During my ten years as director of the Centre for German–Jewish Studies, founded at the University of Sussex in April 1994, my colleagues and I developed a wide-ranging programme of teaching and research. Our London-based Support Group included Clemens Nathan among its members, and it is a pleasure to contribute to a book published in his honour. One of our priorities has been to research the experiences and achievements of refugees who escaped from Nazi-occupied Europe during the 1930s. In addition to completing a number of projects and publications in this field, staff at the Centre are compiling a database of British Archival Collections Relating to German-Speaking Refugees. More controversially, in my own writings, I have explored the concept of ‘German–Jewish symbiosis’ – the close identification of educated Jews living in central Europe with German culture, especially in the period around 1900.¹ This implies that there are certain convergences, both historically and conceptually, between German and Jewish cultural traditions – not least by virtue of their paradigms of remembrance.

The fundamental question is how national and cultural memories are formed and transmitted. As a consequence of the Holocaust, mainstream historiography has tended to picture Jewish and German traditions of commemoration in antithetical terms, as if the two were immutably fixed in their respective roles as victims and perpetrators. This paper will offer an alternative perspective, approaching the subject from the periphery by re-
calling the fate of two ships laden with refugees that were lost at sea during the Second World War. The first is the Struma, which was carrying Jewish refugees from Romania when it sank in the Black Sea in February 1942. The second is the Wilhelm Gustloff, which was laden with German refugees fleeing before the advance of the Red Army when it was sunk in the Baltic in January 1945. When we speak of these ships being ‘lost at sea’, the phrase has a double meaning: they were first sunk (with great loss of life) and then virtually forgotten (through collective amnesia). These specific cases provide a basis for reassessing the processes of public memory, while raising questions about refugees lost at sea that are still relevant in our own day. Hence the concluding section on the controversies associated with another refugee ship, the Cap Anamur.

**Remembering and Forgetting**

The Hebrew narratives of the Old Testament provide an appropriate starting point, specifically the book of Deuteronomy, where the paradox of ‘remembering to forget’ is paradigmatically formulated. A celebrated passage in Deuteronomy 25:17–19 describes how the children of Israel were ambushed by Amalek, leader of a desert tribe from southern Canaan:

> Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.

It would be fascinating to explore the paradoxes inherent in the precept (as formulated in the King James version of the Bible): not to forget to ‘blot out remembrance’. The Deuteronomist is recalling another passage, from Exodus 17:8–14, which describes how the children of Israel, exhausted refugees fleeing from Egypt, were ambushed by Amalek at Rephidim; and how Joshua put Amalek to the sword, while Moses provided moral support, holding up

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