

Europe's Crumbling Myths

The Post-Holocaust Origins of Today's Anti-Semitism

Manfred Gerstenfeld

Foreword by Emil L. Fackenheim



המרכז הירושלמי לענייני ציבור ומדינה
Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs



יד ושם
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הקונגרס היהודי העולמי
World Jewish Congress

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David Bankier • Yehuda Bauer • Avi Beker • Irwin Cotler •
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Lipstadt • Aharon Lopez • Michael Melchior • Yair Sheleg •
Shmuel Trigano • Laurence Weinbaum • Ephraim Zuroff •

Ronald Zweig



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• Yad Vashem



• World Jewish Congress

Dedicated to the memory of Herbert Berman –
a true friend of Israel
and the JCPA

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Manfred Gerstenfeld

Introduction and Acknowledgements

It took me a long time to realize that to understand the post-Holocaust period, a number of issues should be grouped in a single subject of analysis. These include inter alia: survivors' reintegration in the post-war society, their social and psychological rehabilitation, financial and 'moral' restitution, punishment of war criminals, preservation of the memory of the Shoah and Holocaust education.

Many thought Europe had progressed substantially following a greater understanding of the Holocaust, its causes and peoples' behavior during it. There were several indicators for this thesis. This virtual trend is one likely explanation why the post-Holocaust period has not been considered a subject for systematic study, even when the second round of restitution negotiations began. The last three years however have seen a substantial, visible regression toward increased anti-Semitism. This raises profound questions concerning various aspects of the future of the Jewish people as well as with respect to the values and nature of European society and its prospects. This development also necessitates linking anti-Semitism to the post-Holocaust subject in its entirety.

When writing I wondered how the subject of this book had dawned upon me. In what became an autobiographical quest, I realized it had happened gradually and subconsciously. Over the post-war decades, I had gained fragmentary exposure to post-Holocaust elements.

My parents – successful in business in Vienna until 1938 – were among the first to be arrested after the Anschluss. They were given a simple choice: to remain in jail or surrender all their possessions and emigrate. When we – thanks to Dutch gentiles – survived the war in Amsterdam, my father, Rafael Gerstenfeld, kept his vow to devote the rest of his life to help rebuild the Jewish community. In his post-war work as head of Social and Pastoral Affairs of the NIHS – the Amsterdam Ashkenazi community – and through many volunteer capacities, he devoted much thought and spent much time on trying to socially rehabilitate survivors who had lost their family in the Holocaust. His attitude meant major emotional involvement, personal sacrifices and total devotion. It permeated our small family.

In the years after the war, Dutch society cultivated the myth of massive resistance and heroism against the German occupier. I was still in high school when in 1952 on the square in Amsterdam's former Jewish quarter where the big Portuguese and plundered Ashkenazi synagogues stood, a monument entitled the 'Dockworker' was erected in honor of those Dutchmen who had struck in 1942 against the deportation. It was inaugurated by Queen Juliana, who a few months

earlier – against the wish of the Dutch cabinet – reprieved the death penalty of Nazi Willy Lages, one of those responsible for deporting tens of thousands of Dutch Jews to their deaths.¹ M. H. Gans, editor of the *NIW*, the Dutch Jewish weekly, wrote: “it was like a monument for the anti-aircraft defense on the grave of those who had been killed by the bombardment.”²

In the early 1960s, I became a part time reporter for this paper while studying at university. Gans – of whom I have fond memories – was always open to my suggestions. In 1961–62, I published a series of 17 articles on the history of vanished and vanishing Jewish communities in several Dutch provinces focusing on survivors’ memories.³

Through the interviews I discovered the importance of preserving documents. Perhaps the most important one I found was the book of records of the small Jewish community in Oude Pekela written in Dutch. Abraham Toncman – the community’s secretary – ended it in Hebrew: “Few remained of many. We are like cattle being brought to the slaughterhouse, to be murdered and destroyed for disaster and shame. May there be saving and salutation for the Jews speedily in our days. Amen!” My colleague at the *NIW* – later Professor of Contemporary History and an interviewee herewith – Isaac Lipschits, passed it on to historian Jacques Presser who published a photo of it in his history of the destruction of the Dutch Jews.⁴ Gans concluded his masterly memorial book for Dutch Jewry with photocopies from several of its pages.⁵

In the *NIW* I also published articles on the small post-war neo-Nazi groups in the Netherlands. What they permitted themselves is far exceeded by the hate speech of Islamist extremists in the Netherlands today. This research brought me in contact with the scholars at the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation. Like many other Jews in The Netherlands, I was wary of the manipulation of Holocaust history for political purposes undertaken at the Anne Frank House.

As a member of the board of trustees of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture in the mid-1960s, I was exposed further to post-Holocaust issues. Thereafter, I focused on other matters. For many years I followed post-Shoah subjects only out of general interest. I was already well aware that Dutch historians had gradually exposed large parts of the national war myth. As a board member of the Center for the Research of Dutch Jewry in Jerusalem, frequent conversations with its founder and first chairman Jozeph Michman gave me many further insights.

A turning point was the Center’s 1998 symposium devoted to the Dutch war myth. It made me realize that the distortion of Shoah and post-Shoah history in The Netherlands was still significant. At the symposium I was introduced to Avraham Roet who had begun collecting material on Dutch post-war restitution. This was the beginning of a process which resulted in the establishment of an umbrella body of Dutch Jewish organizations in Israel – Stichting Platform Israel (SPI). Roet became its chairman and a key figure in the Dutch restitution negotiations of the past years.

Roet asked me to be SPI's advisor on the analysis of the reports of the Dutch historical commissions of enquiry into restitution issues. I accepted on a voluntary basis, stating that I did not wish to act in any official capacity to maintain my freedom of expression. I had understood this thanks to Isaac Lipschits, by then an emeritus professor, who had done much to fight Dutch post-Shoah history distortions and was then writing my father's biography.

By studying the documents, several issues gradually became clear. The small Dutch Jewish community was no match for the Dutch government and other institutional counterparts in the restitution negotiations. Results would improve if international Jewish organizations were involved. This required analysis in English; Dutch material would help no-one without an understanding of that language.

The late Daniel Elazar, president and founder of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, welcomed this. In the JCPA's publications, the *Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints*⁶ and the *Jewish Political Studies Review*,⁷ I published the essence of my analysis. *The Jerusalem Post*, Hebrew language journals and periodicals showed an interest as well in the matter, as did some Jewish papers abroad. It gave great satisfaction that ultimately Roet succeeded, at least partly, to convince the Dutch Jewish representative body, the Centraal Joods Overleg (CJO) to involve the World Jewish Congress in some negotiations. The Amsterdam stock exchange subsequently had to raise its restitution payments to the Jewish community multi-fold as well as apologize for its wartime assistance to the occupiers.

From these studies I drew another important conclusion. The financial aspects of the restitution were only a sub-issue of a wider moral discourse, which unfortunately received little attention in the Dutch Jewish community. Until today, the Jewish people have two major accounts open with the Dutch government. It is not yet telling the truth about the Dutch assistance to the Nazis during the war and it distorts the story about post-war institutional discrimination of the Jews.

These investigations aroused my interest in post-Holocaust issues. I began learning about what had happened in other countries as well. From discussions with experts it turned out that no overview on the subject existed. A donation from Mrs. Daisy Berman in memory of her husband Herbert Berman – which also contributed to the publication of this book – enabled the JCPA to organize a symposium entitled, "Delegitimization and Moral Compensation: The Holocaust and Today," in November 2001. That was also my first opportunity to present several of this book's major themes.⁸

After the symposium, in two series of follow-up lectures by a variety of experts, the subject was expanded. The explosion of anti-Semitism connected it to post-Holocaust issues which became the subject of the PHAS (Post-Holocaust and anti-Semitism) program of the JCPA now in its third year.

This program developed alongside the spread and diversification of anti-Semitism. The Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah and a donor who wishes to remain anonymous, sponsor the JCPA's monthly publication of essays and

interviews entitled “*Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism*” diffused in thousands of copies worldwide, both printed and e-mailed. The interviews with Yehuda Bauer, Michael Melchior and Deborah Lipstadt in this book were first published there.⁹

Jewish Political Studies Review editor Shmuel Sandler proposed devoting the entire Fall 2002 issue to the post-Holocaust and asked me to be its guest editor.¹⁰ In it a shortened version of the introductory essay of this book appeared.¹¹ More publications will undoubtedly follow as anti-Semitism will remain a primary issue on the Jewish agenda for the foreseeable future.

I am grateful to the JCPA, Yad Vashem and the World Jewish Congress for publishing this book and to the interviewees for sharing their knowledge with me. Special thanks are due to Emil Fackenheim for honoring me with his insightful Foreword. Sadly he passed away on September 19, 2003. May his memory be blessed.

I appreciate the support I received for the PHAS program throughout from Dore Gold and Zvi Marom, respectively President and Director-General of the JCPA. The latter also made many valuable comments on this text. Chaya Herskovic, the JCPA's program director, participated in several of the interviews and was a great help in developing the PHAS program.

I would like to thank Alan Berger for his moral backing throughout the progress of this book and Joel Fishman for his incisive comments on several sections. Thanks as well to Irving Asher for his editing, Alison Goldberg for transcribing the interviews, Terrye Pico for preparing the index and last but not least, Emma Corney for her patient typing, correcting and proofing of the many drafts.

When this book was in its final stages, a Euro-barometer study undertaken on behalf of the European Commission was published. It showed that more Europeans consider Israel a threat to world peace than any other country, i.e. even more so than those states which send terrorists abroad to kill European civilians, finance murderous organizations or have leaders calling for genocide. These findings tell us more about Europe than Israel.

When writing this book it would have been difficult to imagine that a single indicator could be found to show how deeply embedded anti-Semitism remains in European culture. An editorial in *Le Monde* on November 5, 2003 entitled “L'Europe et Israël,” concluded “the results revealed in any case something extremely dangerous about the old continent.”

Notes

- 1 Martin Bossenbroek, *De Meelstreep: Terugkeer en Opvang na de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2001) p. 341. [Dutch]
- 2 *NIW*, December 19, 1952 quoted in Bossenbroek, *op. cit.*, p. 342.
- 3 Manfred Gerstenfeld, *NIW* series "De vergeten Mediene," 1961 and 1962. [Dutch]
- 4 J. Presser, *Ondergang, 1* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965) pp. 401–402. [Dutch]
- 5 Mozes Heiman Gans, *Memorboek* (Baarn: Bosch & Keuning, 1971), pp. 818–827. [Dutch]
- 6 Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Wartime and Postwar Dutch Attitudes Toward the Jews: Myth and Truth," *Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints*, no. 412, August 15, 1999.
 Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Investigating Much, Paying Little: The Dutch Government and the Holocaust Assets Inquiries," *Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints*, no. 424, February 15, 2000.
 The latter also appeared in Hebrew: "Chakira Mitmashechet – Tashlum Mo-at. Hamem-shalah Haholandit Venichsay Hashoah," *Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints*, no. 424 (H), March 30, 2002.
- 7 Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Jewish War Claims In the Netherlands: A Case Study," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 12: 1–2, Spring 2000.
- 8 The theme of that lecture is developed further in Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Europe's Moral Attitudes Toward the Holocaust in Light of the Current Defamation of Israel," *Jerusalem Viewpoints* No. 475, April 1, 2002.
- 9 Manfred Gerstenfeld, interview with Michael Melchior, "The Israeli Government, Holocaust Issues, and Anti-Semitism," *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism*, No. 1, October 1, 2002.
 Manfred Gerstenfeld, interview with Yehuda Bauer, "From Propagating Myths to Research: Preparing for Holocaust Education," *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism*, No. 3, December 1, 2002.
- 10 Manfred Gerstenfeld, interview with Deborah Lipstadt, "Denial of the Holocaust and Immoral Equivalence," *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism*, No. 11, August 1, 2003.
- 11 *Jewish Political Studies Review* 14: 3–4, Fall 2002.
- 12 Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Europe's Bias: From the Holocaust's Aftermath to Today's Anti-Semitism," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 14: 3–4, Fall 2002, pp. 5–56.

Emil L. Fackenheim

Foreword

I

This book leads me as a philosopher to speculate on history. The classical German tradition in philosophy was from Kant to Hegel. Everything after has been, *in dürftiger Zeit*, philosophically a decline. Gobineau? Houston Stewart Chamberlain? Even Marx? Don't be silly.

Kant made a distinction between 'duty' and 'inclination,' humans as morally strong when self-determined by *Pflicht*; 'duty' being weak when yielding to *Neigung*, 'inclination.' Then why, in old age, did he write about radical evil? Neither Schiller nor Goethe liked it or understood him, but Kant had been clear enough: Yielding to inclination, while weak, is innocent; but *real* freedom was the choice between good and evil, which Kant asserted.

The young Schelling had been romantic enough to identify 'Truth' with 'Beauty,' but this, as well as the pantheism that followed, still in his youth, was disrupted by 'Kant-on-choice,' including that of evil, even choice of selfhood itself. For Schelling – following Fichte at that time – the self had to be asserted by the self itself. It was not a given:

The animal can never get out of the Unity of the Whole, whereas man can tear it up arbitrarily... One would wish that mankind's corruption were worst in animal behavior; unfortunately man can only be worse or better than an animal.

In his – to Hegel it seemed – seemingly desperate rush from system to system that followed even into old age, Schelling never got over what must have been an abyss, not even in his final 'leap' from 'essence' to 'existence.' To be sure, in his mind his 'leap' was straight to the existence of God. What he actually got was existence as such, brute, raw, largely impenetrable to Reason. Schelling was the first existentialist.

Schelling and Hegel had been good enough friends to write unauthorized essays together, one of which Franz Rosenzweig had to guess the author. What divorced the two thinkers later, fundamentally, was radical evil. Hegel – not one to rush, let alone desperately – said that Schelling published his drafts, but himself had a lasting trust in, what he called, the 'Cunning of Reason.' His own greatest catastrophe, like Nietzsche's, was the 'death of God;' but whereas Nietzsche faced the specter of nihilism thereafter, Hegel's 'Absolute Spirit' survived: it was in Man as well as in God: his *Weltgeschichte*, 'World History' was at once human and Divine.

Would Hegel's 'Cunning of Reason' have survived Auschwitz? For Nietzsche, if God is dead, 'everything is permitted': the one and only threat is Nihilism. Auschwitz would have been no different in principle. But Auschwitz was a 'Planet' on which 'evil was commanded.' True, there had been SS officer Flacke, of whom one former Auschwitz prisoner, Dr. Ella Lingens testified that she did not know how he did it, but his camp was clean and his food also. The Frankfurt judge was stunned: "Do you wish to say that at Auschwitz everyone could decide for himself whether to be good or evil?" – "That is exactly what I wish to say," she said. Every SS man had said that at Auschwitz one could only follow orders.

But Flacke was alone, could not smash 'Planet Auschwitz,' just as the 'righteous among the nations' were few, could not smash 'Planet, trying to become a Universe, Third Reich, *Drittes Reich*.' And there is now post-Holocaust anti-Semitism in Europe. But Hegel said the following:

After doing everything the most enthusiastic courage could achieve, they [the Jews] endured the most appalling human calamities, and were buried with their polity under the ruins of their City... The scattered remnants of the Jews have not abandoned the idea of a Jewish state, but they have reverted not to the banners of their own courage, but only to the standards of an ineffectual messianic hope (*träge messianische Hoffnung*).

The young Hegel wrote this, in his so-called "Early Theological Writings." In old age, even near his death, he still wrote that, whereas in Islam monotheism transcends a nation, is therefore, unhappily, 'fanatical,' in contrast, "Jewish faith, confidence, merely a folk religion, a basic trait of the Jewish people, is admirable" (*bewunderungswürdig*).

Hegel's dialectic here is subtle, although most would agree he did not pay sufficient attention to Islam.

Never before have either I or anyone else treated the relation between Schelling and Hegel as a response to Kant on evil; this time I had to concerning the theme of this book.

Had Hegel confronted Auschwitz, human 'calamities' more 'appalling' than he thought conceivable, he would have recognized in the Jewish people the 'most enthusiastic' if, to be sure desperate, 'courage' to restore their 'State,' to rebuild their 'City,' Jerusalem.

II

The above is meant for philosophers but abstract for historians. Concretely, not without its 'scandal of particularity' is an Intifada II, of which we are still in the midst. In some sense, theologians have treated ancient Jewish history as *Heilsgeschichte*, but do not treat post-Holocaust Jewish history as a scandal as well.

In a way Auschwitz has been *escalated* today. The suicide-bombers cannot kill hundreds, only a few dozen at a time, but the SS perpetrators could do the killing without thought, like robots, without a decision, just as ordered, directly

or indirectly, by the *Kommandant*: press a button one day, another the next. In contrast suicide-bombers need a decision, particularly because they also kill themselves: what will father say? Mother? Comrades and those who want instead dialogue for peace? Surely with the decision they also need an ideology, even a *Weltanschauung* – hope for him/herself in Heaven, death for victims on Earth.

III

I wrote section I on Philosophy after reading only this book's title, not the book itself. My reason was that philosophy, if any discipline, gets at evil; the problem is that it is also detached from life, personal life.

Born, raised, partly educated in Germany, the clash between the 'Golden Age' in German philosophy and Hitler's *Weltanschauung* is extreme; it is also, personally painful. In the following I face responses, partly respond myself, mostly with questions, addressed only to a selected few.

The author knows, of course, that his book must be published not only in Israel, the country of victims, but also in the English-speaking world, home to once participants, now mostly onlookers, and also in Europe where the Holocaust took place.

Hence I have a question for Manfred Gerstenfeld: why does his book only marginally include Claude Lanzmann, author of *Shoah*, the film, forever unsurpassable? Why not, since Dietrich Bonhoeffer was murdered, Eberhard Bethge, the reporter of his thought, also unsurpassable forever? There are surface answers, that Lanzmann was too busy fighting anti-Semitism in France, and Bethge was over ninety when he died. But deeper answers are underneath. Lanzmann implies that the evil of the Holocaust cannot be explained, either philosophically or historically, but only be pointed to, as in *Shoah*.

In his interview, David Bankier, born in Germany in 1947, quite rightly attacks the myth of Jewish otherness, prominent Germans now talk about Hitler's *otherness*; he could not even speak proper German and the style of *Mein Kampf* is terrible. But my question is about 'too many Jewish lawyers, doctors, etc?' A document in my possession shows there were only few in Halle and when I was in Sachsenhausen concentration camp they did not accuse Jewish lawyers of being too many but of perverting German law and accused Jewish doctors of seducing 'Aryan' women. My father, a lawyer, caring about the German *Rechtsstaat* was most appalled about Roland Freisler, a former communist, now in charge of Hitler's *Volksgericht*.

Yehuda Bauer quotes Hans Mommsen saying, "All Hitler had to do was nod his head for the genocide to take place." This, if true, began already on April 1, 1933. Jews like my Uncle Adolf had lost a leg in the Great War yet were boycotted simply as born Jews. (Is birth not innocent?) In answer Bauer, rightly, concludes that Nazi anti-Jewish activity was "first and foremost ideological;" he, rightly, quotes even the end of Marx's *Kapital*: "Sometimes ideology ... moves everything." In this, after all, Marx was dependent on Hegel.

Aharon Lopez is a former ambassador to the Vatican. He reports theological changes and states, also that they are not enough, the “true litmus test” being the “beatification of Pius XII.”

Michael Melchior’s father was a rabbi who sent his congregation to safety away on Yom Kippur, according to Rosenzweig, the most important day in the Jewish Year. Melchior himself is now in Israel, also a rabbi, and so would Rosenzweig be, if he were alive.

Two honest German historians, one no longer alive, should have been in this book: Sebastian Haffner says Jew hatred was like a *Buckel*, a “humpback, Hitler was born with.” Joachim Fest writes:

Am Ende appellierte er [Hitler] an die Treue und den Gehorsam aller Deutschen, ‘bis in den Tod’ und kam im Schlusssatz [seines Testaments] noch einmal auf die Obsession [Jew hatred] zurueck, die im buchstaeblichen Sinn sein Hirngespinst war.

In the end he [Hitler] appealed to the fidelity and obedience ‘unto death’ and returned in his final sentence [of his testament] once more to the obsession [of his Jew hatred] which was in the most literal possible sense a cocoon in his brain.”

“Humpback” or *Buckel* he was born with? *Hirngespinst*, “cocoon in his brain?” These historians know German history; yet the Holocaust remains unexplained. This book tells us how despite the Holocaust and its study, important parts of European society have regressed into new variants of open anti-Semitism. The author illustrates how this seemingly sudden phenomenon, was in reality an ongoing one. What Manfred Gerstenfeld has laid bare, should be the beginning of much more attention and further study.

Manfred Gerstenfeld

From the Aftermath of the Holocaust to Today's Antisemitism

The 'new' anti-Semitism is more a continuation and development than a departure. Few people realize the extent to which anti-Semitism was rampant in post-Holocaust Europe, and how the legacy of that period laid the basis for today's resurgence of European anti-Semitism. Even fewer have studied this crucial topic in detail. This essay serves as an overview and an introduction to a series of 15 interviews with experts who have made major contributions to the understanding of various aspects of this ominous process as well as related issues. All interviews not cited in the footnotes will be found later in this volume, and are referred to only by the interviewee's name (e.g., "Durst's interview"). It is our hope that this book will help inspire others to continue the work of uncovering how our past has become our present, to help prevent it from also becoming our future.

I. THE RECENT OUTBURST OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Introduction: Active and Virulent

Over the past two years, Israel and the Jewish people have faced an onslaught of physical and verbal aggression: Palestinian violence, with a heavy component of suicide attacks; assaults on Jewish institutions and individuals in many countries; and worldwide verbal anti-Semitism in classic and new forms.

The Palestinian and Arab political leadership, Islamic fundamentalists, political opportunists, neo-Nazis and neo-fascists, extreme leftists, parts of the media, Arab-influenced international institutions, as well as self-hating Jews, motivate and catalyze such attacks. Even limited analysis shows that many anti-Israel expressions are recycled versions of classic anti-Semitic motifs.

