of a hard-won, deeply moving reunion of individuals, managed by the state, that would serve as a model for the national social reconciliation the government hoped to engineer. So, what is wrong with this picture? Certainly, the film's flaws have little to do with its confident, subtle aesthetic design. Rather, they are conceptual. Briefly stated, Cartier-Bresson and his collaborators too readily adopted the



Still frames (screenshots) of *Le Retour.* / Courtesy of Fondation Henry Cartier Bresson

discursive framework erected by the French government at the time. Eager to bring the massive purge of collaborators to a halt and facilitate political reconciliation, the government strongly promoted a homogenized account of the war's victims. They preferred upbeat portrayals of survivors as combatants and heroes, which was certainly true of many former POWs and political deportees. But the same cannot be meaningfully said of the thousands of women and children termed "racial deportees," namely the Jews who received "special treatment" at Auschwitz and other camps. In fact, neither the word "Jew" nor the names Auschwitz, Birkenau or Treblinka where Jews were murdered en masse were ever mentioned in Roy's commentary. The tone was struck in the very first voiceover one hears:

...Germany yesterday [was]... an immense prison in the heart of Europe whose frontiers were prison fences. Into this immense prison the Gestapo threw victims by the millions.

The Nazis tortured and exploited six million prisoners of war and fifteen mi-

llion forced workers and adversaries of Fascism, Hitler's captives condemned to slow death in a concentration camp or tragic death by torture in the gas chambers and by cremation. ...The Germans sought to degrade their souls by breaking their bodies, and if this did not succeed, death followed. Only one tenth of all political prisoners called political deportees survived¹⁷.

The last claim is exaggerated. As Annette Wieviorka notes, 63,085 persons, including hostages, resisters, political opponents and common criminals were deported to concentration camps from France. Of these 37,025 - that is 59% -survived. By contrast, 75,721 French and foreign-born Jews were shipped to centers of extermination in the East, and only 2500 - 3.3% - returned to their homes at the war's end. The figures simply do not add up; they create a fiction of a common fate that was not shared (WIEVIORKA, 1992: 20-21). It is true, of course, that much confusion about the victims reigned during this early period. As Olga Wormser-Migot reports, the lists of those deported were incomplete; fleeing Gestapo functionaries destroyed arrest files. Many of the vulnerable remained in hiding; many more unknowns had died in the camps. Firm numbers were hard to obtain and in constant flux¹⁸. In this respect, *Le Retour*'s submerging of the special identity of Jewish victims into the mass of interned soldiers, forced as well as voluntary laborers, and political prisoners was very much in step with government propaganda policy. Like other news accounts and newsreels published up to the moment of the film's release in November, 1945, *Le Retour* adopted blinders that distorted historical facts¹⁹.

Nevertheless, there *was* at least an incipient awareness that Jews had not been prisoners like any others²⁰. Many "ordinary" prisoners had been killed and many others had died in the camps, but no other group shared the Jews' special fate. The public's perception of that fate would only slowly be augmented, first as the Nuremberg Trials unfolded their startling revelations, and then as more candid films made abroad were shown in France. *Le Retour*, one might charitably say, was completed too soon to embrace that candor. ■

Notes

- * Editor's Note: This essay was originally published in L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos, num. 12, in July 2011 under the Spanish title "El Retorno, de Cartier-Bresson, o algo no cuadra en esta fotografía" (translated by Fernando Medina Gálvez). The pictures that illustrate it have been provided voluntarily by the author. L'Atalante is grateful to Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson for its permission to publish still photographs from Le Retour as well as to Contacto Agencia de Fotografía for the print of Magnum's Photo taken by Bresson (for more information: www.henrycartierbresson.org, www.contactophoto.com and www.magnumphotos.com).
- 1 First enunciated in an epigram to his introduction to *Images à la sauvette* (Paris: Verve, 1952), the phrase became a slogan when translated in the English-language edition, *The Decisive Moment* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1952). Reprinted many times, it is most accessible now in English in Henri Cartier-Bresson, *The Mind's Eye: Writings on Photography and Photographers* (New York: Aperture, 1999), pp. 20-43. The emphasis on geometry may well reflect the photographer's early training with the painter Andre L'Hote. See Michel Frizon, "Unpredictable Glances", in Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Scrapbook* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2006), p. 41.
- 2 Pierre Assouline, Henri Cartier-Bresson, A Biography [1999]. Trans. David Wilson (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), pp. 137-138. Note, too, that Assouline incorrectly states that the film "opens with the scenes of disinfection" and gives the film's length as 25 minutes, when it actually lasts just over 32 minutes.
- 3 Assouline does praise one unspecified pan shot by attributing it without evidence to Cartier-Bresson. Once again he highlights that it ends on what he vaguely calls a "perfectly geometrical composition of great spiritual depth". But he then offers a backhanded compliment to other shots in which, he says, "emotions...speak for themselves", that is, without any attention to compositional geometries. These inconsistent remarks leave his standards for evaluating the aesthetic value of the shots unclear. Assouline, op.cit., p. 137.
- 4 These documents are preserved in the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson in Paris. I thank Clément Chéroux, Curator of Photography at the Centre Pompidou for suggesting that

