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**Words of Witness:
Hans Massaquoi, the Power of Memoir, and Tools for Black-Jewish Allyship**

In 1999, Hans J. Massaquoi published his memoir, *Destined to Witness: Growing up Black in Nazi Germany*. As the title indicates, the memoir details Massaquoi's life as a Black child growing up in Nazi Germany and his experiences surviving World War II. However, the memoir goes beyond Massaquoi's life as an adolescent in Nazi Germany and also describes his move to the United States in the midst of the Jim Crow Era and his subsequent path to becoming the Editor-in-Chief of *Ebony* Magazine from 1967 through 1997. In "Words of Witness," I explore the ways that Massaquoi's memoir documents the marginalization he experienced as a Black person in both Nazi Germany and the Jim Crow United States, and I examine how his work makes clear that, although often viewed through disparate lenses, both regimes were undergirded by the same foundational belief in white supremacy.

Through a focus on the friendships Massaquoi forms with Jewish individuals when they are all trying to survive in Nazi Germany and the scenes where he grapples with experiencing anti-Black racism and hearing anti-Semitic slurs in the Jim Crow United States, I argue that Massaquoi's memoir serves a two-fold function. First, the text highlights the power of memoir – and, more broadly, of literature – to bear witness to atrocity in a nuanced, complex manner that allow us to see the overlapping nature of anti-Blackness and anti-Semitism with a depth often missing from statistics or historical overviews. Additionally, I argue that, through this effective form of nuanced witness via memoir, Massaquoi's text charts a way forward for contemporary Black and Jewish allyship as both groups – and those with intersecting Black and Jewish identities – are currently facing increasing rates of violence in many European nations and in the United States. Using a detailed focus on key scenes in the memoir that exemplify the connections between Black and Jewish communities and experiences, I illustrate how we can take Massaquoi's words of witness from the twentieth century and turn them into tools for allyship and action in our current moment.