Many Jews and non-Jews considered anti-Semitism to be mainly a matter of the past, especially in Europe. Present perceptions and anxieties, however, are well expressed by U.K. Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks:

Let me state the point as simply as I can: anti-Semitism is alive, active and virulent in the year 2002, after more than half a century of Holocaust education, interfaith dialogue, United Nations declarations, dozens of museums and memorials, hundreds of films, thousands of courses, and tens of thousands of books dedicated to exposing its evils; after the Stockholm Conference,

after the creation of a National Holocaust Memorial Day, after 2,000 religious leaders came together in the United Nations in August 2000 to commit themselves to fight hatred and engender mutual respect... What more could have been done? What more could and can we do to fight anti-Semitism?¹

Surveys in 2002 by the Anti-Defamation League indicate that European anti-Semitism is substantial.² An opinion poll in five countries, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Italy and The Netherlands, showed that one out of five respondents – twenty-one percent – can be characterized as “most anti-Semitic.” Twenty-nine percent believe that Jews do not care what happens to anyone but themselves. Forty percent of respondents feel Jews have too much power in the business world and international financial markets. The majority considers that Jews are probably more loyal to Israel than their own country.³ An earlier survey dealt with France, Denmark, Germany, Belgium and the United Kingdom and yielded broadly similar conclusions.⁴ The attitudes between the ten countries researched however, varied substantially.

Cycles of Anti-Semitism

Simon Epstein of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism, says that since the war:

anti-Jewish incidents, as recorded by various institutes and monitoring agencies in Western countries, appear to follow cyclical and universal patterns on the axis of time.⁵

Epstein considers that the first major post-war wave:

which came to be dubbed the ‘swastika epidemic’ was observed in Western Europe, the United States, and Latin America. It started with the desecration of a synagogue in Cologne on December 25, 1959, by two young Germans who were promptly apprehended and severely punished. Some 685 incidents were recorded in Germany, and over 600 in the United States. All told, nearly 2,500 incidents were recorded in 400 localities throughout the world.⁶

Epstein defined the second wave of the late 1970s and early 1980s by saying:

Though it definitely did not reach apocalyptic proportions, nor disrupt the regular life of Jewish communities, the number of anti-Jewish incidents in the West as a whole reached an unprecedented level.⁷

A third wave took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Today’s one is thus the fourth and strongest cycle since the Holocaust. Simultaneously, the Jewish people have many other challenges to confront with limited human and financial resources. It is thus good policy to start by analyzing the macro-issues on the Jewish agenda to obtain a strategic understanding of their main elements and

origins. Only then can one effectively focus one's defense and muster one's allies. Due to its magnitude and worldwide character, current anti-Semitism has become a very urgent strategic macro-issue indeed.

Religious, Ethnic and State-oriented Anti-Semitism

The Jews – more than others – have suffered from hateful myths. These are grouped together under the heading 'anti-Semitism.' On the basis of a Roman trial 2,000 years ago, many Christians held all Jews responsible for the death verdict, against a Jew they considered God. Over the centuries a large number of Christians were actively indoctrinated with hatred for the Jews.

In its religious anti-Semitism, Christianity developed the myth of the intrinsically evil Jew. The Nazis exploited this, with genocidal consequences, in their ethnic anti-Semitism. The newest anti-Semitic variant appears superficially different, since its animus is purportedly directed against a political entity, the State of Israel. Its strongest proponents can be found mainly – but not exclusively – in the Arab and Islamic worlds. This new variant must be analyzed *vis-à-vis* its predecessors.

From Dehumanization to Genocide

Israel is now being dehumanized and demonized, in the same way the Jews have been treated for centuries. The media are the prime channel through which this is done. Psychologist Israel W. Charny describes dehumanization as: "a general devaluing of the worthwhileness, and even the validity, of the existence of another..."⁸ The other is then made out to be less deserving of life than oneself. The next psychological step is to justify why these people should be damaged or killed. "By any test of the simple logic of man's still natural wish to be decent, what needs to be added to justify taking away people's lives is proof that the others are also a terrible threat to our lives, and that it is their intent to take our lives away from us, unless we stop them first."⁹

Charny then explains how one moves from ordinary killing to genocide. People find an external compelling force such as religion or secular ideology to justify the criminality of other groups. "Incredible as it may seem, virtually every genocide is defined by its doers as being on behalf of the larger purpose of bettering human life! In one case, it is to rid the world of infidels who prevent us from receiving the blessings of God; in another case, it is to improve racial purity."¹⁰

Destroying Jewish and Israeli Symbols

Symbols related to the Jewish people are destroyed or hijacked and used against the Jews, as a way of promoting hatred (one example is the distortion of facts

about the Holocaust). While the anti-Semites' classic desecration of cemeteries and tombstone destruction continues, it has found a contemporary symbolic companion in the burning of Israeli flags in public places, in the Third World as well as in Western countries.

In April 2002, at a demonstration of the Swiss-Palestinian Society in Bern, Franco Cavalli spoke. He was then the parliamentary leader of the Social Democratic Party (SP), which is part of the Swiss government coalition. He claimed there that Israel "very purposefully massacres an entire people" and undertakes "the systematic extermination of the Palestinians." At the meeting Israeli flags were torched.¹¹

How ignorant Jews can be of the long term danger of strong continuous anti-Semitic attacks was summarized by Hannah Arendt's statement that 19th and 20th century Jews were the last to realize that "circumstances had forced them into the center of the conflict."¹² Arendt adds that "they never knew how to evaluate anti-Semitism... For more than a hundred years, anti-Semitism had slowly and gradually made its way into almost all social strata in almost all European countries until it emerged suddenly as the one issue upon which an almost unified opinion could be achieved."¹³

Post-modern society is characterized both by its fragmentation and the speed with which events develop. Multiple components which led to the Holocaust exist in the attacks against Israel today, and merit detailed research. They come from many forces in European society. The historian Bernard Wasserstein considers anti-Semitism to be both an ideological doctrine as well as a set of prejudicial attitudes. Several individual incongruent – indeed contradictory – sources contribute to it: "traditional Christian teaching and Nazi neo-paganism, integral nationalism and populist demagoguery ('the socialism of fools'), hostility to Jews as capitalists and to Jews as communists... The anti-Semite, consequently, may be a sophisticated intellectual or a boor, a militant atheist or a Christian crusader, a communist or a reactionary."¹⁴ Today anti-Semitic positions are even taken by those who were supposedly relatively free of it before the war, the so-called 'moderate progressives.'

Lawrence Summers, President of Harvard University, mentioned such attitudes in his much-publicized "Address at Morning Prayers." There he notes that:

Where anti-Semitism and views that are profoundly anti-Israeli have traditionally been the primary preserve of poorly educated right-wing populists, profoundly anti-Israel views are increasingly finding support in progressive intellectual communities. Serious and thoughtful people are advocating and taking actions that are anti-Semitic in their effect if not their intent.¹⁵

Not only most non-Jews, but many Jews as well, ignore how today's dispersed anti-Semitic developments can – under the wrong circumstances – lead to an overall structured attack, which may prove difficult to resist.

The Perversion of Human Rights

Irwin Cotler, a Canadian member of parliament who served as a lawyer for Nelson Mandela and Andre Sakharov, observes how the human rights ideas he has fought for are increasingly perverted into a tool against Israel. He says:

Anti-Semitism now uses the rhetoric of international law and human rights as a protective cover to discriminate against Jews through unfair and one-sided criticism of Israel... We are witnessing a new anti-Jewishness, one that is a dramatic transformation, grounded in classical anti-Semitism... It is a global phenomenon and that is the singling out of Israel and the Jewish people for differential and discriminatory treatment in the international arena...¹⁶

Cotler sees discrimination as a commonality between the old and new versions of anti-Semitism. "Traditional anti-Semitism denied Jews the right to live as equal members of society, but the new anti-Jewishness denies the right of the Jewish people to live as an equal member of the family of nations."¹⁷ These ideas are developed in more detail in an interview with Cotler.

A similar view is adopted by scholars from other perspectives. Ruth Kluger, former chair of the German department at Princeton says:

While the specter of fascism has passed, a latent anti-Semitism – with Israel being used as an illegitimate pretext – seems to be creeping back... an ever-present global 'obsession' with the Jewish state seems to betray an outlook that still sees the Jew as 'foreigner' or 'antagonist' personified.¹⁸

Sacks holds a similar view:

What we are witnessing today is... a mutation so ingenious, demonic and evil that it paralyzes the immune systems the West built up over the past half-century... The mutation is this: that the worst crimes of anti-Semites in the past – racism, ethnic cleansing, attempted genocide, crimes against humanity – are now attributed to Jews and the State of Israel, so that if you are against Nazism, you must *ipso facto* be utterly opposed to Jews... I am shocked that so few non-Jews in Europe have recognized it and denounced it.¹⁹

While such concerns have been mainly expressed by Jewish proponents, one of the few non-Jews who articulated a similar view was former Swedish Deputy Prime Minister Per Ahlmark. At Yad Vashem's International Conference on the Legacy of Holocaust Survivors in April 2002, he said:

Criticism of Israel has become very similar to anti-Semitism. There exists in it a rejection of the Jewish people's right to express its identity in its state; and Israel isn't judged according to the same criteria that are applied to other countries. If anti-Semites once aspired to live in a world rid of Jews, today anti-Semitism's goal is apparently a world cleansed of the Jewish state.²⁰

Pulitzer prizewinner Thomas L. Friedman criticized the hypocrisy of professors and students who do not judge Israel according to the same criteria they apply to other countries. Referring to their efforts to convince universities to divest Israeli securities, he asks:

How is it that Egypt imprisons the leading democracy advocate in the Arab world, after a phony trial, and not a single student group in America calls for divestiture from Egypt? (I'm not calling for it, but the silence is telling.) How is it that Syria occupies Lebanon for 25 years, chokes the life out of its democracy, and not a single student group calls for divestiture from Syria? How is it that Saudi Arabia denies its women the most basic human rights, and bans any other religion from being practiced publicly on its soil, and not a single student group calls for divestiture from Saudi Arabia?²¹

Shortly afterwards, a similar argument was made by Harvard Law professor Alan M. Dershowitz. He said that if a visitor from a faraway galaxy would land at an American or Canadian University, he would conclude that the earth is "a peaceful and fair planet with only one villainous nation determined to destroy the peace and to violate human rights. That nation would not be Iraq, Libya, Serbia, Russia or Iran. It would be Israel... There are no comparable petitions seeking any action against other countries that enslave minorities, imprison dissidents, murder political opponents and torture suspected terrorists. Nor are there any comparable efforts to silence speakers from other countries."²²

Holocaust Denial and its Arab Followers

Several arguments and methodologies used by the Arab defamers are similar to those of Holocaust deniers. Holocaust denial in the Western world has been expressed mainly in the margins of society. In the Arab world, the perpetrators of these lies include several of its central figures and institutions.

In August 2002, the Zayed Center for Coordination and Follow-Up in Abu Dhabi organized a conference on 'Semitism.' This think-tank – whose chairman Sultan Bin Zayed al Nahyan is Deputy Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates – claimed the Holocaust was a false fable.²³ The institute appears respectable, as in the past it has hosted lectures by Western heads of state and diplomats, including former President Jimmy Carter, former Vice President Al Gore, and former Secretary of State James Baker.²⁴

At the conference, its executive director Mohammed Khalifa Al-Murar said: "any discourse about the Jews' history will remain incomplete if it doesn't shed light on that aspect of Jews that they always try to hide, i.e., their non-Semite origin." The Arab League's head of Israeli affairs, Ahmad Saleed Jarad, who represented it at the meeting, made comments that seemed to endorse Murar's view.²⁵ Only after major criticism from American Jewish organizations, did the

Arab League distance itself somewhat from the anti-Jewish statements made at the conference.²⁶

Frequently recurring Palestinian claims deny other historical facts by asserting that there was never a Jewish temple in Jerusalem, or that the Palestinians are descendants of the Canaanites who were driven out by the Israelites in Biblical times. One textbook used in Palestinian schools teaches that: "the Canaanite Palestinians invented the alphabet."²⁷ Another textbook says "the Arab Jebusites built it [Jerusalem] five thousand years ago in that distinguished place; and it has remained, since that time, the capital of Palestine throughout the ages."²⁸

In this context, one may recall that a mere twenty-five years ago Zahir Muhs-ein, head of military operations of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, said in an interview that there was no distinct Palestinian people: "There are no differences between Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese. We are part of one people, the Arab nation. It is only for political reasons that we carefully emphasize our Palestinian identity... the existence of a Palestinian identity is there exclusively for tactical reasons... Because Golda Meir says that there is no Palestinian people, I say that there is a Palestinian people which is different from Jordan."²⁹

Denying the Arab Role in the September 11 Attacks

Those groups who start to assault Jews usually later attack others. This is true for denial as well. Despite all the evidence, many in the Islamic world still deny that those who carried out the murderous attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, were Arabs. At the August 2002 Abu Dhabi conference, mentioned above, Mohammed Khalifa Hassan, director of the Center of Oriental Studies at Cairo University, said that "the events of September 11 were concocted, because we still do not possess concrete evidence of the real perpetrators and their objectives."³⁰

According to a Gallup Poll, such denial characterizes most of the Muslim world, who still "do not believe the attacks of September 11 were orchestrated by Osama bin Laden, or by Arabs, or by Muslims."³¹ These findings lead one to ponder how deeply-seated denial of shameful facts is ingrained into contemporary Muslim culture, even if limited value should be attributed to opinion polls in totalitarian or authoritarian states.

Dr. Shibley Telhami who analyzed the findings of the survey, on behalf of the Gallup organization, said: "I was surprised that very few, even among the elites, believe that Bin Laden did it... it's clear that there is almost a unanimous view that Bin Laden was not responsible for September 11."³²

New Jersey poet laureate, Amiri Baraka, in his poem about September 11, entitled "Somebody Blew Up America," repeated the slander about Jews and Israel having foreknowledge of the assaults, as well as the canard that 4,000 Israelis did not show up for work at the World Trade Center that fateful day.

In the same poem he also made insinuations about those who elected Bush as President.³³

A century ago, historian Lord Acton described this phenomenon of distortion as typical of the Middle Ages. "They became content to be deceived, to live in a twilight of fiction, under clouds of false witness, inventing according to convenience, and glad to welcome the forger and the cheat. As time went on, the atmosphere of accredited mendacity thickened, until, in the Renaissance, the art of exposing falsehood dawned upon keen Italian minds."³⁴ The problem is increasingly with us today.

Denial on Trial

To fight denial one needs to develop a profound understanding of its motivating forces. Thereafter, effective methodological tools have to be created to unmask it. In this context, the lawsuit which British historian David Irving initiated against American historian Deborah Lipstadt assumes major relevance. The trial took place in London in the beginning of 2000. Lipstadt had claimed in print that Irving knew the evidence about the Holocaust period; but that he had deliberately distorted it until it coincided with his ideological leanings and political agenda.³⁵

Irving had frequently denied the Nazis had systematically planned to exterminate the Jews. He also claimed that the Nazis had not used the gas chambers in Auschwitz for this extermination. Seldom were disputes on historical events fought out in such detail as in this trial. In the end, history won. Justice Charles Gray ruled that Lipstadt and her publishers had justified their claims. He also concluded that Irving "repeatedly makes assertions about the Holocaust which are offensive to Jews and unsupported by or contrary to the historical record."³⁶ One does not have to spend the time or expense of a London trial to prove the same about the Palestinian and Arab deniers of facts mentioned above.

Both Western Holocaust deniers and Arab history distorters tell us much about our society. Commenting on the denial phenomenon, Lipstadt noted:

It is important to understand that the deniers do not work in a vacuum. Part of their success can be traced to an intellectual climate that has made its mark in the scholarly world during the past two decades. The deniers are plying their trade at a time when much of history seems to be up for grabs, and attacks on the Western rationalist tradition have become commonplace.³⁷

An overview of the methodologies of Holocaust denial and its development over the past few decades is presented in Deborah Lipstadt's interview.

Alliances: The Extreme Right and Arab Anti-Semites

Links between extreme Western rightists and Arab and Islamic fanatics could develop in many worrisome ways. In November 2001, Michel Friedman, then

president-elect of the European Jewish Congress, told the German daily *Die Welt* that top on the list of issues confronting his organization, in the coming years, is combating anti-Semitism. He said that this could no longer be limited to the national level, and expressed the fear that collaboration might develop between Islamic extremists and right-wing radicals. In Germany, for example, many right-wing extremists viewed the September 11 attack on the U.S. favorably.³⁸

In October 2001, members of the German neo-Nazi National Democratic Party celebrated the September 11 attacks against the United States, during a demonstration in Berlin marking the 11th anniversary of German reunification. In banners and speeches, they defined these as a justified response to American policy and protested against Germany's support of 'American terrorism.'³⁹

One of the attendants was Holocaust denier Ahmed Huber, who admits to having met with Bin Laden followers in Beirut several times. Huber was one of the organizers of a Holocaust denial conference there earlier in 2001. It was only canceled due to international pressure. He was a board member of Al Taqwa, a financial company in Lugano, whose bank accounts were frozen after President Bush published the names of individuals and firms suspected of having links with Al Qaida, a list on which both Huber and Al Taqwa appear.⁴⁰

July 14, 2002, France's national holiday, saw a right-wing assassination attempt against President Chirac. The perpetrator, Maxime Brunerie, belonged to Unité Radicale, an extreme right-wing group which intended to make common course with Arabs against the Jews.

Alliances: The Extreme Left and the Palestinians

The European extreme left has a history of decades of violent support of Arab terrorism. Some 25 years ago, a former German student leader wrote that the extreme left's "infatuation with violence, and the language of hatred it engenders, tends to blur the dividing line between the New Left's anti-Zionism and plain anti-Semitism." A case in point is that of Internationale Solidarität, an ad hoc group established to prevent the Vice-Chancellor of the Hebrew University from addressing a meeting at Kiel University. A leaflet distributed by Internationale Solidarität culminated in the slogan, "*Schlagt die Zionisten tot, macht den Nahen Osten rot* (Beat Zionists dead, make the Near East red)."⁴¹

In October 1982, Palestinian terrorists carried out a murderous attack on Rome's great synagogue. Two weeks later a group of leftists belonging to the Democrazia Proletaria movement put a banner on the gate of the small synagogue in the Via Garfagnana. It read, "Let's burn the lairs of the Zionists." Italian journalist Maurizio Molinari wrote, "The walls of the main Italian cities had been subject to anti-Semitic slogans, from 'Death to the Jews' to 'Return to the crematoria!' for years. No longer were these signed by the neo-fascist extreme right, but by diverse movements of the pro-Palestinian left."⁴²

Ideologies of Murder

In September 2002, Ted Honderich, a Canadian-born philosophy professor at University College, London, delivered a lecture at the University of Toronto. He said that the Palestinians have a moral right to blow up the Jews. He even encouraged them to do so saying, "To claim a moral right on behalf of the Palestinians to their terrorism is to say that they are right to engage in it, that it is permissible if not obligatory."⁴³ This incitement to violence drew sympathetic bystanders. Following his lecture "audience members lined up to respectfully parse the fine points of his philosophical theories."⁴⁴

If one takes Honderich's argument only a little further, anybody who has a claim against his society, which he and a few others think justified, has the moral right to kill its leaders. If he wants to blow up as many members of that society as possible or wound them as painfully as possible by putting nails in his suicide bomb, he is morally entitled to do so, according to Honderich.

The horrifying absurdity of Honderich's argument can be readily exposed by simply asking how Honderich himself would have responded to an Israeli who had lost family members in the Holocaust and who stood up after his lecture and said:

Our family has already suffered terrible immoral losses due to people who preached violence against them, views which led to gruesome murders. I recognize in your words the same preachings. Can you explain to me why, according to your own argument, it isn't my moral obligation to douse you in gasoline and incinerate you?

Much unites the three fanatic ideologies of the twentieth century: Nazism and its extreme rightist derivatives; communism and its extreme leftist derivatives; and radical Islam and its extreme adherents. Says historian Robert Wistrich:

There is the same insistence on the Jew as a revolutionary, subversive and corrosive force; on his hidden, occult, manipulative activities; on his thirst for power and his unscrupulous love of intrigue; on his lust for gold; and on his deliberate undermining of communal cohesion and the sacred values of family, nation and state. The world conspiracy theory appears in fundamentalist Islam (and Arab nationalism) in the same apocalyptic colors as in the Nazi and Stalinist paradigms. There is the same Manichaean struggle between the forces of light, goodness and truth and those of darkness, Satanic evil and falsehood – identified, of course, with the Jew.⁴⁵

This common denominator between Nazism, communism and fundamentalist Islam is further analyzed in an interview with Israeli Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer.

Turning Human Rights into a Forum for Racism

The anti-Semitic propaganda war reached its most recent high-point at the United Nations Anti-racism Conference in Durban, South Africa, in September 2001. The main defamers were Arab governments, supported by many Muslim countries and a considerable number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including Western ones. Terms such as 'genocide,' 'Holocaust,' 'ethnic cleansing,' and even 'anti-Semitism' were hijacked by the defamers and used against the Jews, who have been the primary victims of all these phenomena.

Canadian political scientist Anne Bayefsky summarized the events:

The World Conference Against Racism became a forum for racism. Human rights was used not as a facilitator for communication, but as a weapon of political interests antithetical to human rights protection. A large group of states sought to minimize or exclude references to the Holocaust, redefine or ignore anti-Semitism, and to isolate the state of Israel from the global community as a racist practitioner of apartheid and crimes against humanity. The vestiges of Jewish victimhood were to be systematically removed by deleting the references to anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, to be displaced by the Palestinian victim living under racist, Nazi-like oppression.

The hate literature distributed during the NGO conference included caricatures of Jews with hooked noses and Palestinian blood on their hands, surrounded by money, and Israelis wearing Nazi emblems. At the Government Conference, there was daily distribution by NGO participants of literature reading 'Nazi-Israeli apartheid,' while inside the drafting committees, states such as Syria and Iran objected to the inclusion of anti-Semitism or the Holocaust on the grounds that anti-Semitism was a 'complicated,' 'curious,' and 'bizarre' concept, and reference to the Holocaust would be imbalanced or 'favoritism.'⁴⁶

The Durban conference witnessed several currents of the Western human rights movement making common cause with countries which turn beheadings and amputations into a public spectacle. Some of the leading human rights organizations remained silent, or supported the 'Zionism is racism' resolution. At the November 2001 plenary assembly of the World Jewish Congress in Jerusalem, Cotler denounced a number of Western organizations for hijacking the human rights movement.

Durban and the NGOs: The Misinformers

Reflecting on the aftermath of Durban, Bayefsky criticized leading Western human rights groups, declaring that:

The post-Durban cheerleading and misinformation campaign has also been led by international human rights NGOs.⁴⁷ Mindful of its many Jewish funders, Human Rights Watch went so far as to claim they 'played an important role

in criticizing some of the inappropriate criticisms of Israel at the NGO Forum,' neglecting to mention they watched in silence as Jewish NGO voices were stilled and 'Zionism is racism' becoming the order of the day.