- I visit the Fondation, and Aude Rachimbault of the Fondation for her help in securing these texts for me. Note that the order makes no distinction between political and "racial" (i.e., Jewish or Gypsy) deportees.
- 5 A comprehensive overview of French policy toward repatriation can be found in Marie-Anne Matard-Bonucci and Edouard Lynch, La Libération des Camps et le Retour des Déportés (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 1995). See also Annette Wieviorka, Déportation et génocide (Paris: Plon, 1992). Description of other French films made during this effort are discussed by Claudine Drame in Des Films pour le Dire: Reflets de la Shoah au cinéma, 1945-1985 (Geneva: Metropolis, 2007), pp. 15-70. Curiously, Henry Rousso does not mention Le Retour though it would support the general thesis articulated in his excellent The Vichy Syndrome (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).
- 6 The delay may have been caused by OWI's severe budgetary constraints; the agency was itself terminated in September, 1945. Drame notes that Cartier-Bresson claimed to have filmed the bridges over the Elbe at the time the Soviet and American armies linked up, on April 25, 1945. See op. cit, p. 47.
- 7 Assouline credits both Krimsky and Banks as co-directors, although Le Retour's credits do not list them in these roles. Neither does the shorter American version of the film, Reunion, whose substantial reediting was supervised by Peter Elgar. In Films Beget Films (New York: Hill & Wang, 1964), p. 71, Jay Leyda names Banks only as co-editor. Agnès Sire, in her essay, "Scrapbook Memories", claims Banks as a co-director, but only on Banks's authority. See Scrapbook, p. 13 and p. 220. Cartier-Bresson assigned himself the more modest title of "Conseiller Technique" although it is clear that he was Le Retour's guiding force. Incidentally, Cartier-Bresson clearly preferred his own cut to the shorter Reunion, whose substantial differences Leyda inexplicably understates. See Cartier-Bresson's letter to Beaumont Newhall dated February 18, 1946, reproduced in Scrapbook, p. 18.
- 8 Carrefour (No. 3, p. 4), cited by Sylvie Lindeperg, Les écrans de l'ombre (Paris: CNRS, 1997), p. 149.
- 9 Le Retour starts with some German footage showing French soldiers marching and working in camps.

