IN MEMORIAM SIR MARTIN GILBERT,
1936–2015

I first met Martin Gilbert in May 2000, when he was given an honorary degree at the graduation ceremonies of The George Washington University, where I was Professor of History and chairman of the Program in Judaic Studies. But I felt that I had known him long before that, through his books.

I leave it to others to assess the major portion of his writings devoted to twentieth-century England, especially the career of Winston Churchill. And of course his role within the Chilcot Commission will need to be left to future scholars. Following is an appreciation of his work on Jewish Studies.


A second significant interest was in Soviet Jewry, first explored in The Jews of Hope (1984), followed two years later by Scharansky: Hero of Our Time (1986).


Among his later works was a broader survey – The Jews in the Twentieth Century (2001) – and a return to an early area of interest in the sweep of Jewish experience in the Islamic world: In Ishmael’s House: A History of the Jews in Muslim Lands (2010).
In Memoriam

This sustained productivity, alongside his massive research into the broader historical context especially in England, has educated and inspired readers throughout much of the world who seek a deeper understanding of the European, Soviet, and Israeli Jewish role in the staggering events of the previous century. We are impoverished by his passing, but we are immensely enriched by the legacy he has bequeathed.

Marc Saperstein