Amnesty International was less cagey. Its *Report for 2002* speaks of the conference's success "in highlighting the extent of racism around the world [such as]... the plight of... the Palestinians."⁴⁸

Amnesty International and other NGOs pledged that they would continue to campaign to ensure that governments do not forget their obligations to combat racism. In fact, to be specific, in the words of the NGO Declaration, Amnesty International and other NGOs pledged to "call for the reinstitution of UN resolution 3379 determining the practices of Zionism as racism practices" and to "call upon the international community to impose a policy of complete and total isolation of Israel as an apartheid state."⁴⁹

Only much later did both organizations devote more substantial analysis to the character of the Palestinian attacks. In November 2002 Human Rights Watch published a 170-page report on this subject and said: "Palestinians who launch suicide attacks against Israeli civilians are guilty of 'crimes against humanity.'" They added, "Yasser Arafat has not done enough to deter them."⁵⁰

From Johannesburg to Durban

At the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in the summer of 2002, Palestinians tried to disrupt the Israeli events. This time the South African government restrained the demonstrators.

Shimon Samuels, European Director for International Liaison at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Paris attended the summit. He concluded that:

What began in Durban has not ended here... The undercurrents, despite all the important themes of the conference, the thrusts of foreign policy, are the same... What happened in Durban made the United Nations central to the new human rights theology, in which Israel is the anti-Christ... Israel then becomes the villain in every story, whether the issue at hand is sustainable development, health or human rights... You are the enemy of mankind... What is happening here on the level of non-governmental organizations is exactly that continuation.⁵¹

The UN 'Nazifies' Israel

Cotler mentions the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) as another example of unfair attacks levied against Israel. While the UNCHR has never accused China, which has one of the world's poorest performances on human rights, thirty percent of its indictments are against Israel.⁵² Similarly, Israel became the only country indicted in more than fifty years of the Geneva

Convention, “not Cambodia, not [any country in the Balkans] with its ethnic cleansing, not Rwanda with its genocide, not the Sudan with its killing fields.”⁵³ Cotler’s interview details the way the United Nations singles out Israel and the Jewish people for discriminatory treatment in the international arena.

In September 2002, anti-Israel activity of another United Nations agency was exposed. The Anti Defamation League (ADL) reported that Palestinian children were being taught how to become terrorists in summer camps organized by the Palestinian Authority, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The ADL’s national director, Abraham Foxman, noted how a number of these camps were funded by UNICEF, “an organization that has traditionally sought to improve the welfare of children.”

The ADL stated: “At the summer camps, children were encouraged to learn how to play a role in terrorist attacks, to learn how to shoot guns, and they were given instruction in how to blow up Israeli buses and settlements. Suicide bombers were also glorified with a number of camp groups being named for them.”⁵⁴

In October 2002, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Jane Kirkpatrick reminisced about her four year tenure there from 1981–1985. She said in her keynote speech at the Zionist Organization of America 2002 Justice Louis D. Brandeis Award Dinner: “The United Nations hasn’t really improved much in the years since I was there, and it hasn’t really improved much at all with respect to Israel... I was very deeply shocked by the simple anti-Semitism that pervaded the place... We need to speak out about the calumny spoken at the UN.”⁵⁵

Europe’s Anti-Israel Bias

When discussing the current defamation of Israel and the Jewish people, it is often remarked that the main defamers are undemocratic Arab countries which did not enjoy much moral standing in the world even before September 11, 2001. The defamers’ defenders claim that one cannot compare this with the Nazis, whose ideas found resonance in many European countries infested with anti-Semitism.

This response ignores many other factors which strengthen the defamation discourse. These include the influence in Western society of bodies with business interests in the Arab world, the dependence of Europe on oil from Arab and other Islamic countries, and the large number of Muslims who now live in the West, many of whom have voting rights. In recent years evidence has shown how Islamist fundamentalists blend into the moderate Muslim majority and influence it.

The European Union has often chosen to take extreme pro-Arab positions in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Arab world’s undemocratic, totalitarian character is intentionally ignored, as is the support for terror among sizable sectors of Palestinian society and the abundance of anti-Semitic fascist and neo-Nazi literature in the Arab world. European leaders also look the other way when Palestinians execute or lynch other Palestinians.

At the same time, moral condemnation of Israel has often been stressed beyond all reason by European politicians and media. Although the Europeans are followers rather than leaders in defaming Israel, they have nonetheless been playing a most significant role. Their attitudes are particularly hypocritical given Europe's past, not only during the Holocaust, but also before and after it.

European Governments Concealing Anti-Semitism

Physically violent anti-Semitic attacks in Europe are carried out by marginal figures in society, often Arabs. Several observers now believe that Europe's political positions toward Israel have helped lay the emotional infrastructure for this aggression.

European governments often conceal local anti-Semitism. For example, according to French sociologist Shmuel Trigano:

This situation is best exemplified by the anti-Semitic attacks on the Jewish communities of France provoked by North African groups in reaction to Middle East events. There were around 450 anti-Semitic assaults between autumn 2000 and spring 2002. Yet for over a year the media and the authorities implemented an incredible news blackout on discussion of these attacks. This blackout, coupled with the pro-Palestinian bias of the media and public opinion, created a feeling of helplessness and abandonment within the Jewish community.⁵⁶

This same issue is discussed extensively in a report published in August 2002 by the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, entitled *Fire and Broken Glass: The Rise of Anti-Semitism in Europe*. Michael Posner, executive director of this independent, New York-based group, said on the occasion of its publication:

European governments are inadequately reporting anti-Semitic violence, with some providing little public information on even the most serious hate crimes... Yet timely, accurate, and public information on crimes of racist violence are essential for effective action to suppress such violence.⁵⁷

The organization also sent out a press release stating:

In Europe, anti-Jewish animus has included physical assaults on individuals, and fire-bombings, gunfire, window smashing and vandalism of Jewish homes, schools, synagogues and other community institutions. Vandals have desecrated scores of Jewish cemeteries across the region, daubing anti-Jewish slogans, threats, and Nazi symbols on walls and monuments, while toppling and shattering tombstones... Jews and people presumed to be Jewish have been assaulted in and around centers of the Jewish community, in attacks on Jewish homes, and in more random street violence. Attackers shouting racist slogans have thrown stones at children leaving Hebrew-language schools and

worshippers leaving religious services. In street violence, attackers shouting racist slogans have severely injured people solely because they were thought to have a Jewish appearance... The resulting environment, particularly where anti-Jewish attacks occur with relative impunity, is a climate of fear and encouragement for further hatred and violence.⁵⁸

II. ANALYZING EUROPEAN ATTITUDES

Over the past decades, considerable attention has been given to European attitudes toward the Jews during the Holocaust. Knowledge about this topic has continuously increased in recent years, partly as a result of major international discussions on material restitution issues.

This debate has also given some impetus to the study on how European societies related to the Jews in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Yet this subject remains largely opaque and neglected. Even a few years ago, an integrated study of Europe's moral attitudes toward the Jews in the post-war period would have ranked low on the large diversified Jewish agenda. Its relevance, if considered a significant subject at all, would have been couched in such vague terms as, "the historical truth has to be told" or "it is part of the general study of human rights." Today, assessing moral attitudes toward the Jews in post-war Europe has become important, if not crucial, for understanding Jewish public affairs. When exposing the persistent anti-Semitic character of many current European attacks on Israel, examples taken from Europe's recent history must play a major role.

In this section, we consider several aspects of the main thesis of this book: that developments in post-Holocaust Europe already prefigured the adversities Israel and the Jews are facing there today. It also explores how some events contributed to laying parts of the foundation for Europe's current discriminatory attitudes.

National Myths and Responsibility

National myths about the behavior of European countries during the Second World War have played an important role in their societies' distorted post-war attitudes to the Jews. In an interview with Shmuel Trigano, he analyzes French society's unwillingness to discuss the Shoah. He relates this suppression to the myth created by General Charles de Gaulle that the 'true France' was akin to the Free French abroad and to the underground opponents of the Nazis, rather than an accomplice of the Vichy regime.

Based on their national myths, many other European governments still claim that they should assume no – or only limited – responsibility for misdeeds committed against the Jews during their country's occupation. For example, in Spring 2000, in an interview for Israeli radio, Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok repeated

what he had said the previous day to Dutch community representatives in Israel. "The Dutch have never been responsible for the misbehavior of the Germans in the Netherlands during the war."⁵⁹ He completely neglected to mention the demonstrable co-responsibility of the Dutch authorities, institutions and many individuals. In their preparations for the extermination of the Jews in the Netherlands, the Germans received considerable assistance from the Dutch administrative infrastructure. The occupiers used only a few of their own forces. Most of the job of putting the Dutch Jews on their first steps on the road to extermination was carried out by the Dutch.⁶⁰

A Straight Line of Responsibility

Regarding discrimination against the Jews after the war, when Western European countries were once again democratically ruled, present governments often prefer to remain silent. A straight line of responsibility runs from the post-war authorities toward those in power today. Admitting the Jews' post-war discrimination means accusing one's own democratically elected predecessors and countrymen.

An interview with Dutch political scientist Isaac Lipschits, elaborates on the Dutch government's many post-war methods of discriminating against the Jews. Despite all facts to the contrary, the Dutch government still denies this was intentional. On March 21, 2000, the Dutch government sent a document to the Dutch Parliament acknowledging that "looking backwards with today's knowledge and eyes" there was "too much formalism, bureaucracy and, above all, chill in the postwar restitution process." In view of this, "the government expresses sincere regrets and apologizes to those who suffered then, without however presuming wrong intentions by those responsible."⁶¹

The Nazis Started with Words

The current hate campaign against Israel and the Jewish people recalls many elements of the prewar decades. None of the waves of anti-Semitic outbursts since the war have reached today's intensity. In the post-modern period, the number of possible scenarios for the future is so high that this cannot be a practical tool for analysis. One must rather search for other gauges to assess what the future may bring. Intensifying intermittent signals over a long period is one of those. The increase in anti-Semitism is thus most perturbing.

During the Weimar Republic, the Nazis tried to 'kill the Jews with words.' Such propaganda instilled a virulent anti-Semitism in much wider circles of European society than was previously the case. After the Nazis' rise to power in 1933, verbal attacks were followed by economic discrimination, financial despoilment and later by the physical destruction of the Jews. Even if this had not been fully planned, its dynamics had largely been ingrained.

It is not widely known that, even during the war, several prominent Nazi opponents expressed discriminatory attitudes toward the Jews. This phenomenon has been studied in some detail by Israeli historian David Bankier (see his interview in this volume). Bankier explains how, both in Germany and in the Czech, Polish and French underground, many prominent figures held the position that Jews – if not all, then most of them – should be discriminated against and/or deprived of full citizenship after the war.

Some Dutch officials of London's government-in-exile had different worries when preparing for post-war Holland. They were concerned about the possible impact of Dutch Jews receiving significant donations from abroad:

It is possible... that large donations may be made available from the United States for Dutch Jews. Should such a drive grow too large, it might accentuate the gap between the non-Jewish and Jewish sector of our people. The Government should manage to convince the donors [of this danger], however well-intentioned they may be.⁶²

Analyzing Moral Attitudes

When investigating European post-war attitudes toward the Jews, one realizes how complicated – and poorly studied – this subject is. The period to be assessed spans well over fifty years. Furthermore, Europe cannot be analyzed as a single entity. There is a radical difference in developments between democratic Western Europe and Eastern European countries. The latter were under communist regimes until the late 1980s. Many Jews who had survived the Nazi persecutions were victimized again by non-democratic rulers.

There are major differences in attitudes toward the Jews in different Western European countries, although common patterns frequently recur with different intensities. The studies undertaken to date thus mainly deal with specific topics in individual countries, rather than taking a broader pan-European perspective. Indeed, the aggregation of the limited material available, would not enable a general overview of the subject. Finally, many issues must be viewed from a multidisciplinary perspective which studies attitudes within an integrated framework, including historical and political, cultural, educational, psychological and communications aspects.

Following an analysis of the broader picture, the main way to initiate such a search is to assemble the fragments on individual topics for each country. Many topics merit monographs yet to be written. Through analyzing the attitudes of individual countries toward Jews, according to the key elements discussed below, an overall picture can be developed over time. This will, however, not only be a lengthy but also a costly – if important – project.

Meanwhile, any understanding of the issue will be, at best, impressionistic. To reach partial conclusions within a shorter timeframe, a different methodological

approach is required. Our strategic assessment, proposed below, involves assembling broad indications by interviewing leading experts from various fields on key issues. This approach has been pursued in the 15 interviews which follow this essay. The picture is also enlarged by studying some major events and issues in individual countries in detail below.

III. THE AFTERMATH OF THE HOLOCAUST

After the Holocaust, Jewish survivors wanted to be socially reintegrated. Many had lost their entire families. They wished to return home or to emigrate to better societies. They wanted to gain a sense of belonging. These tortured and persecuted individuals expected that democratic justice would also punish the perpetrators for the crimes they had committed. In many instances, democratic European societies failed to do so.

Those who had been robbed or looted wished to retrieve their property or to be sufficiently compensated for it. Some expected their native countries to show solidarity by sharing their losses. These restitution issues were only partly dealt with and the process was often drawn out for a prolonged period, sometimes to the point of virtual irrelevance to the original victim. Residues of these subjects today – nearly 60 years after the war – are still on many countries' agenda. A few elderly war criminals are still being investigated or face trials. Several financial restitution issues, even today, have not yet been brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

Pieter Lagrou studied various aspects of the return of the Jews to European society after the Holocaust.⁶³ He concluded that:

Post-war Europe was not a promising setting for the emergence of a multicultural, tolerant and cosmopolitan society, very much to the contrary. The emigration of hundreds of thousands of Jews from Europe during these years, including the miserable conditions of a protracted period of transit in displaced persons camps (where the emigrants were hostage to the political arm-twisting between Britain and the United States about the emigration quotas to Palestine and America respectively), are a powerful illustration of this.⁶⁴

The Main Elements of Analysis

The main elements to be systematically analyzed in order to determine Europe's moral attitude toward the Jews in the post-war period are:

1. What was the nature of the Jews' social re-integration in the various European countries after the war? That is: How were they received into society when they returned from concentration camps or hiding? How promptly, and to what extent, were their rights restored? What general efforts were made to rehabilitate the persecuted?

2. How did European countries deal with the moral aspects of economic restitution? Did the governments require the general population to show financial solidarity with those who were the hardest-hit by making payments from state budgets? Did the Jews retrieve what had been stolen? Did the law favor those who had been robbed or those who now held stolen assets? Did the Jews receive compensation for unrecoverable property? How bureaucratic, difficult or drawn-out was the restitution process? How humane were its procedures? Did Jews receive payments for non-material damages?

3. Was justice done? How much of an effort was made to arrest and bring war criminals to trial? How were the Jews' persecutors punished? Were crimes committed against Jews actually an important factor in trials? (It is a mistake to consider these issues as exclusively legal, since significant moral implications exist.)

4. How is the Holocaust remembered? Is its history recounted at all and, if so, how truthfully? (This will become increasingly important as most Holocaust survivors have now passed away; the remaining witnesses are mainly child survivors.) What will be the future of memory after all the survivors have died? (Large parts of the battle on this issue are still ahead.)

5. What do European countries recount about their own post-war history? How much do politicians embellish the oft-problematic role of the government authorities in reintegrating the Jews after the war?

6. How is the present generation being educated about the Holocaust and its aftermath? How will Holocaust education be structured in the future? (This could indicate what moral lessons countries have learned from the Holocaust era.)

The above list is incomplete. One can suggest additional indicators of moral attitudes, such as the national authorities' positions toward the custody of Jewish war orphans or how they preserve Holocaust-related sites. One could also compare how Jewish survivors were financially dealt with after the war, compared to Nazi-collaborators.

How were Rescuers Treated?

Another – more limited – indicator could, perhaps, be how the rescuers of the Jews were treated in post-war society, particularly those who had broken their country's laws while performing such acts.

One such example is St. Gallen Police Chief Paul Grüninger. After the Austrian Anschluss, he started assisting in the illegal entrance of refugees into Switzerland. He was almost the only speaker, at a meeting of police chiefs on August 17, 1938, who supported a more generous asylum policy for Switzerland. According to the protocol he said: "Refugees cannot be returned [to Nazi Austria] out of human considerations. We should let many in." He even 'legalized' the entrance of refugees after the border closure by predating the date they had crossed the border in

official documents. He also sent entrance permits to prisoners in Dachau, enabling them to leave the camp.

In spring 1939, Grüninger was deposed from his position. Rumors accusing him of taking bribes, while never confirmed, damaged his reputation. At the end of 1940, he was found guilty by the St. Gallen court of having abused his duty and having falsified documents. Not until 1970 did the St. Gallen government recognize the humanitarian, life-saving aspects of his efforts. He was rehabilitated only many years after his death, in 1995. By that time Switzerland had already come under international criticism for its treatment of dormant Jewish bank accounts.⁶⁵

After his deposition, the Jewish Sternbuch family, who had been deeply involved in rescue efforts, helped Grüninger earn a livelihood. In 1971 he was honored by Yad Vashem as one of the 'Righteous among the Nations.'⁶⁶

Social and Sociological Aspects

When studying the social and sociological aspects of post-war European attitudes toward the Jews, it would be erroneous to put the sole emphasis on how specific Jews progressed professionally or on how they were accepted when mingling with non-Jews. Many Jews indeed held high positions in the European academic, judiciary and business world. Several also achieved very senior political positions. Austrian socialist Bruno Kreisky was Austria's Chancellor from 1970–1983. Many Jews have mixed memories of him because of his negative attitude toward Israel. The election of a Jewish prime minister did help 'clean up' the image of this perpetrator country parading as a victim. As American historian Bruce Pauley noted:

A cynic could, of course, retort that Kreisky's popularity was based in part on his coolness toward Zionism and sympathetic treatment of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The fact remains, however, that no Jew of any political persuasion (with the possible exception of Otto Bauer) could have become a chancellor during the First Republic, let alone remained the popular leader of the country for thirteen years.⁶⁷

Some Jewish politicians identified with Jewish communities. In France, Prime Minister René Mayer was a member of the central Consistoire of French Jews and Vice President of the Executive of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. Léon Blum became France's first Jewish prime minister in 1936 and briefly returned as prime minister in one of the post-war cabinets. Before the war he had been a member of the International Socialist Pro-Palestine committee and the Jewish Agency. Pierre Mendes-France was a consistent supporter of Zionism and openly championed the cause of Israel. On the other hand, though perceived as a Jew by part of the French public, Prime Minister Laurent Fabius was born, after 1945, to Jewish parents who had converted during the war.⁶⁸

The Belgian Deputy Prime Minister Jean Gol had held leading functions in Jewish youth and student movements. In 1993 Ignatz Bubis, president of the Central Council of the Jews in Germany, was widely mentioned as a possible candidate for the German presidency; but he declined, saying that he didn't believe that Germany was ripe for deciding that a Jew could become president.⁶⁹

The same trend of greater prominence of Jews in politics expressed itself at lower levels. Before the war there had never been a Jewish mayor in Amsterdam, where the Jews comprised about 10% of the population. After the war there were four Jewish mayors, in a city where the Jews represented only about 2% of its inhabitants.

The many mixed marriages of European Jews may be considered both a sign of their assimilation and of their acceptance by non-Jewish European society.

Interest in the Jewish Cultural Heritage

Although the Jews are much less numerous in Europe than before the war, their cultural heritage has become of more general interest. Since 2000, on the annual European Day of Jewish Culture, activities open to the general public are held all over Europe. In 2001, 23 countries participated in this event, which "aimed at recognizing the Jewish heritage as an integral part of the cultural heritage of Europe, promoting tourism to Jewish heritage sites, and fostering both Jewish pride and a sense of European Jewish identity."⁷⁰

Many movies meant for a general audience feature Jewish characters. The curiosity aroused by *klezmer* music is another example.⁷¹ So is Jewish food. After the fall of communism, this trend began penetrating Eastern Europe. Yet all this, on which there has been much media focus, forms only one part of the picture.⁷²

On the other hand, the intensity and the breadth of the recent outburst of European anti-Semitism suggests that negative feelings, while repressed, must have been latent in Europe for many years. Its nature and violent eruption further suggest that many negative aspects of post-war European attitudes toward the Jews have often been understated. It is with these aspects that this essay mainly deals.

The 'Moral Restitution' Debate

The discourse concerning Europe's post-war moral attitudes toward the Jews is not only recent. However, the highly publicized debate on supplementary financial restitution to be paid to the Jews spawned the misleading phrase 'moral restitution.' This concept has remained a vague, junior partner of material restitution. It implies that the European side has had an immoral attitude toward the Jewish one. 'Moral restitution' has often been mentioned in the media, by both sides, without ever being defined in detail. Neither has its overall importance in the Jews' relationship with general society been properly assessed.

The term 'material restitution' is easy to understand. It concerns the return of money, securities, buildings, works of art and other possessions stolen during World War II from Jewish individuals or communities. Some have been given back, others still need to be returned. (In particular, many Jews originating in Eastern Europe will never retrieve most of their possessions.) While financial assets can be returned, morality cannot be 'restituted.' Indeed, the term itself has become a dividing, rather than a uniting, force and, critics argue, it would be preferable to find an alternative expression. Although the guilty could and should have been punished, this is primarily a matter of legal justice, even if it also has moral aspects. It is not an act of 'restitution,' since the survivor can never return to what he was before the injustice, the family members he lost cannot be resuscitated, and his suffering cannot be undone. The resulting traumas will remain forever.

In this confused and dispersed discussion, others claim that 'moral restitution' is achieved when rights to financial payments for non-material damages are recognized. Conversely, some Holocaust survivors have refused to ask for the financial restitution due them, arguing that this 'blood money' would morally absolve their persecutors. Holocaust psychologist Shai Schellekes says that this is especially true "if they perceive the money to be another attempt to make good the unforgivable."⁷³

Yet others claim that, even if some Jews forego fighting hard for those payments (*inter alia* out of a fear that it may increase anti-Semitism), the fact that it is granted still amounts to moral restitution.

Another view holds that the very fact that the Holocaust has become a landmark of inextinguishable guilt in European history itself constitutes a sign of moral restitution. Yet others consider Europe's support for the establishment of the state of Israel the greatest moral rehabilitation of the Jews possible. For example, Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer expressed this position at the JCPA's first Herbert Berman Memorial Symposium in 2001.⁷⁴

This debate reveals two alternative approaches to analyzing Europe's moral attitudes toward Holocaust issues in an integrated manner. One is to include various positive aspects of Europe's moral attitudes toward the Jews under the inadequate, if oft-used, heading of 'moral restitution.' Another involves coining a more defensible new term, for instance 'moral rehabilitation.' Both approaches are unsatisfactory, and in the following analysis neither are used.