- 10 For information about the censoring of newsreel footage shown in France in the early post-war period, see Drame, op.cit., pp. 15-70; and Sylvie Lindeperg, *Clio de 5 à 7. Les actualités de la Libération: archives du future* (Paris: CNRS, 2000).
- 11 Comparisons would include *Les Camps de la mort*, compiled from Allied and French camp footage. This film was made to accompany the exhibition, "Hitler's Crimes", which opened in Paris on June 10, 1945. It was screened throughout France until 1946.
- 12 One or more of the celebrations may well have been staged. Interestingly, *The Liberation of Auschwitz* (1985) by the German filmmaker Irmgard von zur Mühlen, includes poorly staged replicas of such joyous moments by Soviet filmmakers. The Soviets, however, never used this footage in any film during the period.
- 13 The second scene occurs just after the film's half-way mark when two former collaborators are apprehended.
- 14 Other shots of the ongoing scene were undoubtedly taken, though not used in the final edit. Cartier-Bresson also snapped pictures following the action. See his photographs in *Scrapbook*, pp. 226, 228-9.
- 15 Lannoy astutely comments on the impulsive march home by slyly shifting from major to minor keys. Elsewhere, he weaves in popular songs like "Auld Lang Syne" or anthems like "La Marseillaise", changing rhythms and harmonies to portray various emotional states. In instrumentation and style, Lannoy's score anticipates Hanns Eisler's for Alain Resnais's great, but also problematic, film *Nuit et brouillard* (1956) about the camps and their liberation.
- 16 Leyda erred when he attributed these shots to Cartier-Bresson. See *Films Beget Films*, p. 71.
- 17 I quote with minor modifications from the translation of the commentary to *Le Retour* held in the Fondation Cartier-Bresson.
- 18 See her Le Retour des Deportés: quand les Alliés ouvrirent les portes, second, enlarged edition (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 1985).
- 19 As per the report in *Le Film Français*, No. 49 (November 9, 1945):1. Curiously, this leading industry journal promised a review of *Le Retour* but never published one. The same source on August 2, 1946, p. 81, mentions Regina Distribution as the distributor of a 900 meter version. How widely *Le Retour*

was seen in France, however, needs further research. See also Didier Epelbaum, *Pas un mot, pas une ligne?* (Paris: Stock, 2005), pp. 1-241, for information on press censorship and the deliberate exclusion of Soviet filmed and written reports.

20 See, for example, "Le Problème juif dans l'après guerre", in *Combat* (May 12, 1945). Too little was still known about the fate of Romani and Sinti peoples, and as I noted earlier, even the author of *Le Retour*'s commentary seems to have been insensitive to their murders.

Bibliography

- ASSOULINE, Pierre (2005). *Henri Cartier-Bresson, A Biography*. Londres: Thames & Hudson.
- CARTIER-BRESSON, Henri (1952). *Images à la Sauvette*. París: Verve.
- (1952). *The Decisive Moment*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- (1999). The Mind's Eye: Writings on Photography and Photographers. New York: Aperture.
- DRAME, Claudine (2007). Des Films pour le Dire: Reflets de la Shoah au cinéma, 1945-1985. Génova: Metropolis.
- EPELBAUM, Didier (2005). Pas un mot, pas une ligne? París: Stock.
- LEYDA, Jay (1964). Films Beget Films. New York: Hill & Wang.
- LINDEPERG, Sylvie (1997). Les écrans de *l'ombre*. Paris: CNRS.
- (2000). Clio de 5 à 7. Les actualités de la Libération: archives du future. París: CNRS.
- FRIZOT, Michel (2006). Unpredictable Glances (pp. 31-71). En Michel FRIZOT et alii (eds.) (2006). Henri Cartier-Bresson: Scrapbook. Photographs 1932-1946. Londres: Thames & Hudson.
- MATARD-BONUCCI, Marie-Anne y Eduard LYNCH (1995). La Libération des Camps et le Retour des Déportés. Bruselas: Complexe.
- ROUSSO, Henry (1991). *The Vichy Syndrome*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- SIRE, Agnès (2006). Scrapbook Stories (pp. 9-29). En Michel FRIZOT *et alii* (eds.).
- WIEVIORKA, Annette (1992). Déportation et génocide. París: Plon.
- WORMSER-MIGOT, Olga (1985). Le Retour des Deportés: quand les Alliés ouvrirent les portes. Bruselas: Complexe.

Stuart Liebman (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1948) is a Professor of the History and Theory of Cinema at Queens College (Department of Media Studies), as well as at the PhD Programs of Art History and Theatre at CUNY Graduate Center. Professor Stuart Liebman's research focuses on two principal areas: the intersections of the cinema with modernism in the arts, and the representation of history in films. He has published widely on early French cinema, American avantgarde cinema, Soviet cinema, films about the Holocaust, and post-World War II German cinema. He is currently at work on a book about representation of the Holocaust in world cinema between 1944 and 1956. In 2006 he was named an "Academy Film Scholar" by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Los Angeles. He has served as a member of the Advisory Board for the critical journal October and is a former member of the Board of Trustees of Anthology Film Archives in New York City. He is the editor of Claude Lanzmann's Shoah: Key Essays (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), among other publications.