Are Apologies Desirable?

Another important aspect of this unfocused and frequently chaotic discourse concerns the various apologies by governments and other bodies for what was done to the Jews during and after the war. These have either been made separately or have accompanied restitution settlements. Some observers claim that many such apologies are not morally motivated, but rather represent political pressure or a fear of economic boycotts in the United States.

These arguments are often made *vis-à-vis* the Swiss government's apologies in the previous decade. For years Switzerland consistently supported continuing injustice, especially with regard to dormant accounts in Swiss banks. Many view the apologies of Eastern European states keen to join Western institutions such as NATO in the same light. Similarly, many claim that Germany could not have re-entered the family of civilized nations without apologies and restitution for material and immaterial damages. The German government, by the way, coined a semantic misrepresentation, to describe this reparation process, *Wiedergutmachung* ('making good again'). This term wrongly pretends that such payments go far beyond simple justice to 'make good' what, can never be repaired.

Matters of Conscience: A Declaration of Guilt

Some observers say that the Jews should not request apologies, because deciding whether to apologize or not is a matter of conscience. Furthermore, what value is there to apologies not being made by either the criminals themselves, or even representatives of their generation, but by the latter's children or grandchildren? Others hold that this makes apologies less meaningful, but not necessarily meaningless.

The opposing argument holds that apologies, much more than the mere recognition of injustice done, constitute a clear declaration of irrevocable national guilt toward their Jewish counterparts. They will remain well-documented for future generations, after all survivors will have passed away. In this view, it is hardly relevant whether the apology has been forced or, *in extremis*, is even false in the eyes of the cynical government representative who makes it.

In practical terms, there is much to be said for the latter position. Once countries have not only recognized their guilt but have also apologized for it, a common basis of what is normative has been established. Such apologies cannot only be quoted in future discussions and conflicts with the apologizing governments, but also in discussions with others with whom the Jews or Israel continue to run into regular conflict, for example, the Vatican and the Red Cross.

Apologies have even been expressed by some companies. The German Bertelsmann publishing house, had misrepresented for decades, its activities during World War II. When this was exposed in 1998, it appointed an independent historical commission. In view of its findings, company chairman Gunter Thielen expressed "our sincere regret for the inaccuracies the Commission has uncovered in our previous corporate history of the World War II era, as well as for the wartime activities that have been brought to light."⁷⁵

IV. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND COMMUNICATION FACTORS

Some general remarks are required about psychological rehabilitation. The position that it should be an important factor in assessing the post-war moral

rehabilitation of the Jews in Europe is difficult to defend, although those who suffered during the Holocaust did need and didn't receive psychological help.

As one Swedish expert put it:

Mental rehabilitation was conspicuous by its absence. No one took an interest in the traumatic experiences of the survivors, nor in their earlier history. As human beings with psychological problems, they were often greeted with utter silence. People were afraid, and probably also ashamed, to be inquisitive and to become acquainted with them.⁷⁶

When discussing this, however, one has to realize that problems of psychological traumas were hardly understood by professionals – both Jewish and non-Jewish – after the war. Many of the drugs used in treatment today did not yet exist. Few professionals comprehended that the suppression of strong emotions by the survivors might later cause major psychic disturbances.

Dutch psychiatrist Jan Bastiaans, an international pioneer in dealing with the psychological problems of Holocaust survivors, wrote as late as the mid-1980s:

The outside world continues to regard much psychic suffering and mental illness with little tolerance. Where today is there sufficient tolerance and understanding for mentally disturbed beings, especially for those who are victims of man-made disasters? How many get proper psychotherapeutic help after having been in isolation, in wartime or in some other traumatizing situation?⁷⁷

A Matter of Intuition

The recent arrival in Western Europe of refugees and survivors of war and persecution has renewed interest in how Holocaust survivors were re-integrated into society. Swedish psychiatrist Lilian Levin points out that, even in modern-day Sweden, "there is no inalienable right or compelling judicial law guaranteeing the rehabilitation of children traumatized and depressed by war and persecution."⁷⁸ Psychological assistance to survivors after the war was often a matter of chance and intuition. She cites the case of a traumatized boy, put up at a hotel, who was unable to sleep for fear of terrifying nightmares. Each night he would speak in Polish to the Swedish night receptionist, who did not understand a word. The survivor later stated that the stranger's empathy and simple willingness to listen had saved him from insanity.⁷⁹

There were other major categories of people who had to be psychologically rehabilitated after the war, such as shell-shocked soldiers. Neither governments nor the medical profession knew how to treat them. Thus 'psychological rehabilitation' does not seem a valid criterion for the analysis of post-war moral attitudes toward the Jews in Europe.

Continued Psychological Torture

The survivors' ongoing psychological torture in the post-war period did not only result from war traumas. Even measures meant to alleviate their material suffering, were executed in a way which opened up new psychological wounds. Israeli Holocaust psychologist Nathan Durst elaborates on this in his interview.

Nor should one underestimate the psychological problems involved in the claiming of restitution, problems that are still evident today. In September 2002, Hannah M. Lessing, Secretary-General of the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism and of the General Settlement Fund said that:

Many people who should be filing claims are not doing so, because they don't want to relive their wartime experiences yet again. They have already filled in the forms for Swiss Banks, for Generali Insurance, and for other avenues of restitution – often with much pain and little or no results. They don't want to go through that again.⁸⁰

In 1999 the AFA, an international arbitration institute based in Switzerland, devoted a day-long seminar to the issue of the dormant accounts in Swiss banks. Israeli judge Hadassa Ben-Itto, one of the arbitrators of the Claims Resolution Tribunal (CRT) dealing with investigating claims against these accounts, described the difficulties, practical and psychological, that thousands of people around the world faced in filling out the complicated forms:

These claimants are asked to rummage through old cabinets, seeking ancient documents. They go through emotional upheaval, rekindling painful, sometimes unbearable memories, examining old letters and photographs, writing to authorities in other countries whose language they no longer speak, asking for old certificates from archives which sometimes no longer exist. We arbitrators at the CRT...are striving to discover the people behind these documents, the families behind the family tree. I saw one family tree, with scores of names, where the claimant, a woman, wrote in matter-of-fact language that she had marked in red the names of all family members who had perished in the Holocaust. There were only three names not marked in red on that family tree.⁸¹

National Psychology

The mental suffering of the survivors constitutes one, but not the only, major psychological aspect to be evaluated in assessing European attitudes toward the Jews. Durst connects current European anti-Semitic outbursts with repressed guilt vis-à-vis the Holocaust. An Austrian psychologist, Irvin Rongel, claimed that the Austrians' reaction to the attacks on President Kurt Waldheim's wartime past

was extremely clinical. The entire country was forced to psychologically deal with the history it had spent so long trying to repress.⁸²

Ruth Kluger, who is not a psychologist, observes that even in Germany, which is “more sympathetic than most European countries... there is a rise in anti-Israeli sentiment as part of a growing attempt to extirpate feelings of guilt for the Holocaust.”⁸³

Kluger’s suppositions about rising German anti-Semitism are supported by a poll conducted by researchers of the University of Leipzig and released in September 2002. Twenty-eight percent of respondents felt that Jews have “too much influence.” The increase was particularly high in West Germany where 31% now agreed, compared to 14% four years ago. (Previous polls had contradicted each other on trends in German anti-Semitism.)⁸⁴

Sometimes, however, particularly in the more distant post-war past, feelings of national guilt furthered Jewish or Israeli interests. Avi Beker refers to this in his interview.

When the moral attitudes of Europe toward the Jews in the post-war period are more widely studied, psychologists will have a major role to play. The irrational character of anti-Semitism provides an additional impetus for a psychological perspective. Psychiatrists will also surely be asked how anti-Semitism is transmitted and whether it can be cured. A recent advertisement of the American Jewish Committee indirectly addressed this issue. It was entitled “No one is born hating... But too many are taught how!” It discusses how Arabs inculcate hatred of Christians, Jews and Americans in young children, and concludes that, “Teaching children to hate is the foundation for future terrorism, and yet the international community remains eerily silent.”⁸⁵

Israel, a Test Case for European Failures

In 1993, political scientist Dan Segre interpreted European attitudes toward Jews and Israel in both political and psychological terms. He found that: “the central thread running through these attitudes consisted of long-held historical prejudices, complexes and frustrations.”⁸⁶ In his view, Marxist anti-Semitism had a profound impact on the European left because:

It accepted the principle that Third-World people were by definition proletarian, while Israel was an imperialist stooge. Communism, which claimed that it had immunized itself against anti-Semitism, did not raise its voice against the delegitimization of Israel as a state by the Palestinian National Charter.⁸⁷

To make matters continuously worse in the eyes of the Europeans, Israel is a modern victorious state, whereas they would have been defeated in World War II by an ideology of darkness had it not been for the military efforts of two nations that the Europeans regard as rather uncivilized: the Americans

and the Russians. Modern European historians have begun to realize that the two world wars were, in fact, European wars which Europeans spread to the rest of the world.⁸⁸

According to a certain type of European historical determinism, a state like Israel, created by Zionism, the only national movement ever branded by the United Nations as racist, should lose wars against the Third-World Arabs the same way the Europeans lost their colonies.⁸⁹

In 2002, former Israeli Ambassador to the European Community Harry Kney-Tal expressed his concern about:

a new generation of Western European leaders who grew up on the Palestinian-Arab narrative. That narrative, which is reinforced by Israeli or former Israeli researchers, has nearly totally taken over the academic, political and media discussion of the issues... It is appropriate to the popular worldview in Europe nowadays, which is pacifist and post-modernist, full of guilt toward the former colonies and full of sympathy for oppressed nations demanding self-determination. It also serves electoral interests as well as the traditional interests of Realpolitik, which makes up a large part of E.U. policy.⁹⁰

Communications

Communications is another disciplinary perspective to be considered in much greater detail. One aspect concerns an analysis of the landmark events which enhanced the Shoah's perception in the Western conscience. For example, the Nuremberg trials and their surrounding publicity played an important early role. There is also a broad consensus that the Eichmann trial in 1961 created an unprecedented degree of worldwide Holocaust awareness. Hannah Arendt, who wrote a controversial book on the trial, describes one aspect of its influence:

Eichmann's capture would trigger the first serious effort made by Germany to bring to trial at least those who were directly implicated in murder. The Central Agency for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes, belatedly founded by the West German state in 1958, and headed by Prosecutor Erwin Schüle, had run into all kinds of difficulties, caused partly by the unwillingness of German witnesses to cooperate and partly by the unwillingness of the local courts to prosecute on the basis of the material sent them from the Central Agency.⁹¹

Arendt says that the trial in Jerusalem did not produce any significant new evidence which could be used to find and convict Eichmann's associates. Yet the news of Eichmann's capture and his trial was enough to convince German courts to use Mr. Schüle's evidence.⁹² Trials of Nazi war criminals

have also affected public opinion and awareness in several other countries. Therefore many experts believe that, even today, the prosecution of Nazi perpetrators is meaningful despite their advanced age. This argument is developed in more detail in an interview with Efraim Zuroff, director of the Israel Office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

More recent landmarks which increased Western society's awareness of what had happened to European Jewry include movies such as the NBC television series on the Holocaust (1978), Claude Lanzmann's French documentary film *Shoah* and Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*.

Another landmark in worldwide communication on the Holocaust was the restitution discussion of the late 1990s. Due to the media attention it inspired, the economic aspects of the Holocaust became a central item on the Western agenda. This argument is developed in Avi Beker's interview.

Jews and Non-Jews: A Communications Failure

Other important aspects of Holocaust issues with a potential impact on European moral attitudes toward the Jews have hardly been given any public attention. For instance, few people are aware that the Jews, through defending their own interests, have helped many non-Jews who were previously discriminated against.

One example concerns the CRT tribunal which, in recent years, has investigated claims for monies in the dormant accounts of Swiss banks. It was established largely thanks to the efforts of international Jewish organizations. Initially all concerned were convinced that these dormant accounts belonged predominantly to Jewish Holocaust victims. Subsequent investigations showed, however, that most such accounts belonged to non-Jews.⁹³ It became gradually clear that the Jewish organizations' efforts had spearheaded a major initiative to bring justice to many gentiles. These facts, however, are known only within very limited circles.

The restitution agreements reached by Jewish organizations with the Swiss banks have also served as important precedents for gentile victims, who can now more easily present claims on non-Holocaust-related issues. The Jews did, however, get all the negative publicity for the initial struggle.

Jewish action mainly on behalf of non-Jews extends to still larger issues. The German payments to non-Jewish slave laborers and forced laborers only became possible thanks to the Jewish-initiated restitution processes. Similarly, in the Netherlands, it was only thanks to the government's need to deal with Jewish claims that the Sinti and Roma received restitution.

Israel and the Media

Many other aspects of communication issues remain to be analyzed. Communication-related topics will become increasingly important as multiple Western media and journalists continue to foster anti-Semitism by their one-sided reporting about

Israel. One aspect of this complex phenomenon concerns the respective press rights of an impartial reporter versus a journalist who has, to all extent and purposes, become a party in the conflict rather than a witness to it. Such communication-related issues have only been superficially explored.

Italian journalist Fiamma Nirenstein provides some insight into the objectivity problem. She notes that most international journalists who come to Israel on temporary assignments stay in the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem where the waiters and staff are Palestinians, as are the regular guests. "The support crews are largely Arab, the stringers are Palestinian, and often the cameramen are too... An acquaintance amusedly tells me of overhearing a correspondent thanking his Palestinian source for supplying him with the precise hours of the next day's 'spontaneous' clashes."⁹⁴

Nirenstein herself describes these co-opted journalists as:

slightly vain. Many... still bask in memories of themselves at age twenty, Arab *kaffias* around their necks, on the campuses of American or European universities: young rebels, young heroes, young upsetters of the hegemonic powers-that-be... These are people who feel the weakness of democratic values, their own values; who enjoy the frisson of sidling up to a threatening civilization that coddles them even while holding in disdain the system they represent.⁹⁵

Post-war Elements of Conflict

The return of Jews from deportation or hiding often engendered conflict with parts of their surrounding society. Many non-Jews had benefited from the Jews' disappearance. Some had helped steal, or stolen the Jews' property. Others had moved into their homes. Still others had taken their jobs. Jews often gave temporary custody of their most precious belongings, until their expected return, to non-Jewish neighbors or colleagues.

A number of non-Jews were unpleasantly surprised at the Jews' survival and said so. For example, the son of a Belgian survivor relates that, when his father returned to Antwerp after the war, his neighbor (with whom he had good relations before the war) greeted him by saying: "I thought we had got rid of you."⁹⁶

Though no statistics exist, the number of non-Jews who refused to return Jewish possessions was far from insignificant.

European Governments took advantage of the Jews' heirless property, stolen or not. They also benefited by discriminating against the Jews in a multitude of other ways. Isaac Lipschits describes how this took place in the Netherlands in his interview.

The fate of war orphans was another major issue. Many non-Jews who had saved Jewish children, whose parents were later exterminated, fought to keep them, rather than transfer their custody to family members or Jewish institutions.

History and Memory

There were also profound nonmaterial reasons for conflict between the returning Jews and their surrounding society. Few people had been heroes under the German occupation, although many pretended or wished they had been. In several countries, Nazi collaborators by far exceeded the active members of the resistance. Wishful national myths emerged about the resistance of entire populations to the occupiers. What the few had done, often with little broader influence or support, now became a predominant part of the national memory.

The Jews were an unwanted 'witness unto the nations.' They remembered the true role of most of these indifferent bystanders rather differently. The Jews thus had not only to reconstruct their private lives and reestablish their communities, but they also had to battle for a truthful national memory. This struggle against national myths was often very difficult. The long tortuous road of this battle in France is described in the interview with Shmuel Trigano.

There were other distorting elements. Those who had been deported with the help of their own government authorities, or had been betrayed by their fellow citizens, had mostly not survived. The majority of the survivors had good reasons to be thankful to the non-Jews who had helped them. Many negative Jewish memories about European wartime attitudes had been extinguished in the gas chambers. Thus, the praise rightly due to the small number of 'righteous gentiles' was tendered by both Jewish and non-Jewish co-nationals. However, by justly honoring them, for instance at Yad Vashem, the Jews unwittingly contributed to false national perceptions, as no equivalent attention was focused on the devious acts of so many others.

In light of all these handicaps, it is amazing that the Holocaust has become an integral part of European history. Many museums and memorials are devoted to it; universities have established chairs for it; and there is an ongoing stream of books. The overall process required a major effort over many years. Yet the current outburst of European anti-Semitism shows that satisfaction about the Holocaust's historical centrality should be very limited. The glass is half full at best. More and more one hears remarks suggesting that the Shoah may return.

Anne Frank – A Paradigm of What?

Despite the manifold documentation of Holocaust history, much of it gives only a very partial picture. The story of Anne Frank has become a paradigm of such distortion. It stresses the role of the 'good Dutch.' The house in Amsterdam, where she was hidden, has become one of the Netherlands' most frequented museums. (The main cultivator of Anne's memory was her father, Otto.) Yet very little attention has been given to those 'bad Dutch' who probably betrayed Anne, and the many Dutch officials who dealt with her on her way to deportation and death.

The experience of Dutch film director Willy Lindwer suggests that the management of the Anne Frank House intentionally presents a partial picture. When he approached the foundation's director in the mid-'80s for help on his movie on the last seven months of Anne's life in a concentration camp, he was flatly refused. He was not even allowed to film inside the house. The director made comments along the lines of: "Anne Frank is a symbol. Symbols should not be shown to die in a concentration camp." Undeterred, Lindwer went on to make his movie, "The Last Seven Months of Anne Frank," for which he received the 1988 International EMMY award for Best Documentary.⁹⁷

This was but one of many indications of the foundation's efforts to strip Anne Frank of her Jewishness, as a symbol of the Holocaust and to turn her into a symbol of universal anti-racism. Later when the foundation needed a new logo, the Jewish designer Otto Treuman submitted a design based on Anne Frank's head. It was rejected by the foundation's management, presumably because she looked too Jewish. Treuman had to replace her head with a more abstract logo.⁹⁸

The Delayed Historical Truth of Eastern Europe

In Eastern Europe all debate on the war truth was delayed. Only one ideologically distorted version of history existed, that was imposed by local communist regimes. Even those who might have introduced some external truth didn't do so. In 1979, when Poland was still ruled by communists, Pope John Paul II celebrated a mass at Birkenau. WJC research director Laurence Weinbaum notes that: "the irony of this, of a Catholic mass being celebrated on the grounds of the largest Jewish cemetery in the world, was not lost on anyone – even if the Jews were impotent to stop it."⁹⁹

Former Israeli ambassador Sergio Minerbi accuses the Pope of deliberately Christianizing Jewish themes on his visit there. On that occasion the Pope "stood before the inscription in Polish and spoke about remembering 'the six million Poles' who perished. The number 'six million' rings a bell. It is another Jewish symbol expropriated."¹⁰⁰ Indeed, "During his entire visit, John Paul II did not mention the word 'Jew' once... Even when he stood before the Hebrew inscription there, he referred only to 'the sons of Abraham.'"¹⁰¹ In short, the Pope's message of reconciliation was lost by blurring the Jewishness of the tragedy.

Despite the delay, the process of facing bitter Holocaust truths, which gradually took place in the West, has recently begun in Eastern Europe. How this proceeded in Poland is described in Laurence Weinbaum's interview.

Falsifying Memory, Worse than No Memory

Israeli historian Dov Levin became involved in the struggle for Holocaust truth in Lithuania only after the country's independence and the fall of its communist

regime. He also fights the currently popular myth which idealizes the solidarity between Lithuanians and Jews before the war.

Levin became concerned when he discovered that a number of Lithuanian officers, with whom the Jews had fought for an independent Lithuania, later participated in the mass murder of the Jews. He summarizes his growing indignation:

Falsified memory is worse than no memory. The more I studied it, the angrier I got. The Germans could never have succeeded in the mass murder without the help of the Lithuanians and without the lack of [Lithuanian] help for the Jews.¹⁰²

Preferring to Forget the Past

In 1990 French Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld put up his own memorial plaque in the Hôtel du Parc in Vichy, home to Pétain's wartime government. He didn't request permission, as he knew it would not have been granted. The residents of the apartments to which the hotel had been converted were outraged; and the plaque was defaced. In July 2001, Klarsfeld "organized a solid stone memorial facing the former hotel. This time he informed the municipality, which dared not refuse. Klarsfeld's memorial bears witness to the 75,000 Jews deported from France. This cenotaph, too, is regularly attacked. The desecrators are never pursued."¹⁰³

The city of Vichy's Deputy Mayor for Tourism, Jean-Louis Bourdier, was interviewed in 2002 by an English journalist who suggested it might be psychologically healthy for the town to admit its past. His description of the Deputy Mayor's response is instructive:

Dr. Bourdier is circumspect. "A museum here is risky," he says. "It is something the Jews want, but it would be a monument to shame. We'd end up like the Pope, who apologized for the Crusades and the Inquisition. The Vichyssois are humiliated by this past; they don't want to talk about it. This question of a museum, well, even the National Front wants one, but that's only so they can rehabilitate Pétain. No, I think it is a bit too soon."¹⁰⁴

In many Eastern European cities where the Jews were either a substantial minority, or even a majority, before the war, their memory is expunged from local history. In 2001, *Jerusalem Post* journalist Haim Shapiro visited Tarnopol in the Ukraine, where a third of the population before the war had been Jewish:

We went to the local museum, which has a series of exhibits on the history of the city. It is well-planned and laid out, with a combination of dioramas with scenes of daily life, objects from the past, photographs, and other illustrative material... There is just one problem... there is no mention of the Jews. It is as if they had never existed.¹⁰⁵

The Myths' Decline

Wartime myths thrive in many countries, even in Germany where major efforts have been made to research and disclose the criminal acts of the past. While wanting to construct a solid democratic future, Germany simultaneously cultivated a number of wartime legends. One was that the German army (the *Wehrmacht*) did not participate in the cruelties against the Jews. Former German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt was among those who strongly backed this false image of non-culpability.

Another myth turned all the participants in the 1944 anti-Hitler conspiracy into heroes. This scheme resulted in Count Stauffenberg's failed attempt to kill Hitler on July 20 of that year. By that time, however, it had long been clear that Germany had already lost the war; and war criminals figure among those honored as participants in the attempted coup.

From 1997 an exhibition traveled through Germany to expose the *Wehrmacht*'s war crimes. A member of a well-known Hamburg family, Jan Philipp Reemtsma, sponsored it. Though there were mistakes in the initial exhibition, and it had to be withdrawn and researched anew, much of the historical information regarding war crimes committed by the *Wehrmacht* was irrefutable.¹⁰⁶

When interviewed about the exhibition in 1999, Helmut Schmidt still refused to confront the facts:

I haven't seen the Reemtsma exhibition. I lived through all that. I was an officer [in the *Wehrmacht*]. I don't think one should accuse the 18 million soldiers of the *Wehrmacht* of crimes against humanity... There was equality in the trenches; camaraderie in the battles; and then there were the conspirators of July 20, the *crème-de-la-crème*, the honor of Germany.¹⁰⁷

The original 1997 exhibition led to extreme-right protests in Munich. When the revised exhibition opened in October 2002, there was a similar demonstration under the motto "The German *Wehrmacht* fought courageously and decently! Stop this untruthful exhibition!" However, the counter-demonstrators were much more numerous.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the city's municipal council unanimously adopted a resolution which said that "the responsibility of parts of the *Wehrmacht* and, in particular, its leadership for crimes of National Socialism cannot and should not be denied."¹⁰⁹

Inviting Israelis to Honor German Soldiers

How necessary Reemtsma's efforts are was again clarified in October 2002 when the German Embassy in Israel was planning a memorial ceremony for Germans killed while serving in the German army. The German military attaché in Israel, Colonel Ernst Elbers, sent invitations also to various Israelis to participate in the event to honor the memory of "the fallen and missing servicemen in both world wars" who served in the German army.

Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* commented: "Elbers, who is posted in Tel Aviv for only about a year, defended his government's commemoration policy with an obstinacy not devoid of the familiar tone of an officer fulfilling orders. He took pains to note that he himself was born after the war, and two of his uncles, whom he did not know, fell on the front." According to the paper, Elbers had said "The memorial ceremony is intended to symbolize 'reconciliation.'" *Haaretz* added "One of his innovative contributions to this reconciliation, in speaking to an Israeli audience, is the comment that in his opinion 'there is no point in dividing the dead into good dead and bad dead.'" ¹¹⁰

In view of the many complaints, the German Embassy postponed the event. Its spokesman said, "We still intend to hold the ceremony itself. We understood that the text on the invitation about commemorating soldiers killed or missing in both world wars aroused anger in Israel. Perhaps it will be dedicated, as it was a few times in the past, to the memory of World War I soldiers, but we still have to discuss the framework and nature of the ceremony." ¹¹¹

Education

It took a long time to understand that memory of the Holocaust had to be accompanied both by research on its origins and education, in order to try to avoid its repetition. The Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem played a central role in promoting this realization. Nowadays, the role of survivors in this educative process has become very important. Their testimonies have been key in providing audiences with a better understanding of history.

James Smith, a practicing Christian, who together with his brother Stephen founded the Beth Shalom Holocaust memorial and education center in Nottingham, England, notes that:

Visitors, especially younger ones, find it much easier to relate to real people. They see a survivor in front of them and think: 'This could be my grandmother. It could happen to anyone.' ¹¹²

The strengthening of radical right-wing parties in Europe, as well as other manifestations of extremism, have proved an additional impetus for the study and teaching of the Holocaust. Some Western political leaders have realized that the return of the same ideological motifs which led to the mass murder of the Jews could, in the future, threaten their society as well.

Over the years, the importance of educating Europe's younger generation about the Holocaust has also become better understood. The reasons for this differ somewhat from country to country. Many Germans, having witnessed what their nation was capable of, live in some fear of the future. '*Angst*,' the German word for anxiety, has become a recurrent motif in the analysis of the German psyche. Germany's democratic leaders also gradually comprehended that an important part of their rehabilitation as a nation depended

on stamping out anti-Semitism. Teaching about the Holocaust plays an important role in that attempt.

In France, another country where Holocaust education has existed for some time, one frequently hears that there is great difficulty in teaching the subject in schools with many Arab children.

In several European countries, interest in Holocaust education is suddenly accelerating, more than fifty years after the war. Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson took a major step by convening an international conference on Holocaust education, in January 2000, entitled 'The Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust.' Persson was motivated by the influence of Holocaust deniers in his country and the presence of neo-Nazism among young Swedes. Many senior foreign politicians attended the conference and signed its concluding document.

The Growing Interest in the Holocaust

This conference was the prime manifestation of an international desire for Holocaust education. At its opening, Yehuda Bauer said:

An amazing thing has happened in the last decade – in fact, during the last few years. A tragedy that befell a certain people, at a certain time and in certain places, has become the symbol of radical evil, as such, the world over. With a museum on Auschwitz near Hiroshima, and a department to teach the Holocaust at Shanghai University, it has become a matter of universal concern. Major politicians, wrongly but characteristically, compare Saddam Hussein to Hitler or the tragedy in Kosovo to the Holocaust.¹¹³

Bauer asked how one could explain this growing interest in the Shoah, despite the subsequent occurrence of other genocides – particularly since, given the comparatively small number of Jews in the world, there were more non-Jewish than Jewish victims of World War II. (He added that he considered it immoral to "compare sufferings.") Bauer then answered his own question:

There is something unprecedented, frightening, about the Holocaust of the Jewish people that should be taught. For the first time in the bloodstained history of the human race, a decision developed in a modern state, in the midst of a civilized continent, to track down, register, mark, isolate from their surroundings, dispossess, humiliate, concentrate, transport and murder every single person of an ethnic group, as defined not by them but by the perpetrators. Not just in the country where the monster arose, not just on the continent the monster first wished to control, but ultimately everywhere on earth, and for purely ideological reasons. There is no precedent for that.¹¹⁴

Bauer concluded that because the Holocaust happened once, it could happen again, but not necessarily "in the same form, not necessarily to the same people,

not by the same people, but to anyone by anyone.” That did not, however, detract from the importance of Holocaust education, as:

We don’t live in abstractions. All historical events are concrete, specific, particular. It is precisely the fact that it happened to a particular group of people that makes it of universal importance, because all group hatred is always directed against specific groups, for specific reasons, in specific circumstances...Evil is always concrete, specific. If you want to teach about it, teach specifics, with actual cases of real people.¹¹⁵

In his interview, Bauer remains cautious as to what extent the successors of the leaders who attended the Stockholm Conference will be interested in Holocaust education. His guarded attitude is shared by Stephen Smith of Beth Shalom in Nottingham:

There is a very big leap between knowing about the Holocaust and being changed by it. There is a presumption that, if you teach the Holocaust, it makes for a better world; but I don’t buy it. We need to know what happened; but there’s a big leap between knowing what happened and acting on it. I am less worried about what the grandparents of our young generation did sixty years ago; I am more concerned about what this generation’s grandchildren will do. Will they have learned anything?¹¹⁶

Simon Epstein shares this view:

It is a great illusion of Diaspora Jewry that if one wins the battle of memory of the Shoah this will eliminate anti-Semitism. That struggle has to be undertaken for its own merits. It is naivety to think that when you educate about the Shoah you will prevent attacks on Jews.¹¹⁷

Self-help

Since little research has been conducted on post-war moral attitudes toward Jews, it is difficult to analyze specific elements on a Europe-wide basis. Still, some motifs recur so frequently that even preliminary analysis brings them to the surface. A few such examples are given below.

One common theme is that the fight for Jewish rights has to be led by the Jews themselves. There are many examples of this. In his interview, Isaac Lipschits notes that Jewish survivors in the Netherlands often had to make their own efforts to obtain post-war justice. The main Dutch historians dealing with the fate of the Jews during the war were also Jewish.

Similarly, in the second half of the nineties, Jewish Under-secretary of Commerce for International Trade, Stuart E. Eizenstat, author of *The Eizenstat Report*, played a key role in American efforts to investigate the behavior of neutral countries during the war. In his introduction he wrote that the most compelling reason for renewed interest in the restitution issue was due to:

the extraordinary leadership and vision of a few people who have put this issue on the world's agenda: the leadership of the World Jewish Congress, Edgar Bronfman, Israel Singer and Elan Steinberg; a bipartisan group in the U.S. Congress, in particular, the early, tenacious and important role of Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York; and President Bill Clinton, who has insisted on our establishing and publishing the facts.¹¹⁸

Likewise, the belated Norwegian restitution investigation also would not have reached a satisfactory conclusion without the efforts of Norway's small but persistent Jewish community. This is expanded upon in an interview with Michael Melchior.

Self-hate

Another recurrent motif, with both psychological and public affairs implications, is Jewish self-hate. When Jews are called upon to defend their interests, there are some Jews in almost every field who help their enemies by putting major blame on the Jewish side. While scholars have taken an interest in the problem of Jewish self-hate, the issue merits much more consideration by psychologists.

One such case involves historian Norman Finkelstein who published a book entitled *The Holocaust Industry*.¹¹⁹ Israeli historian Ronald W. Zweig, who reviewed it, wrote:

Finkelstein argues that the contemporary use of the Holocaust has created an entire 'industry' which, in the best manner of exploitative capitalism, is not only politically useful but also financially rewarding. Himself Jewish and the son of Holocaust survivors, Finkelstein could allow himself to articulate what many people believe but do not dare say in public. This is especially true in Britain, where socialist circles are anti-Zionist and pro-Palestinian *de rigueur* but struggle to avoid being tarred with the brush of anti-Semitism. The core of Finkelstein's argument is that a cabal of Jewish leaders conspired to extort money from European governments, under the pretext of claiming material compensation for the losses of the Holocaust and for the benefit of the survivors. Once their claims were successful, these organizations then kept the money to themselves and paid the survivors only a pittance. Summarized in this form, the accusation is so unbelievably and totally without foundation that I looked once again at the third chapter of *The Holocaust Industry* to ensure that I had not parodied Finkelstein's argument. But the summary fairly represents what he wrote.¹²⁰

Revenge: Conspicuous by its Absence

Another post-Holocaust theme, 'revenge,' has gained increased impetus due to current media debates regarding the Palestinian uprising. A number of Western

authors have justified the Arab murder of U.S. civilians – for instance in the September 11, 2001 U.S. bombings. Their argument is that, because Arab societies have remained backward, frustration causes some of its citizens to orchestrate attacks like that on the World Trade Center. They add that the Palestinians similarly use suicide bombings against random innocent civilians as a last resort to draw attention to their plight. In short, desperation legitimizes violence, as a sort of revenge for maltreatment.

This is an immoral argument; and it contrasts strongly with the historical reality of the Jewish response. After the Second World War, the plight of European Jewry, six million of whom had been systematically victimized and murdered, was far more desperate than that of the Palestinians today. Indeed, no Palestinians would have been killed in recent times if their society and leadership had not cynically condoned and actively encouraged terrorism against Israeli civilians. Holocaust Jewish survivors, on the other hand, killed few Nazis after the War, and did not engage in massive violent retaliation against collaborators and civilians.

The major contrast between Palestinian and Jewish behavior remains poorly understood. In 1995, long before the second Palestinian uprising, Cardinal Carlos Maria Martini of Milan said in reference to the Shoah:

Now the moment has come to repeat, with greater force, that the task of treating this sore falls first of all upon us in Europe, because here the hideous extermination was carried out...This people, which has been terribly hurt has not requested revenge, it has not run through Europe in processions of migrants; it has not sown bloody terrorism, it has only been seeking, for the last fifty years, security for its land and Diaspora.¹²¹

Unable to Kill Barbie

Indeed, Jewish survivors and their families were, by and large, literally morally incapable of revenge. The following story presents one of the most dramatic of many such sublimations of the natural urge for revenge. The French government had made only very limited efforts to extradite Klaus Barbie, former Gestapo chief of Lyon, from Bolivia. This led Michel Cojot Goldberg to go to Bolivia in 1975 with the intention of killing Barbie, who deported his father and many other Jews to certain death. At the time, Goldberg, a French Jew, was the head of the Caracas office of the world's largest management consultancy, McKinsey.

Goldberg posed as a journalist and met Barbie in a coffee shop in La Paz. When Barbie went to Santa Cruz, in the east of the country, for the weekend, Goldberg decided to go there and kill him. There, Barbie passed only a few meters from the revolver-clad Goldberg, who, however, decided not to shoot.

A few years later Goldberg recounted this story in an autobiographic book, *Namesake*, in which he analyzed his inability to execute the criminal who sent his father to his death:

Obviously justice will now never be done. The man responsible for the death of some ten thousand men, women, and children, usually in hideous circumstances, cannot be [truly] punished for his crimes. What is cutting off the few years remaining to him compared to the deportation to Auschwitz and the death of the forty-one orphans of Izieu, the oldest of whom was only thirteen? How can five smooth bullets, which numb the senses in a fraction of a second, compare to the torture of Jean Moulin and of hundreds of others, day after night? What does a quick death mean to a purveyor of slow death? What is death to a man who has worn the uniform with skull and crossbones? No, justice will never be done... From where I stand I can sometimes see the back of his head... I even go up the stairs to the restaurant and watch Barbie through the little glass swinging-door while he is eating. I can still go in and fire.¹²²

The Jew, Michel Cojot Goldberg, however, could not, and did not. The likely reaction of a Taliban, Hizbullah or Palestinian terrorist under such circumstances, therefore, would tell us more about their personal ethics and culture than about the ethics of revenge and frustration *per se*.

V. COUNTRY REVIEWS

Another important avenue to enlarging our perspective on Europe's post-war attitudes toward the Jews, and to improving our analytical methodologies, is to study relevant events in different countries. It will take a long time before full-fledged national overviews become available; and, in any case, no country is typical of Europe as a whole. Still, the analysis of important or typical issues in specific countries can provide shortcuts to new insights and hypotheses, and can indicate directions for further research. This is attempted in the following series of short vignettes. Due to the preliminary nature of this investigation, many European countries have not been included, although this subject is relevant to them as well.

The mosaic obtained provides an impressionistic picture and, at the same time, an infrastructure for further study. The cases chosen could be replaced or complemented by many others for the same country, and the concepts developed can be often applied to several other nations as well. It remains for other scholars to develop a more complete picture.

Germany

Seldom has a poet caught the impressions of an entire generation about a country with such precision as Holocaust survivor Paul Celan, when he wrote in his *Todesfuge* (Fugue of Death), "Death is a Master from Germany."

Germany's post-war views on many issues radically differed from those of other European countries, due to its wartime history. Its perception of the

Holocaust gradually became clearer; but the involvement of many of post-war Germany's ruling elite in the Nazi-past, usually garnered scant attention. A detailed study of Germany's post-war attitudes toward the Jews is particularly important, atypical or not, because many profound discussions of various aspects of our inquiry were openly held. Equally informative, physically and verbally violent incidents have punctuated this process, which continues until today.

German soul-searching has led to a more intense questioning of the nation's past than in many other countries. Investigating Germany can thus provide methodological tools which can later be applied to other countries.

Some queries expressed in German fora are rarely heard elsewhere. For example, in 2000, Munich University arranged a series of lectures on "How Past is the Past Century?" In one lecture, Reemtsma hypothetically asked what one should respond to somebody who admitted that he wasn't sure whether he would have volunteered as a commando to kill women and children, or to a person, who said that he might have denounced his neighbor to the Gestapo, because he can't stand him. Reemtsma concluded that, today, one would not consider this proof of extraordinary honesty, but rather a painful revelation of deeply immoral and evil attitudes. He suggested such positions should remain private, to be discussed between the person and his psychoanalyst. They did not belong in a public discussion, because there are certain norms or values one should not directly or indirectly challenge.¹²³

Searching for Normalcy

A special German term was coined for the efforts to grapple with one's past, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. One of its aspects is a national desire to live without a collective guilt complex. Another is an individual's desire to mentally digest the crimes of one's direct forbears. Nathan Durst notes in his interview that this is almost impossible.

There is a desperate search for 'normalcy' in Germany. Germans want to be like other nations. This is an absurd quest, *ab initio*, because there is no standard 'normal' nation for any people to try and emulate. The Germans' real quest, however, is to live in an environment which does not regularly raise the issue of the Holocaust *vis-à-vis* their contemporary behavior, a quandary illustrated in the following anecdote. A few years ago, an Israeli student was sitting in an Amsterdam coffeehouse when some young Germans asked for directions to the Anne Frank house. Someone in the vicinity replied: "During the Holocaust your people had less problems finding her."

In 1998, German author Peter Schneider asserted in an interview that "it is important to create an awareness that there have been types of resistance and of totally normal willingness to help those persecuted by National Socialism." The interviewer responded that this attitude was not heroic enough for the Germans.

Schneider replied, "We do not need giant heroes for our history's picture. We should find more 'half-high' heroes, for normalcy. We should not raise our children with pictures of mass murderers only." Schneider added that the Germans had, by now, become a normal people even if "I agree that we don't have a normal history. But where are we headed when the first thing we tell our children is 'You are not normal; you do not belong to a normal nation'? We would be breeding monsters."¹²⁴

Yet many current German events and attitudes keep the controversy alive. One such issue was the lengthy discussion whether a major Holocaust memorial should be erected in central Berlin. Another topic – culminating in major discussions before the 2002 parliamentary elections – was whether extreme anti-Israel positions were acceptable within the FDP Liberal Party.

Walser: A Spiritual Arsonist

Shortly before these elections, German author Martin Walser published *Tod eines Kritikers* (Death of a Critic). The book's main character was largely modeled on the prominent German Jewish literature critic Marcel Reich-Ranicki. The leading German daily, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* had originally planned to serialize the book, but its publishers told Walser they would not proceed because they considered the book anti-Semitic.

Reich-Ranicki explained on television why Walser's book was anti-Semitic. He quoted an article by another German critic, Uwe Wittstock, in the daily *Die Welt*. Wittstock had said that German literature could have a place for clearly negative Jewish figures, but that "the literary critic in the center of the new novel, André Ehrl-König, is not a human being, but a monster of corruption, vulgarity, vanity and lasciviousness."¹²⁵

Two authors, Doron Rabinovici and Robert Schindel, in a discussion on this topic said that the late Ignatz Bubis' characterization of Walser as a "spiritual arsonist," was now shared by more people.¹²⁶

Looking Away from Auschwitz

Walser had already caused a scandal in his 1998 acceptance speech upon receiving the Peace Prize from German book publishers in Frankfurt. He said:

Everybody knows our historical burden. The shame cannot be eliminated. There is not one single day in which it isn't presented to us. Can it be that the intellectuals who reproach us, to our shame, have for even one second the illusion – just because they work in service of this horrible memory and have apologized a little – that they are for one moment closer to the victims than the perpetrators?... During the worst film scenes from concentration camps, I have looked away at least 20 times. No serious person

refutes Auschwitz. No mentally sound person denies its horror. But, when the media presents me this past every day, I find something in me resists the ongoing presentation of our shame. Instead of being grateful for this eternal presentation of our shame, I look away.¹²⁷

Walser's statements yielded many reactions, including Bubis' characterization above. (That Walser was a prominent intellectual aggravated the situation in Bubis' view.) On the 60th anniversary of Kristallnacht, Bubis said that Walser promoted a culture of 'looking away,' which was common in National Socialism, and which Germany should not allow itself to become accustomed to again.

In an interview Bubis also stated that "the way Walser talks about the Holocaust is denigrating for its victims." Walser wants Holocaust-related talk to stop; but "you cannot expect that from the victims. If Walser's ancestors had ensured that the Jews had remained alive, there would be no such discussions about them today."¹²⁸

What would the Jews have Done?

Klaus von Dohnanyi, former mayor of Hamburg, whose father was executed by the Nazis as a resistance fighter, published an article in which he tried to calm the waters. He wrote: "Germans gave the orders. Germans were the commanders. Germans were the organizers (even if often with European help). And Germans were also the spectators. This shame affects us until today as Germans – at least for anybody with an active conscience." Still, he said, it was unfair to try to judge Walser from the outside. Bubis as a Jew had another conscience; for him responsibility as a German began only after the Holocaust. He was liberated from having to say, "We are responsible for the Holocaust."

Von Dohnanyi then added a statement of 'potential equivalence' that caused renewed controversy:

Germany's Jewish citizens must also ask themselves whether they would have been more courageous than most other Germans if, after 1933, only the handicapped, the homosexuals or the Roma would have been brought to the extermination camps. Everyone must try to answer this question truthfully.¹²⁹

In analyzing the Walser-Bubis debate, the historian Hans Mommsen suggested that, "the fundamental question is which position the memory of the Holocaust occupies in the German consciousness. Is the memory of the Shoah, and the crimes this term embodies, an unbearable burden, which asks to be suppressed? Or is it a point of reference for a new German national awareness, willing to accept its National Socialist heritage as a political and moral challenge?"¹³⁰ In the same lecture, Mommsen mentioned that historical research showed that the German elites had collaborated in developing the infrastructure for the criminal

policies of the Nazis – or had even participated in directly and indirectly implementing them – far more than previously supposed.

Had He been Gassed, I could Sleep More Peacefully

Both Walser's 2002 book and his 1998 lecture were landmarks in Germany's continuing debate regarding what is permissible toward Jews today and what is not. An earlier milestone was German author and film director Rainer Werner Fassbinder's 1985 play *Der Müll, die Stadt und der Tod* (Garbage, the Town and Death). Its main character, perhaps modeled on Bubis, was a Jewish property speculator about whom one character said, "Had he been gassed, I could sleep more peacefully tonight." Members of Frankfurt's Jewish community, including Bubis, occupied the theater's stage to prevent the performance. Eventually the play was banned in Frankfurt.¹³¹

During the 2002 debate on Walser's book, the debate about Fassbinder's play was reopened. *Die Welt* wrote that the influence of literature on the development and justification of anti-Semitism was often underestimated. Ernst Cramer pointed out that the still-popular 19th century stories of the Grimm brothers include several tales containing anti-Jewish prejudices and lies. Similarly, everyone still recalled, almost two decades later, the Fassbinder play and its character 'the rich Jew.' At the time people asked whether there was a problem with exposing despicable figures on the stage. According to Cramer, "That is the wrong question. Of course representing an unappetizing character is part of literature. Often even its salt. But when such a figure is depicted as the representative of an entire group, it becomes scandalous and wicked, because it strengthens anti-Semitic prejudices."¹³² The subtitle of that article might have stood for Western Europe in general: "Germany is not an anti-Semitic country, but anti-Semitism is constantly reemerging there."

Israel and Anti-Semitism: Issues in the 2002 German Elections

Attitudes toward anti-Semitism and Israel became a central factor – according to some a determining one – in the 2002 German parliamentary elections. This despite the fact that Germany's 100,000 Jews represent barely one-tenth of one percent of the population and even less of the voters. Nonetheless, several politicians attributed the defeat of the right-wing Christian-Democrat/Liberal opposition to the anti-Semitic and anti-Israel positions of Jürgen Möllemann, the FDP deputy chairman.¹³³

In May 2002 the FDP's faction in the state parliament of North-Rhine Westphalia had accepted a dissident green parliamentarian, Jamal Karsli, into its ranks. Karsli had declared the Israeli army was using Nazi methods and stressed the power of the Zionist lobby in Germany. The enthusiasm with which

Möllemann, the state party leader, had received Karsli, inspired major discussion in the German media.

Both Karsli and Möllemann were criticized by many German politicians, including key FDP figures and German Jewish leaders. Ultimately Karsli resigned from the party and later had to leave its state parliamentary faction. During the discussions, Möllemann said that German Jewish leaders, in particular Michel Friedman, then Vice President of the Central Council of German Jewry, were causing anti-Semitism by their reactions to the affair.¹³⁴

The daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* claimed Möllemann used classic anti-Semitic motifs which so far had only been applied by extreme rightists in Germany. It commented:

The Jew is guilty. This sentence belongs to the obscene brown classics Möllemann takes it from. In interviews he blames Michel Friedman with his intolerant and malicious behavior for the increasing ability of anti-Semites to attract adherents in Germany. In other words, the Jew should keep his mouth shut, should not act so prominently, and should not dare to constantly complain about anti-Semitism. Only an unnoticeable Jew is a good Jew.¹³⁵

A few days before the September election, Möllemann paid hundreds of thousands of Euros, from unknown sources, for a campaign publication in which he attacked both Ariel Sharon and Friedman, neither of whom was running for office in Germany. Friedman had said a few days before that "the murder of people starts with words like those of Martin Walser or Jürgen Möllemann." Friedman admitted that there were also anti-Semites in the Christian Democrats (CDU), his own party, or the Socialists (SPD), but no other major party behaved like the FDP. Friedman added that one should refute these things from the very beginning, and added that Möllemann was already "beyond the beginning."¹³⁶

The FDP's electoral performance fell substantially below that predicted by opinion polls before Möllemann's last-minute attacks were published. The day after the elections, he was asked to resign by the party's leadership.¹³⁷

In fact, over the following weeks, Möllemann had to give up all his party positions, due to illegalities in the financing of his infamous campaign publication. The FDP's treasurer publicly declared that the supposed donors either denied having given money for the publication or had such common names as to be nonidentifiable.

Germany's Nazi past played another role in the same election on a subject unrelated to the Jews. A few days before the election, Socialist German Justice Minister Herta and Paul Amirson compared Bush's methods with respect to Iraq to those of Hitler. Subsequent reactions made it clear that she would be excluded from the new German cabinet. Before that could happen, she announced that she was no longer interested in such a position.

Begin Dressed as a Nazi

Italy's courting of Arab countries is only one of the major factors in its sometimes vulgar and extreme anti-Israel positions, adopted early on among both extreme leftists and mainstream politicians. Several senior Italian politicians emphasize a 'Mediterranean' policy, to compensate for their lack of influence in Europe. Although there is hardly an intellectual willing to admit that latent anti-Semitism exists within Italy's anti-Israeli feelings, Gianni Baget Bozzo, a Catholic theologian, recently asserted, in the left-wing paper *Manifesto*, that "Jewish morals were dictated by a violent God instead of the Christian one."¹⁴⁹

In 1982, after the Lebanese War, Sandro Viola a well-known Italian journalist who writes in the widely read daily, *La Repubblica*, defined Israel as a "people sick of violence." Nuova Società, a publication put out by Turin's communist party, portrayed Prime Minister Menachem Begin dressed as a Nazi on its front cover, with a Star of David distorted into a swastika.¹⁵⁰

Italy's trade unions marched in front of Rome's main synagogue, shouting anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic slogans. Its leader Luciano Lama delivered a speech asking the Jews to dissociate themselves from Israel. A few days later Rome's main synagogue was attacked by Palestinian terrorists. A child was killed and 30 people wounded. Initially the Jewish community did not want the Italian President Sandro Pertini, who had been very critical of Israel, to attend the funeral. After some deliberations it decided otherwise, but specifically requested the representatives of the trade unions not to attend.

What was then acceptable only for the left became, twenty years later, so for part of the mainstream. In 2002 the Italian daily, *La Stampa*, published the epitome of an anti-Semitic cartoon during the siege of the Church of the Nativity, in which Arab terrorists had taken refuge. It depicted Jesus looking up from the manger at a tank saying, "Don't tell me they want to kill me again."

Supporting Iraq Against Israel

No mainstream European politician in the 1980s ever went as far as the Christian Democrat Giulio Andreotti, who has headed several Italian cabinets, in his anti-Israel stance. At an inter-parliamentary conference in Geneva (April 7, 1984), he voted, as Italy's foreign minister, in favor of a motion presented by Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The motion equated Zionism with racism, supported the boycotting of Israel, and defended the right of "the armed struggle for the liberation of Palestine" [i.e. terrorism]. Italy was the only western European country to vote with the Soviet bloc for this motion.¹⁵¹ Later that year, Andreotti and Italian socialist leader Bettino Craxi flew to Tunisia to officially meet with Yasser Arafat. This despite an outstanding Italian justice ministry mandate to capture and try Arafat for supplying weapons to Italian left-wing Red Brigades terrorists.¹⁵²

In 1985 Israel attacked the PLO headquarters in Tunisia, after the murder of three Israeli tourists in Cyprus. Shortly before, there had been several Arab terrorist attacks in Rome. On October 3, the Italian Parliament met to discuss the situation in the Middle East. The session “totally ignored Arab terrorism in Rome and elsewhere and formally attacked Israel. According to both Andreotti, then Minister of Foreign Affairs and the socialist deputy Baget Bozzo, Israel had done worse on this occasion “than what the Nazis had done at the Fosse Ardeatine,” the quarry on the outside of Rome where the Nazis had executed Jewish and non-Jewish hostages during the war.¹⁵³

In the 1990s, Craxi eluded Italian justice by fleeing to Tunisia, after being accused of misappropriating major monies. He did not deny this, but claimed he had used the funds for the Italian socialist party in an illegal, but common, form of party financing. Craxi, now a symbol of Italian political corruption, died in Tunisia in 2000.

Italians do not take such matters too seriously. Even some politicians admit that, in Italy, there is often little difference between theater and politics.¹⁵⁴ As Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said several years ago:

In Italy it is not enough to win elections in order to govern. Italian politics is mainly words, chatter, a kind of play whereby the politicians consider their performance in the media. I don't know how Italy is viewed in the eyes of Israel, but, looking from the inside, it is a backward country with an irresponsible public administration, and efficiency and laws from the Middle Ages.¹⁵⁵

Sergio Romano: The Ideological Base of a Murky Discourse

Against the background of the endless flow of anti-Israel publications and statements, from many parts of the Italian political scene, an intellectual emerged who tried to give an ideological foundation to this large and murky discourse. Sergio Romano, a prominent Italian historian, was formerly Italy's ambassador to NATO and Moscow. In 1997 he published *Lettera A Un Amico Ebreo* (A Letter to a Jewish Friend). The book did not contain footnotes and was a slick combination of constructs which contained remarks which were borderline anti-Semitic, or beyond. In his conclusions Romano claimed that old anti-Semitism was dead in Italy, but that a new anti-Semitism had emerged. Both of his reasons for this exonerated Italy and blamed the Jews themselves. The first was Israel's privileged position thanks to the support of the Jewish communities abroad. The second was the prominence of the Holocaust in twentieth century European history. This was due, he implied, to the collective guilt of some nations and religious cultures.¹⁵⁶ According to Romano:

The strategy of memory fulfills for many a natural need for security. After a long history of oppression and persecution, the memory of genocide is an insurance policy, the best defense against the risk of a repetition. For Israel

it has also, in the past, been an extraordinary diplomatic weapon, a precious source of international legitimization.¹⁵⁷

He characterized Judaism, as having “a fossil catechism... of one of the oldest, most introverted and backward religions ever practiced in the West.”¹⁵⁸

The most detailed Jewish reaction came from Sergio Minerbi who published a book in response. He pointed out that the United Nations’ negative public attitude toward Israel amply refuted Romano’s remark about Israel’s privileged position.¹⁵⁹ He stressed that Romano was merely saying “Dear Jewish ‘friends,’ stop memorializing the Shoah, because it bothers anti-Semites.”¹⁶⁰ He also ridiculed Romano’s remark on the “catechism.” Since there was no such thing in Judaism, how could it be a fossil? He furthermore rhetorically asked Romano, “Whom does it harm if a religious Jew respects the commandments? Is Judaism perhaps ‘archaic and sullen’ only because Romano hasn’t made a minimal effort to study it?”¹⁶¹ Minerbi concluded that many of Romano’s arguments had long ago been raised by revisionist and anti-Semitic historians.¹⁶²

From Neo-Fascists to Acceptable Right-Wing?

In Italy – which has considerably ‘massaged’ the truth of its wartime past – attitudes toward the Holocaust and the Jews remain a recurring public issue. Until the early 1990s, the neo-fascist MSI Party (Italian Social Movement) was outside the Italian mainstream, with a rather stable voter potential of about 5%. In 1992, on the 70th anniversary of Mussolini’s march on Rome, 50,000 people gathered in commemoration, demonstrating in the city’s streets.

In 1995, following years of major political crisis, in which many of Italy’s senior politicians and several judges were accused of corruption, MSI leader Gianfranco Fini created a new right-wing party, the National Alliance. The MSI’s extremists remained outside of it. At its founding convention, the Alliance broke with its neo-fascist past, condemning totalitarianism, racism, intolerance and anti-Semitism. Over the years, Fini, who in his MSI days had proclaimed Mussolini to be “the greatest statesman of the century,” has indeed moved away from such neo-fascist positions.¹⁶³ His party now returns a fairly stable vote in national elections of around 15%, and has become a pillar of Italy’s right-of-center governments.

Fini took a number of steps to reposition himself and his party closer to the democratic center. In 1999 he visited Auschwitz. In 2000 he voted in favor of legislation to establish a Holocaust Remembrance Day and, later, he even supported the idea of Israel joining the European Union. Fini also managed to improve his relationship with the Italian Jewish community. In 2002, Luzzatto said that he was convinced that Fini is a genuine democrat. “He’s saying things today that, in the past, were inconceivable. If I were the prime minister of Israel,

I'd probably invite him for a visit."¹⁶⁴ From an interview with the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, in September 2002, it became clear that Fini was waiting for just such an invitation, which would constitute a personal and political 'moral clearance' from the Jewish people.

Fini's apology to the Jews drew attention to some of Italy's many inner contradictions. When he said in his *Ha'aretz* interview that Italy bears responsibility for what happened after the 1938 racial laws and that it should apologize, he irritated both the extreme right and the extreme left. The former think that Italy should rehabilitate Mussolini. The latter, who include many partisans who fought against Mussolini, asked how such an apology could be made by a pupil of Giorgio Almirante, the founder of Italy's post-war neo-fascist party. The soul-searching will continue and perhaps grow even stronger.¹⁶⁵

After Fini's interview, Victor Emmanuel of Savoy, the son of Italy's last king asked for "forgiveness for his family's ties to fascism and its anti-Semitic laws," a reversal of his 1997 remark that "I do not have to apologize for these laws, which anyway weren't so terrible."¹⁶⁶ In response, Luzzatto noted that Victor Emmanuel had been evasive about the racial laws "which were not signed by the devil, but by a king of the House of Savoy, his grandfather." While Luzzatto accepted Fini's apologies he considered the ambiguous language of Victor Emmanuel unacceptable.¹⁶⁷

A revision of how fascism is presented is now underway in Italy, due to the need to integrate former fascists and neo-fascists into the Italian political system. One Italian minister, Mirko Tremaglia, was even a volunteer in the Republic of Salò, Mussolini's fascist government, which continued to fight alongside Nazi Germany after the official Italian government switched sides.¹⁶⁸

France

As early as 1944, philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre was writing about the reintegration of Jews in French society:

Today those Jews whom the Germans did not deport or murder are coming back to their homes. Many were among the first members of the Resistance; others had sons or cousins in Leclerc's army. Now all France rejoices and fraternizes in the streets; social conflict seems temporarily forgotten. The newspapers devote whole columns to stories of prisoners of war and deportees. But do we say anything about the Jews? Do we give a thought to those who died in the gas chambers at Lublin? Not a word. Not a line in the newspapers. That is because we must not irritate the anti-Semites; more than ever, we need unity. Well-meaning journalists will tell you: "In the interest of the Jews themselves, it would not do to talk too much about them just now. For four years French society has lived without them; it is just as well not to emphasize too vigorously the fact that they have returned."¹⁶⁹

Sartre added that the Jews:

have made a clandestine return. Their joy at being liberated is not part of the nation's joy... In my *Lettres Françaises*, without thinking about it particularly, and simply for the sake of completeness, I wrote something or other about the sufferings of the prisoners of war, the deportees, the political prisoners, and the Jews. Several Jews thanked me in a most touching manner. How completely must they have felt themselves abandoned, to think of thanking an author for merely having written the word 'Jew' in an article!¹⁷⁰

Over the past decades, France has attempted both to hide and to come to terms with its Vichy past. The French post-war attitude toward the Jews is extremely complicated.¹⁷¹ French authorities only finally acknowledged the Vichy regime's racist actions because a few Jews continued to struggle for a public admission of the truth. President Chirac obliged, unlike his predecessor Mitterrand, who had been busy hiding the truth about himself. This issue is discussed in more detail in the interview with Shmuel Trigano.

The Papon Case: A Symbol

French Jewry has been hit by more recent violent anti-Semitism outbursts than any other Western European community. That also enhances the importance of the many unfinished French Holocaust issues, including the punishment of war criminals. Over the past several decades, very few of the many unpunished French perpetrators have been tried, although each trial has acquired significant symbolic meaning.

One among many indications that the aftermath of the Holocaust still has significant ramifications for this century occurred when a French court freed Maurice Papon in September 2002 for health reasons. This 92-year-old former French minister was the last person to be jailed for war crimes. When he was released from jail, bystanders shouted "Papon to jail!" and "Murderer!"¹⁷² Several hundred people protested in Marseilles. Zvi Ammar, chairman of the local Jewish community said, "to let such a criminal go free is an attack against the foundations of the republic; and that concerns all democrats."¹⁷³

Papon's story reflects many facets of French official behavior during and after the war. From 1942 until 1944 he was a deputy prefect under the Vichy regime. As such he signed off on the deportation of more than 1,500 Jews who were sent first to Paris and then to Auschwitz. After the war he became the police chief of Paris (1958) and France's budget minister (1978). In 1981 his wartime role was revealed by a French newspaper.¹⁷⁴

In 1982 Holocaust victims filed a suit against him, and prosecutors in Bordeaux opened an investigation. In 1983 he was formally charged with crimes against humanity. In 1987 the appeals' court dismissed his case for procedural irregularities. The following year he was again charged with crimes against

humanity. In 1995 the Bordeaux prosecutors reduced the charges to “complicity” in crimes against humanity. In 1997 his final appeal was rejected and the trial commenced, 15 years after initiating proceedings. In 1998 Papon was found guilty of complicity in crimes against humanity. In 1999 he fled to Switzerland. He was caught and extradited to France, where he began his ten-year prison sentence.¹⁷⁵ A scant three years later, upon his release, his lawyers announced that Papon, who had never admitted guilt or showed remorse, intended to seek a retrial.¹⁷⁶

Public reaction to Papon’s liberation included severe judgments on how French justice had functioned or failed to function. The head of the French League for Human Rights, Michel Tubiana, noted that “Maurice Papon is being liberated today because of his health, while justice took 17 years to judge him.”¹⁷⁷ Serge Klarsfeld commented, on behalf of the Association of Sons and Daughters of the Jewish Deported in France, “now all sick criminals should be released; otherwise it will be shown that there are two measures.”¹⁷⁸ The socialist parliamentarian Julien Dray was more blunt: “For the children who were in the sealed wagons and the families who went up in smoke, there were no reasons of health.”¹⁷⁹

Belgium

Belgium, one of the European countries most hostile to Israel, has recently seen several very violent anti-Semitic incidents. In them, Muslim aggression, European incitement against Israel and references to the Holocaust all come together. A foreign journalist described one such violent incident in Spring 2002:

Dressed in the striking black mantles and shtreimel fur hats of the Hassidic Jews, Eli Fallick and his son stood out as targets for a gang of 20 Arab youths laying in wait. The two were smashed to the ground on their way to the Belz synagogue in Antwerp, near the dividing line between the fast-growing Moroccan quarter and the ‘Jootse wijk,’ where the city’s 12,000 orthodox Jews live. They were kicked ferociously about the body and head as a chorus of teenage attackers spat at them, chanted ‘Dirty Jew’ and praise to Hitler, the now-routine lexicon of abuse in Muslim street attacks.¹⁸⁰

A few days later, Mr. Fallick’s ten-year-old daughter was assaulted on Antwerp’s streets.

Few, if any, Jewish leaders after the Second World War made as strong a statement to a prime minister of a European democratic country as did Isi Leibler, senior vice president of the World Jewish Congress at the organization’s meeting in Brussels, April, 2002. Part of it read:

My grandparents and most members of my family were deported and gassed in Auschwitz. Sadly, Belgian collaborators assisted the Nazis in apprehending them. Until recently, I shared the pride of my Belgian origins, which had

been imbued in me by my parents. Now that is no longer the case. In fact, I opposed holding this conference in Brussels, because it shames me to say that, in recent times, this city has effectively established itself as the European capital of biased anti-Israel agitation.

I make this accusation knowingly, sensitive to the fact that one must take great care to avoid viewing bona fide criticisms of Israeli policies as being motivated by anti-Semitism. However your government, and particularly Foreign Minister Louis Michel, have been so one-sided and employed such outrageous double standards against Israel, that these positions can only be described as anti-Semitic. How else can one explain policies, which fail to distinguish between killers of innocent civilians and killers of the killers? Indeed, in recent days, some of the accusations of alleged atrocities by Israeli soldiers have been so outlandish, that they smack of medieval libel.¹⁸¹

Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt responded in a letter to Leibler saying, with less than complete honesty, that the Belgian government had:

always tried to take a balanced and neutral position with regard to the situation in the Middle East and the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians... I strongly regret your allegations of anti-Semitism directed at my government and at Foreign Minister Louis Michel. Both Minister Michel and I have vigorously condemned the anti-Jewish attacks that we have seen in Belgium and in Europe over the past few weeks. Belgium has a tradition of philosophical, political and religious tolerance. I am very much attached to this tradition of openness toward all communities living in Belgium. I reject all forms of racism and know for a fact that Louis Michel shares this conviction.¹⁸²

The quotations from his letter stand here to be used the next time Belgium takes a one-sided anti-Israel position, as it has so often done, in United Nations bodies.

Greece

Greece has often been one of the most problematic European Union countries. There is substantial anti-Semitism, although few violent acts are committed against Jews. The country's Jews were among the hardest hit during the Holocaust. Before the war there were 77,000 Jews in Greece, about two-thirds in Salonika; only 10,000 survived the German occupation. Today the community, with no more than 5,000 members, is almost invisible.¹⁸³ After the war, the restitution of assets was handled, however, relatively appropriately, compared to many other Western European countries.

Yet extreme anti-Semitic remarks both against the Jews and Israel have been made at the highest levels. In a public statement in 1982, socialist Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou openly compared the Israelis to the Nazis.¹⁸⁴ In 1988 Greek

Justice Minister V. Rotis overruled a court decision to extradite a Palestinian terrorist to Italy, where he was charged with bombing the synagogue in Rome. His attack killed a three-year-old child and wounded many others. Rotis said that the attack concerned the "Palestinian people's struggle for the liberation of their homeland, and therefore cannot be considered as an act of terrorism."¹⁸⁵

In 2001, Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Athens Christodoulos, perhaps the most popular personality in Greece, accused the Jews of being responsible for Greece's cancellation of the use of 'religion' in the population register and individual identity cards, in line with European Union decisions.¹⁸⁶ This Church leader is a cultured man, who speaks several foreign languages (not common in Greece). The socialist government spokesman, Dimitris Reppas, declared, "I believe that such an allegation, beyond that it is an absolute lie, creates problems for the country's international image."¹⁸⁷

A number of Jewish sites have been vandalized over the past few years.¹⁸⁸ This includes cemeteries and Holocaust memorials. In Salonika, which before the war had a large Jewish population, a Holocaust monument was finally erected a few years ago. It was located far from the city center (where the Jews had mainly lived). This monument was also recently desecrated.¹⁸⁹

A report filed by the Embassy in Athens to Israel's Foreign Ministry, in Spring 2002, told that a former Greek Foreign Minister had denied Israel's right to exist. Greece's best known composer, Mikos Theodorakis, has "published an article in which he compared the IDF actions to those of the Nazis."¹⁹⁰

In July 2002 the Anti-Defamation League called on the Greek government to condemn the rise in anti-Semitic depictions and articles in the Greek press. The press release contained a cartoon which appeared in the pro-Government, center-left publication *Eleftherotypia*. It showed a fat Israeli soldier with a star of David on his helmet threatening a meager veiled Arab woman with a gun. The headline read "Holocaust II." To gain some perspective on these accusations of casualty levels in Israel and the territories, one might recall that about 1–3% of the population died in Greece's civil war, *after* the end of World War II.¹⁹¹

Denmark

Denmark has a more checkered Holocaust history than many realize. For example, a few years ago, historian Vilhjalmur Orn Vilhjamsson revealed that Denmark had deported 21 German Jews to Nazi Germany, where most presumably perished. As Efraim Zuroff wrote in the Danish daily *Berlingske Tidende*:

The articles published recently in this paper reveal that Denmark implemented a restrictive anti-Jewish refugee policy in the 30s and 40s and, on its own initiative, sent German Jewish refugees back into the Nazi inferno. We also know now that at least one Danish company exploited slave labor in Estonia and that the negative attitude toward stateless Jews persisted even after World

War II. If we add up the decades-long cover-up of these issues, the refusal of some agencies to allow research into these questions, and the failure of the Danish authorities to prosecute Danes who committed Nazi war crimes, the picture is far bleaker than we ever imagined.¹⁹²

The issue of Denmark's collaboration with the Nazis during the Second World War may be much more substantial than has been acknowledged until now. Unopened archives may contain the names of about 300,000 Nazis or Nazi sympathizers collected by a Nazi opponent. Claus Bryld, a professor of modern history at Roskilde University, claims that much of Denmark's industry and agriculture collaborated with the Nazis, and that 12,000 Danes actually fought with the Germans against the Russians.

Bryld also stated that once these archives are opened:

Big business figures may be compromised by its release and there may be revealing information in the files on the royal family. There were very intimate relations between leading German officials and leading Danish ones. They made no political considerations. They traded with the Germans as if they were normal people. A moral perspective was totally absent.¹⁹³

Norway

Some of Europe's most anti-Israeli politicians, trade unionists, journalists and other prominent figures can be found in Norway today. On many occasions their criticisms reflect anti-Semitic sentiment. This provides extra impetus to reinvestigate the Norwegian wartime myth, which tries to project the picture of a courageous people with few Nazi collaborators, and to analyze how the Norwegian democratic authorities behaved toward the Jews after its liberation.

Norwegian journalist Bjorn Westlie notes that the German occupation of Norway during 1940–1945 is the topic most studied by Norwegian historians, a subject on which hundreds of books have been published. Yet the financial aspects of the persecution of Norway's Jews have been largely ignored. "It represents one of the most dramatic and brutal episodes in Norwegian history."¹⁹⁴ Before the Jews were sent to their deaths, all their possessions were confiscated by the Norwegian police and government officials. In his interview, Avi Beker discusses both Norwegian restitution to the Jews, a few years ago, and the country's problematic war past.

Discriminating against the Jews after the War

After the war, Norway's democratic government established a reparations office for confiscated properties. Restitution was paid, although how much is not known. For example, the wartime Liquidation Board for Confiscated Jewish Assets, which dealt with stolen Jewish properties, used 32% of their value for

their own administration. These were *deducted* from the restitution payments to the Jews! Westlie writes that many applicants retrieved only small parts of their possessions – one particular family, to his knowledge, received less than one percent.¹⁹⁵

The reparations office also transferred some private Jewish property to the War Indemnity Fund, a state-run welfare scheme. Only Norwegian citizens could apply for this. Of the thousand surviving Norwegian Jews, several hundred were not citizens and thus not eligible for any indemnity. The Norwegian government had promised the World Jewish Congress, during the war, that it would take measures to help the Norwegian Jews, but it did not do so.

Westlie concludes:

Although [during the war] the Jews in Norway were treated differently in every respect from all other Norwegian groups, this was not taken into consideration during the post-war settlement... A directorate was established to help Norwegian seamen as a group with particular problems after the war. The inhabitants of the northern region of Finnmark, too, were viewed and treated as a special group after their homes and workplaces had been burned and plundered by the Germans. Special measures for the Jews, on the other hand, were not taken into consideration. This was an historic injustice.¹⁹⁶

1995: Visiting a Prominent Nazi

The restitution issue only reemerged in the mid 1990s. “On 27 May 1995 the newspaper *Dagens Naeringsliv* reported that the Norwegian authorities had made little effort to help Norwegian Jews recover their property, although considerable funds were discovered in bank accounts after the war.”¹⁹⁷ When this issue drew attention in the international press, following World Jewish Congress publications in March 1996, Norway’s government belatedly reacted by establishing a Committee of Inquiry into the Confiscation of Jewish Property in Norway during World War II.

Berit Reisel represented the Jewish community on this committee. She described her 1995 visit to Rolf Svindal to American journalist Richard Z. Chesnoff. Svindal had been the head of Oslo’s Liquidation Board for Confiscated Jewish Assets, established by the Quisling government to loot Jewish property; and Reisel needed books and files still in his possession. Svindal, then 96 years old, introduced himself by saying, “My name is Rolf Svindal and I am a Nazi.” He unrepentantly told Reisel that his large apartment contained furniture and paintings taken from Jews. There was only one matter Svindal was sorry about. Reisel reported that, “He was angry that, after the war, the Norwegian authorities had mixed up the property files for the Jews and non-Jews. That’s what bothered him the most. He was a very good clerk, and he had done everything right with a system down to

the last centimeter. And then someone had made a mess of his beautiful orderly system. It was awful to hear."¹⁹⁸

Despite bureaucratic efforts to stall the issue, the Norwegian government and parliament approved a rather generous payment to survivors. Norway has been highly praised, since it was the first European government to settle with the Jewish people in the current round of restitution. Yet, given that few people were involved, the costs to Norway of this belated justice were relatively minor, while it prevented major damage to its image abroad.

Due to worldwide publicity, some of the extreme efforts of Norwegian organizations to boycott Israel have received above average attention. Probably the more some of the Norwegian elite defame Israel, the more attention will be given to the best-known Norwegian in the Western world, the Nazi-collaborator Quisling, whose name has become a generic term for traitor.

Sweden

Sweden has an extremely poor record of prosecuting war criminals. It has not investigated any Swedish perpetrators, although hundreds of Swedes were SS volunteers. Baltic war criminals found ready refuge in Sweden from 1944 onward, with the knowledge of the Swedish government. However, Swedish archives on these matters remain closed.¹⁹⁹

In recent years the Swedish Foreign Minister has expressed severe criticism of Israel's policies and supported extremely discriminatory anti-Israel resolutions of UN bodies. This behavior should be compared with the conclusions of the Commission on Jewish Assets in Sweden at the Time of the Second World War:

One finds that Sweden's policy towards the belligerent parties for most of the war was based on power politics. Moral issues were excessively disregarded and actions were taken with the overriding purpose of keeping Sweden out of the war and maintaining essential supplies. Today of course, such an attitude can seem deplorable.²⁰⁰

The commission advised further study. One of the major issues concerns:

the importance of Sweden's trade with Nazi Germany, as regards the ability of the latter to continue its persecution of Jews and others, until as late as 1945. This research field is made relevant not least by the latter-day debate on whether Sweden's trade with Germany prolonged the war and with it the sufferings of the Jewish people.²⁰¹

The Commission also deplored that the moral questions involved in the business relations with Nazi Germany were never raised in parliamentary or governmental discussions.²⁰² If the Swedish government's current anti-Israel statements ever become subject to similar public inquiry, their future judgment may duplicate the past: "Moral issues were excessively disregarded."

Even Iceland has its Holocaust controversies. Zuroff points out how its national soccer coach Atli Edvaldsson is “using his prominence as a sports hero to rewrite the history of his Estonian Nazi war-criminal father.”²⁰³

Switzerland

Switzerland's Holocaust and post-Holocaust relationship with the Jews has many facets, some positive and some negative. Toward the war's end – when it was already clear that Germany was losing – there were important demonstrations and press campaigns in Switzerland against German atrocities in Hungary and Hungarian complicity in them. The press reported on these, despite the Swiss Interior Ministry's request, a few days earlier, that all Swiss newspaper editors refrain from this.²⁰⁴ After the war, Switzerland skillfully escaped the wrath of the United States and its allies for the support it gave, under the guise of neutrality, to Nazi Germany. The Swiss were accused at the time of having prolonged the war through their economic activities with Germany.

However, one element of Swiss attitudes toward the Jews has recently dominated the media. Swiss bankers and politicians created major negative publicity for their country regarding restitution in the late 1990s, while showing a total lack of understanding of Western public opinion.

After the war, heirs of Holocaust victims began to complain about the accounts that their relatives had in various Swiss banks. The latter used many subterfuges to avoid dealing with such claims. Once the accounts were opened, it became clear that these had often been depleted through decades of charges.

The eventual costs to the banks for their resistance to justice was heavy, in terms of both money and image. The procedure established for dealing with the investigation of the dormant accounts was costly and the expenses had to be borne by the banks. Their image, and that of Switzerland, was tarnished by the massive publicity the issue received. During the process, then Swiss President Pascal Delamuraz made matters worse by making blatantly anti-Semitic remarks. Comments Beker: “Not since the Second World War had such an anti-Jewish expression (‘Jewish blackmailers’) been made by the leader of a democratic country.”²⁰⁵

A Bureaucratic Restitution Process

Another aspect of the restitution, one which has hardly been analyzed, is the attempt to turn belated justice into an antiseptic, excessively bureaucratic process. To deal with the claims, the Swiss banks and the Jewish organizations agreed on the creation of an independent entity, the CRT, for which complex procedures were established.

At a 1999 conference in Switzerland, a debate took place between the banks' representative and Israeli arbitrator, Judge Hadassa Ben-Itto, a member of the CRT. She said that:

The banks' representative tells us very frankly why the banks were interested in creating the CRT. They wanted an independent body to deal with the individual claims, because they did not want to deal with the individual claimants. Negative decisions had to be made by someone else, or as Dr. Romerio described in his own language, they wanted 'to pass the buck' to somebody else. We were selected for this job. The buck was passed to us, but it should be made very clear that we are not here to do the banks' business. We are acting as independent arbitrators who must do justice to both sides. Our task is not facilitated by complicated Rules of Procedure and by the lack, in many cases, of relevant bank documents. We must abide by the rules; thus we must sometimes give individual attention to twenty files on an account with a balance of only 5 Swiss Francs. Not only are we compelled to follow the rules handed to us but, in this unusual procedure, we must do so carefully, with much sensitivity.

This is our mandate and also our duty. And, if for some unforeseen reason, the banks were mistaken in thinking that it can be done in these circumstances in a more accelerated manner, setting an unrealistic deadline and expecting lower costs, it should now be admitted that this was a grossly over-optimistic view.²⁰⁶

The restitution process has also forced a major reassessment of Swiss war history by a government-appointed commission: the Swiss Independent Commission of Experts, more generally known as the Bergier Commission, after its chairman Jean François Bergier.²⁰⁷ This belated research is gradually providing a more truthful description of Swiss Holocaust history.

Poland

Poland's post-war attitude toward the Jews requires major study, even if few findings are applicable to Western European countries. Its post-war history boasts several landmark events regarding attitudes toward the Jews. The murder of more than 1,000 Jews in post-war Poland – until the middle of 1946 – is revealing in understanding how the returning Jews were received.

Another important issue was the battle, during the second half of the 1980s, to move the Catholic (Carmelite) convent, built in 1984 within the Auschwitz concentration camp site. An agreement was reached in 1987, signed by four European Cardinals, to move the convent by early 1989. This promise was not kept. Several Jewish delegations subsequently traveled to Auschwitz to protest. One delegation of the European Union of Jewish students blew the *shofar* (the ritual ram's horn) in front of the camp.²⁰⁸ The convent was eventually moved.

Another landmark was the recent debate about the Poles' massacre of Polish Jews in Jedwabne during the war. This episode became public knowledge in 2001,

and caused intense media debate in the country.²⁰⁹ A report edited by Pawel Machcewicz of a Polish-government body – the Institute of National Remembrance – published in November 2002, found that Poles committed war-time crimes against Jews in at least 24 locations.²¹⁰ These facts are difficult to accept for a nation, which sees itself as a war victim, without yet realizing that at the same time it was an oppressor. Polish post-war attitudes toward the Jews are the subject of the interview with Laurence Weinbaum.

Hungary

In October 2002, the Hungarian Jewish novelist Imre Kertész was rather unexpectedly awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Kertész had survived Auschwitz and lived thereafter under Hungary's communist regime, which often censored his writings. Quotations from some articles published on the occasion of the prize-giving, create a vignette which brings together many subjects related to our enquiry. When Kertész was awarded the prize, a Dutch critic wrote:

The Western literature of the past half-century would have been radically different without Auschwitz. It is unclear whether tens of prominent authors would have become writers without Auschwitz... His [Kertész'] is the style of somebody who has no expectations yet is curious... He is not a born cynic, but his illusions have been taken away.²¹¹

To many, Kertész symbolized the fate of the Jewish 'double victim.' *The New York Times* wrote, "For 25 years he was a solitary figure in Budapest, devoted to reflection on the two repressive political systems that came to dominate his life."²¹² In March 2001 Kertész, in an interview with the Spanish daily *El Pais*, linked his Judaism to current anti-Semitism in Hungary:

My Judaism is very problematic. I say this, as I am not a believing Jew. However, as a Jew, I was taken to Auschwitz and was in the death camps. Today, I live as a Jew in a very anti-Semitic [Hungarian] society that does not like Jews. I always felt that they forced me to be Jewish. I accept this but, to a large extent, the fact is that it was imposed.²¹³

In April, 2002 Kertész came to Israel and lectured at a survivors' conference at Yad Vashem. According to *The New York Times*:

When he visited Jerusalem earlier this year, amid Palestinian suicide bombs and Israeli military incursions into the West Bank, the experience reinforced his Jewish identity. "I am not impartial and, moreover, cannot be," he wrote in an essay. "I have never assumed the role of impartial executioner. I leave that to European and non-European intellectuals who embrace this role for better and often for worse." He added, "They have never bought a ticket for a bus ride from Jerusalem to Haifa."²¹⁴

The prize caused joy to some in Hungary, according to *Ha'aretz*:

"On the day the prize was awarded to Kertész, it was good to be Hungarian again," said Hungarian president Ferenc Madl. But other observers remarked that the work that was generating all these good feelings was only written because of a past attempt to deny its author the right to be Hungarian, and even to live.²¹⁵

One extreme rightist weekly, *Magyar Forum* (published by author Istvan Csurka):

Criticized the fact that the prize was awarded to a Jewish author "who is beholden to a different, un-Hungarian culture – the culture of Auschwitz." The magazine writes that Kertész gave expression only to the Jewish fate, and that he "hints that it was Christianity that created Auschwitz, and demonstrates a passionate hatred for Hungarians."²¹⁶

Lithuania

The Baltic States regained their independence after the fall of communism. Due to their small size, little international attention is given to what happens in them. Lithuania, however, has one of the darkest Holocaust histories among all German-occupied countries. The Lithuanians murdered tens of thousands of Jews even *before* the Germans arrived. According to Efraim Zuroff:

The Germans found numerous collaborators among the Lithuanian people who implemented the 'Final Solution' of Lithuanian Jewry with perverse zeal and thoroughness. The assistance provided by these collaborators was especially important in Lithuania, where the murders were carried out locally, primarily by the native population.²¹⁷

The Germans even used Lithuanian murder units to kill Jews (and others) in other countries. A German commander in Belarus considered the Lithuanians such brutal slaughterers that he asked his superiors in Minsk to keep their police battalion away from his district.²¹⁸

In view of the massive crimes committed by Lithuanians before and after the Germans came to power, one would have expected that some unpunished war criminals might have been tried in the 1990s, after Lithuanian independence. Until today, however, not a single perpetrator has been brought to trial. The newly independent Lithuania also cheats knowingly about its Holocaust history. In the early 1990s, Dutch moviemaker and author Philo Bregstein revisited the Paneriai forest outside Vilna, where 100,000 people were murdered, mostly Jews:

Again we stand near the old gray stone monument in which, since our previous visit, a piece of black marble has been inserted. [It says] "Here 100,000 people were killed – of whom 70,000 were Jewish men, women and children – by

the Nazis and their Lithuanian local helpers.” But our guides draw our attention to it. The text “Lithuanian local helpers” appears in Yiddish, English and Hebrew, but not in the Lithuanian translation.²¹⁹

The Jewish people’s relations to Lithuania must therefore remain ambivalent for a long time to come. Vilna is now home to plaques on many former Jewish sites. (During the Soviet rule, even this was forbidden.) The Lithuanian government has made several goodwill gestures toward the local Jewish community and Israel, such as its support for the commemoration of the 200th *Yahrzeit* of the Vilna Gaon and by sending (mainly damaged) Torah scrolls to Israel.

For many Jews, these gestures do not compensate for the immunity of surviving war criminals and the inability of Lithuanian Jews living abroad to reclaim stolen family property. Also for these reasons, some Israeli leaders, who were invited, refused to participate in the commemorations of the 200th anniversary of the death of the Vilna Gaon, the greatest Jewish scholar in the country’s history.

The problems concerning Lithuanian restitution of Jewish property are discussed in the interview with Naphtali Lavie, executive vice-chairman of the World Jewish Restitution Organization.

Latvia and Estonia

Another case of major historical falsification concerns Latvia. The Lets played an important role in many of the anti-Jewish atrocities carried out there during the war. At the 2000 Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, President Vaira Vike-Freiberga disingenuously rejected Latvia’s responsibility for the fate of its Jewish citizens: “Latvia as a country having ceased to exist at the time, the Nazi German occupying powers bear the ultimate responsibility for the crimes they committed or instigated on Latvian soil.” This further demonstrates how, if Jews give up the battle for memory, countries will be able to get away with open lies.

In May 2002, the American ambassador to Estonia, Joseph De Thomas, published an Op-Ed piece in the Estonian newspaper *Eesti Päevaleht*. He outlined the three post-Holocaust failures of Estonia: the lack of prosecution of Nazi war criminals, the lack of understanding that the Holocaust is part of their history, and the lack of attention given to the Holocaust in their textbooks. A few months later the Estonian government designated January 27 as National Holocaust Day.²²⁰

In 1998 Estonian President Lennart Meri established the International Historians’ Commission to investigate the crimes committed during the Nazi and Communist occupations. It found that the 36th Estonian police battalion participated in the murder of the Jews of Nowogrudok (Belarus) on August 7, 1942. When the Simon Wiesenthal Center demanded that the Estonian security police investigate 16 members of this battalion, the latter responded within two weeks that the

Estonian unit had not committed war crimes, despite the Historians' Commission's published findings to the contrary.²²¹

In the summer of 2002, the Simon Wiesenthal Center offered a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the conviction of Nazi war criminals in the Baltic countries, which seemed to lack the political will to bring Nazi criminals to trial. This announcement led two months later, to the submission of 51 names of perpetrators. It also inspired many anti-Semitic reactions, specifically aimed at Zuroff, who had initiated the reward. In an on-line interview, he was asked questions such as: "Have you ever thought about the taste of revenge? Do you really thirst for that?" "Why do you have such an evil look in your eyes?" "How do you feel about being the most hated foreigner in Estonia?"²²²

Croatia

The Croatian example illustrates how, by not giving up, the truth may be admitted, even a half-century after atrocities were committed. Croatia was the only country where a local government – that of the Ustasha – operated a concentration camp independent of German assistance. Jasenovac has been called "one of the lesser-known but most brutal concentration camps of World War II."²²³ Almost 100,000 Serbs, Jews and Gypsies are estimated to have been murdered there.²²⁴

In late 2001, 56 years after the end of the war, President Stipe Mesic told President Katzav and the Knesset:

I profoundly and sincerely deplore the crimes committed against the Jews in the area controlled during Second World War by the collaborationist regime which, unfortunately, carried the Croatian name... I take every opportunity to ask forgiveness from those who were hurt by Croats at any time and any place, but first of all from the Jews.²²⁵

Croatia has also helped to open the archives, which provide information on its criminal past.

Also in late 2001, the United States Holocaust Museum announced its discovery and preservation of decaying documents and artifacts from Jasenovac. Peter Black, the museum's chief historian, stated there were neither gas chambers nor crematoria in the camp; rather the inmates were "murdered one by one with axes, guns, knives or prolonged torture. Bodies were buried or thrown into the adjacent Sava River."²²⁶ Mate Maras, a Croatian diplomat, objected to some of the assertions made by the museum staff, but agreed that it was "a good time for Croatia to open up these sad pages of our history."²²⁷

The Vatican

The wartime and post-war history of the Vatican's attitude toward the Jews will remain the subject of debate for a long time to come. It must be viewed within

the framework of the long period during which the Catholic Church laid the infrastructure for religious anti-Semitism.

The Vatican's behavior during the war is subject to ongoing scrutiny. Catholic British historian John Cornwell began researching Pius XII's pontificate with the conviction that the late Pope would be vindicated. He experienced deep moral shock when he found the material he had uncovered should lead to a wider indictment, rather than an exoneration.²²⁸ Ironically, over the past few decades, the Vatican has made preparations to possibly beatify Pope Pius XII. The exceptional sensitivity of this issue is discussed by former Israeli ambassador to the Vatican, Aharon Lopez in an interview.

The Commission of Historians

The controversy surrounding Pius XII finally resulted in the Catholic Church's agreement to investigate his behavior by a panel of independent scholars. In October 1999, the Catholic-Jewish Commission of Historians was established jointly by the Pontifical Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews and the International Jewish Committee for Inter-religious Consultations. It comprised three Jewish members appointed by the Jewish side, and three Catholic members selected by the Catholic one. However, in July 2001, the Commission suspended its activities, when the Vatican refused to answer 47 preliminary questions put to it by all six members of the interfaith commission. The questions were framed after reviewing the incomplete published material made available to it by the Vatican. The Vatican also refused to give the scholars access to its unpublished archival material on the subject.

In October 2001, two Jewish scholars resigned in protest from the Commission: Robert Wistrich of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Professor Bernard Suicheky of the Free University of Brussels. On that occasion, Wistrich declared in an interview, that the published material alone was already "a damning indictment of insensitivity and moral failure, of indifference to the humiliations and suffering of the Jews under anti-Semitic laws, and of a refusal to even consider any rupture with Nazi Germany."²²⁹

Wistrich summarized his judgment on the Vatican's attitude toward the Commission's work in a subsequent article:

The stark truth is that in two years we received no material assistance, no real encouragement and, above all, not one single new document from the Vatican. On the other hand, we did receive our fair measure of denigration, insinuation and false rumors from persons attached to, or even speaking in the name of, that powerful and august institution... It is... a particular bitter irony to observe that the Commission has fallen apart in the wake of, and despite, the present pope's praiseworthy actions to atone for Catholic sins toward the Jewish people in the preceding two millennia. Pope John Paul II

called on his Church in the millennial era to cast a critical eye on past omissions, sins and failings in order to step forward with a clear conscience into the 21st century. In all honesty, I must say that there is still a considerable way to go before that call becomes a reality and we can speak of a true 'purification of memory.'²³⁰

The Vatican's current attitude toward revealing all the facts about Pius XII's wartime behavior will probably remain an important controversial issue for many years to come. Public attention to it was again attracted by the 2002 movie *Amen* by film director Constantin Costa Gavras. It was based on the German 1963 play *Der Stellvertreter* (The Deputy) by Rolf Hochhuth. Its accusation of Pius XII's refusal to publicly condemn the Holocaust caused much debate at the time. The movie's poster was also highly controversial. It showed the cross imposed on the swastika.²³¹

Helping War Criminals Escape

Arieh Doobov of the World Jewish Congress, Jerusalem, summarized several issues which historical research on the Vatican must elucidate: Vatican awareness of the Shoah, and intervention (or lack thereof) to protect Jews, financial transactions between Nazi Germany and its allies and the Vatican, Vatican involvement in the escape of Croatian war criminals, and the Vatican's relationship with the wartime Croatian clergy, which often supported war crimes in name of the Catholic church.²³²

According to Stuart E. Eizenstat:

After the war, leaders of this [Croatian] fascist regime found refuge in the Pontifical College of San Girolamo in Rome, which, with the aid of looted gold, helped finance the escape of Croatian fascists to South America. This pontifical college also cooperated with the 'ratline' created by the U.S. Army Counterintelligence Corps which got such infamous war criminals – but anti-communists – as Klaus Barbie to South America. It will be critical for Croatia, Serbia and the Vatican to open their archives to obtain the full picture of this sordid story.²³³

Furthermore, from time to time, new problems emerge. For example, when Pope John Paul II visited Syria, he remained silent when Bashir Assad, the country's president described in his presence the Jewish people as "killers of God and now as killers of the Palestinian people." On behalf of Italian Jewry, Amos Luzzatto, protested in an official letter to the Vatican against this silence.²³⁴

The Netherlands

The Netherlands is a very appropriate case to study, because Dutch wartime history is particularly well documented and because of the persistent, but untrue,

myth that the Dutch generally courageously assisted Jews during the war. This myth largely springs from Anne Frank's diary, which ended before she could mention that – while she and her family were hidden by good Dutchmen – they were probably betrayed by bad ones. This Dutch wartime myth, however, seems indestructible. For instance, in early 1986, Claude Lanzmann came to the Netherlands for the television screening of his film *Shoah*. Although he was not visiting other countries for this purpose, he came, he said, because of “the impeccable wartime record of the Dutch toward the Jews.”²³⁵

In the Netherlands, before the war, public anti-Semitism was limited and non-violent. Yet, under occupation, although the Germans ordered the deportation of the Jewish population, it was the Dutch authorities which mainly implemented it. The percentage of Jews from the Netherlands murdered during the war was higher than for any other Western European country. Out of approximately 140,000, only 35,000 (25%) survived.

Even as recently as 2001, the *Jewish Travel Guide* wrote in its introduction to the Netherlands: “The Germans transported 100,000 to various death camps in Poland, but the local Dutch population tended to behave sympathetically toward their Jewish neighbors, hiding many.”²³⁶ The discrepancy between the wartime image and reality is probably still greater for the Netherlands than for any other country.

Negative Attitude toward Returning Jews

Dutch historians cannot be blamed if wartime myths persist. The Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation (NIOD) has done important work in researching and publishing the country's wartime history. Hans Blom, its present director, describes the Dutch wartime attitude toward the Jews as follows:

The population and the bureaucracy were equally cooperative and deferential [toward the Nazis], especially in the first years of the occupation. The immediate and strictly enforced segregation policies of the Germans were not only accepted but even willingly and efficiently assisted. With few exceptions, opposition to the occupation and sabotage of German measures came relatively late and had little to do with the persecution of the Jews. By the time there was a large-scale underground, it was too late for the Jews.²³⁷

Dutch governments skillfully embellish post-war history *vis-à-vis* Dutch attitudes toward the Jews. According to Jewish historian Jacques Presser: “There is little doubt that, certainly in the first years after the liberation in the Netherlands (and not only in the Netherlands), there was a significant – let's put it neutrally – negative attitude toward the returning Jews.”²³⁸ Among other examples, Presser cites the caustic remark of a Dutch school principal who said, “The good Jews

are all dead. The bad Jews have returned.” According to Presser, “that is what a colleague of mine, a teacher, had to listen to from his boss in front of a full hall, when he returned from his horrible [Holocaust] experiences.” The ‘boss’ in question was a generally respected Dutch personality.²³⁹ Later analyses of anti-Semitism in the liberated Netherlands have been carried out by historians Dienke Hondius²⁴⁰ and Michal Citroen.²⁴¹

One of the most painful elements in the immediate post-war period was the Dutch authorities’ attitude toward Jewish orphans. A struggle for the custody of these children ensued between the remnants of the Jewish community and the Christian members of the government committee dealing with this issue. Israeli historian Joel Fishman states:

Upon examining the administrative development and ideological basis of the Commission for War Foster Children, one may observe that, from its inception, its spirit and structure were inherently offensive to the Jewish minority, and, of necessity, predicated an adversary relationship.²⁴²

The most poignant definition of the Jews’ position in post-war Holland was given by political scientist Isaac Lipschits, who called his book *The Little Shoah*. He explains its title by saying:

In the liberated Netherlands, the Jews were not physically threatened. However, we do find other symptoms of the Shoah. Verbal anti-Semitism became sharper; the despoilment of the Jews continued... Deportation and extermination had come to an end, but the ... isolation of Jews continued... The reception [given Jewish survivors] was so cold, bureaucratic, hostile, humiliating and so disappointing that I call the post-war period ‘the time of the Little Shoah’.²⁴³

Lipschits further describes Dutch post-war discrimination against the Jews in his interview.

The government-appointed van Kemenade Commission published its findings on supplementary financial restitution in a report issued immediately after the Stockholm Forum of January 2000. In anticipation of this document, Prime Minister Kok’s speech at that gathering was subject to more than usual scrutiny. One of his claims was that “the restoration of legal rights in the impoverished post-war Netherlands was basically correct from a legal and formal point of view.”²⁴⁴ Kok should have known that the van Kemenade Report would hardly support this conclusion. In fact, the commission wrote that: “In retrospect, a special arrangement for the Jewish victims of persecution would have been justified.”²⁴⁵

Post-war Dutch governments do not want their democratic predecessors to be judged according to their deeds. The distortion of history is a moral, not a financial, matter; but today’s Dutch Jewish community is too weak, too indifferent, too ignorant or too frightened to fight against it.

Moral Aspects of Financial Restitution

The debate on financial restitution has other important moral implications. Should a society share in widespread burdens, which hit some of its members particularly hard? In some cases, not involving the Jews, the Dutch apparently hold 'yes.' In 2001, the Dutch government paid compensation to farmers whose animals had to be burned because they were – or might be – infected with foot-and-mouth disease. Similarly, during serious flood episodes after the war, such burdens were not usually shouldered just by those who had irretrievably lost their possessions. By 1953, two billion dollars (current value) had been paid by the government to the victims of these natural disasters. Showing such solidarity with disaster victims is a moral choice, of which laws are only an expression.

The democratic Dutch government made a different moral choice, however, after the Second World War. The Jews had been unfairly segregated by the Nazis, so, from now on, the Jews would receive the same treatment as all others, despite their radically different situation. Similarly, the restitution legislation did not mention national solidarity or disaster relief at all. It dealt solely with assets that could be located.

Another major moral aspect of a restitution process concerns its execution. Did the process seek to return those assets that had been stolen from innocent civilians, or did it protect those who unrightfully were holding them? Little doubt remains today that the Dutch democratic authorities often discriminated against the Jews in this process. When the latter went to court however, Holland's more impartial judicial system supported them in several important cases.²⁴⁶

Recently, much attention has been given to the Dutch authorities' attitude *vis-à-vis* art restitution. The Stichting Nederlands Kunstbezit (SNK) was established after the war to recover Dutch-owned art sold involuntarily or under German-induced pressure. When facing claims from the original owners, however, it ruled too often that a sale was 'voluntary' and thus the art recovered belonged to the state. "This fitted its aim to enrich the Netherlands with a significant collection of art."²⁴⁷ Obviously, such an attitude has moral implications, beyond its legal and material aspects. Only recently has there been some improvement, as the Dutch daily *NRC Handelsblad* reported:

Until a short while ago, The Netherlands had a bad reputation concerning art restitution abroad, particularly in America. The World Jewish Congress in New York reproached the Dutch government for its 'extremely harsh' position on claims made by private individuals regarding art works which, during the Second World War, came into the hands of the Germans and, after the war, the Dutch state. The Netherlands earned the reputation of a heartless nation. The government even found it necessary to hire a public relations firm in the United States to improve its image.²⁴⁸

Other moral features remain to be analyzed: How did the authorities behave toward those who had been despoiled? How humane was their attitude? In his book, Lipschits relates how one Dutch restitution official asked a Jewish survivor, whose wife had been murdered in the gas chambers of a concentration camp, to describe in detail the composition, quantity and quality of her underwear.²⁴⁹

Weak Justice

After the war, the Dutch legal system failed to severely punish the German war criminals it had caught, or the many Dutch who had collaborated with the Germans. The historian Ido de Haan writes: "Many were condemned, but almost all were freed within a short time. Of the 152 [criminals] condemned to death: in 100 cases the punishment was converted to a life sentence, eleven people were judged *in absentia*, and one committed suicide. Only 40 were actually executed."²⁵⁰

This forgiving approach toward those who had harmed the Jews was true at many levels. For example, notarial services were frequently needed to liquidate Jewish possessions. After the war, active collaboration was considered punishable with either dismissal or a rebuke. The Justice Ministry found that the behavior of several *hundreds* of notaries required detailed investigation. By November 1946, however, only 13 had been dismissed and 7 had received a private rebuke.²⁵¹

Holocaust Education and the Battle for Memory

The Ashkenazi orthodox NIK, the largest Dutch Jewish community organization, dealt with Holocaust education in its 2000 Annual Report. It expressed concern that:

In non-Jewish society, understanding of the Holocaust is notably declining. In the younger generations, there is less and less knowledge of the fact that six million Jews were murdered in the Second World War... This fact raises the question whether this is the natural result of the passage of time, which leads to distance from the Holocaust, or whether this is the result of government policy.²⁵²

Dutch policy with respect to teaching about the Holocaust can be described as insufficient... The Netherlands does not provide Holocaust education; rather its curriculum puts emphasis on the occupation of the Netherlands. Although it is good to place the Holocaust in the context of the Dutch occupation, through this it loses visibility. Such attention is particularly necessary in the Netherlands, where a relatively large number of Jews were deported; where Jews have made and are making major, identifiable contributions to society; but where the Jewish community, after 1945, has barely been visible.²⁵³

The report also mentions that the Committee of the Jewish Resistance during the Second World War had to cancel a public memorial meeting in Amsterdam in 2000 because they were afraid of possible disturbances from Arab youth.

The Amsterdam municipality reacted by supporting an important Kristallnacht memorial meeting. However, against the wishes of the Jewish organizers, it invited an Arab speaker who used the occasion to publicly attack Israel.

The NIK concludes that, due to poor Holocaust education, the unique aspects of that tragedy are not part of the awareness of large parts of the Dutch population. For many of them, the Cold War, the Gulf War and the Second World War are more or less the same.²⁵⁴

Current Defamation

For a long time Dutch extremist defamation of the Jews and Israel was mainly confined to specific Islamist circles. In 2000, however, the Bilal Muslim elementary school in Amersfoort, showed its pupils a violent video, depicting the maltreatment and murder of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers.²⁵⁵ This school is considered one of the most 'liberal' Muslim schools in the Netherlands.

When the Palestinian uprising started in autumn 2000, Islamic extremists shouted "Death to the Jews" at a demonstration; the police disbanded the gathering. Such calls were unheard of in post-war Holland, with the exception of one place: football stadiums. This has been particularly noted with regard to one of the country's leading soccer clubs, Feyenoord of Rotterdam. They identify their main competitor, Ajax, as a 'Jewish' club. Thousands of Feyenoord's fans regularly sing from their stands: "Gas the Jews."²⁵⁶

A former Jewish Ajax board member is quoted as saying: "I have seen things that, if they were filmed, could be compared to Hitler's Germany at the beginning of the 1930s... When you arrive by bus at Feyenoord or at The Hague, hundreds of people with hatred in their eyes call out 'Jews', hiss [to imitate the gas chambers at Auschwitz] and give the [Nazi] salute."²⁵⁷

In its 1999–2000 Annual Report, the Tel Aviv University's Stephen Roth Institute of Anti-Semitism and Racism reported:

Anti-Semitic slurs have long become the norm at football matches in the Netherlands. Hissing, slogans and chants such as " Hamas, Hamas, Jews to the gas" are often heard during games. The spokesperson of the CIV (Center for Information on Football Vandalism) warned that "in football arenas things are accepted which would not be tolerated elsewhere." Even though the authorities, the judiciary and the politicians agree that hissing and anti-Semitic chanting are unacceptable behavior, the law is not being enforced and games are not stopped.²⁵⁸

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The recent reemergence in Western Europe of anti-Semitism in its crude and brutal forms is largely Arab-driven. It is also accompanied, however, by many

more sophisticated Western variants. Anti-Semitism in Europe, as well as its strong anti-Israeli metamorphosis, will continue to keep both the Holocaust and various post-Holocaust issues on the European agenda.

A serious psychological connection exists between Europe's guilt-feelings, which have come to the fore over the past decades, and its exploding bias against Israel. The above overview also shows many other, less obvious, links between the post-war period and Europe's present attitudes toward the Jews and Israel. Thus, an analysis of Europe's moral attitudes toward the Jews in recent decades is important, not only for understanding the past, but also for preparing for the future. It raises many key issues, which will require a much more detailed and profound assessment over the coming years.

Recurring Themes

The above vignettes and the following interviews raise many themes, motifs and questions about Europe's Holocaust aftermath; yet they comprise only a limited subset of the many topics that require further investigation. Still, as even this introductory volume makes clear, there are many recurring issues which appear in several countries in different guises. One obvious example is the persistence of self-serving but false national myths. Some, such as those of Germany, France, Norway, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Poland have been exposed above and later in this book. Similar, although culturally different, myths exist in many other nations.

In many European countries, attitudes toward the Holocaust and the Jews (and sometimes also Israel) serve as a moral litmus test for European societies. For example, although the Jews represent less than a tenth of one percent of the German electorate, German political parties showed a disproportionately large interest in obtaining their vote in the 2002 parliamentary election.²⁵⁹ Italian right-wing politician Gianfranco Fini sees being invited for an official visit to Israel as a moral clearance for both himself and his Alleanza Nazionale Party. In his interview, Shmuel Trigano discusses the special role former French president Mitterrand attributed to the Jews in his political schemes. This phenomenon of the Jew as a tool in the hands of politicians manifests itself in many other ways.

Another important common theme concerns the reactions of the Jews themselves. Why did some of them stand up for their collective interests after the war, while others did not? Why, by the 1980s, had the Jews gained enough confidence to protest publicly and to take on both local and international political leaders? The 1985 protest against President Reagan's visit to the Bitburg cemetery, where members of the Waffen SS are also buried, is one example; the protest against the Frankfurt showing of Fassbinder's play is another; the protests against the Carmelite Convent at Auschwitz is a third.

The 'landmarks' that have changed public perceptions of the Shoah is another important topic. What triggers influence individuals to personally 'connect' with

the Holocaust and to even undertake major initiatives? For some, the Eichmann trial, visits to Auschwitz, individual historical research, Shoah-related movies and television series, etc. played a major role, one which cannot be ignored (as pointed out by Beker in his interview).

The presence of deeper similarities despite surface differences appears again when comparing Sergio Minerbi's analysis of Romano's revisionist publication in Italian, with that of Trigano's assessment (in his interview) of Todorov's book in French. To these, many other examples of persistent topics and common themes can be added.

Introducing Order into an Overlarge Agenda

The Crusades might be considered Europe's first ideological venture. They were accompanied by the mass murder of Jews. Europe's attitude toward the Jews in the twentieth century can be summarized by saying that, on that continent, the chances of a war-criminal surviving to old age were much higher than those of a Jew. This sad assessment underlines both the scope and gravity of the Holocaust bloodbath, and the leniency and disinterest of Europeans toward its perpetrators after it. As for today, while some naïve Jewish leaders may have thought, a few years ago, that the main challenges to the Jewish people were behind it, any sensible person now understands that, whatever the future may bring, the Jewish people will *continuously* have to confront many major challenges.

To put some order in an overlarge Jewish agenda, a much better understanding of the recent past is required. With all due respect to the Jews' many potential allies, scattered throughout the Western world, Jewish leaders will themselves have to ensure that this research is undertaken and then draw strategic operational conclusions from it. One of these will be how to deal with anti-Semitism, which will continue to reemerge both in its classic variants and many new forms.

How to Proceed?

Some important issues concern the fight for memory and study of the post-war Holocaust past. Jews and their allies must continue to struggle to open the archives, and to indelibly record the history of the Jews in those European locations in which their memory scarcely remains. Holocaust museums and other institutions will have to reconsider the focus of their role. The example of Croatia, which had to wait several years before being recognized by Israel, shows that Israel can play an important role in this fight for the truthful recording of the past.

How should we proceed after we realize that, to protect our future, we need to better understand our past? Historians will need to prepare an infrastructure of knowledge, to permit, *inter alia*, an analysis of the present European delegitimization of Israel and the Jews against the background of similar Nazi propaganda in the days before they came to power.

Psychologists will need to explain the motivations behind the varied types of defamation of the Jews over the centuries, and play a leading role in interpreting the current ones. Psychiatrists need to clarify the pathological aspects and underpinnings of anti-Semitism and suggest possible responses and therapy. Lawyers, public affairs experts and politicians can propose what concrete actions should be taken. Communications experts can indicate the shape and likely impact of such actions, before they are implemented.

All this has to be done even while new problems emerge within the rapid dynamics of post-modern society. Several core elements of this multidisciplinary process have been identified above. Others will, hopefully, result from additional research and operational thought over the coming years.

Notes

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- 4 "European Attitudes Toward Jews, Israel and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict," *Anti-Defamation League*, June 27, 2002.
- 5 Simon Epstein, "Cyclical Patterns in Anti-Semitism: The Dynamics of Anti-Jewish Violence in Western Countries since the 1950s," *Analysis of Current Trends in Anti-Semitism*, no. 2 (Jerusalem: Hebrew University), 1993, p. 1.
- 6 Simon Epstein, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
- 7 Simon Epstein, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
- 8 Israel W. Charny, *How Can We Commit the Unthinkable? Genocide: The Human Cancer* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), p. 108.
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INTERVIEWS

David Bankier

Wartime Views on Jews in Post-War Europe: A Cool Reception at Best

“As early as 1941 and 1942 the Allies made preliminary plans for how to organize post-Hitler Europe. Yet the Jewish question did not feature in these early American, British and Russian formulations of the future.” This according to David Bankier, Yad Vashem’s Director of the International Institute for Holocaust Research, who has researched this subject.

“Neither can any significant references to the future of the Jews be found in the discussions of governments in exile, either in London or elsewhere. There are no concrete plans. At most a few, usually abstract, remarks are all that exist.”

Poland: Jewish Survivors should Leave

“The attitude of Polish leaders was particularly revealing because, before the war, three and a half million Jews lived there, comprising about ten percent of the total population. Most Polish underground organizations believed that post-Hitler Poland would be a country without Jews. They knew that the majority of Polish Jewry was being exterminated.

“Those Jews who remained would have to leave Poland after the war. This view was expressed even in the Żegota organization, the Council for Aid to the Jews set up by the Polish resistance. Among them were people who endangered their lives, most notably Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, a devout Catholic, a famous writer and one of the founders of the Żegota. Her opinion that Poland was not a country where Jews should live was highly indicative of true Polish feelings.

“In an article entitled ‘Whom do we help?’ written in August 1943, Kossak-Szczucka referred to what the post-War attitude toward the Jews would be, saying: “Today the Jews face extermination. They are the victims of unjust murderous persecutions. I must save them. ‘Do unto others what you want others to do unto you.’ This commandment demands that I use all the means I have to save others, the very same means that I would use for my own salvation. To be sure, after the war the situation will be different. The same laws will apply to the Jew and to me. At that point I will tell the Jew: ‘I saved you, sheltered you when you were persecuted. To keep you alive I risked my own life and the lives of those who were dear to me. Now nothing threatens you. You have your own friends and in some ways you are better off than I. Now I am depriving you of my home. Go and settle somewhere else. I wish you luck and will be

glad to help you. I am not going to hurt you, but in my own home I want to live alone. I have the right.’”

A Thousand Years Residence: Outside Polish Society

“The Jews were never considered part of the fabric of Polish society. Their ancestors may have lived there for 900 or even 1,000 years, but, as they did not belong to the national majority, they remained foreigners. Most people did not see in the catastrophe befalling the Polish Jews a tragedy affecting the Polish nation. At best, they saw two parallel disasters caused by the Germans. One concerned the Polish nation, the other the Jews.

“Except for some socialist and communist underground movements, they never linked these two tragedies by saying that the suffering of the Jews was part of the Poles’ suffering. Those who belonged to the center or right did not see the Jews as fellow citizens. Their hardship thus could not be Polish suffering. That the ancestors of the Jews had lived so long in Poland and had Polish citizenship and passports was a formality without further implications.

“The Polish government in London, when making statements on the Jewish question, was under constraints. They would be heard by the British, the Americans and Jewish organizations, and they had to be careful in their declarations. Usually they said that, after the war, all surviving Jews would return and that their rights would be restored.

“They had to say this although many Polish leaders in exile were long-standing anti-Semites. The majority in the National Council of the Polish Republic in exile in London were Polish nationalists who didn’t see the Jews as a component of the Polish nation, despite the Council’s having Jewish representatives: Ignacy Schwarzbart for the Zionists and Artur Zygelbojm for the Bundists. There was also substantial anti-Semitism in the Polish army in the West, which led some Jews to desert their units in Scotland. Several Jewish organizations protested against this anti-Semitism to the Polish government in exile.

“Economic factors played a major role in the anti-Jewish messages emanating from the Polish underground. This became even clearer when the Jews returned to Poland after the war and wanted to return to their houses or farms. Many Jews were murdered or subjected to violence. The wartime attitudes of the Poles toward the Jews have been extensively researched, for example in a doctoral thesis by Joanna Michlic, and in articles written by Andrej Friszke and Szymon Rudnicki.”

Czechoslovakia: More of the Same

“Similar attitudes are often expressed in the reports which reached the leaders of the Czech government in exile in London: Eduard Benes, the country’s President and Jan Masaryk. Via Istanbul they got information from their home

country which showed that the Czech people were shocked by the German horrors against the Jews. At the same time, the government in exile was asked not to allow the Jews back and to avoid creating the impression that they wanted them to return.

“Masaryk spoke at a dinner organized by the Jewish community in London, where he said that, after Hitler’s fall, Aryanization would be revoked and all rights of the Jews restored. The Germans used this for propaganda purposes, among the Czech population. It created commotion in Czech public opinion, as people who illegally held Jewish property became concerned that they might have to return it.

“Binyamin Aktzin, who became a well-known Israeli political scientist, realized this when he wrote an article in *Harpers Magazine* in 1941. He concluded that the problem was much wider than just Czechoslovakia. He warned that elected post-war democratic governments in many countries would not be able to tell people to leave their formerly Jewish-owned houses and other properties, or to leave formerly Jewish-held jobs. Any government which would dare to say that would commit political suicide.”

France

“In the French underground, there were some declarations that after the war the Jews’ rights would be restored, though little is written on this. On the other hand, there were those who openly wondered whether France’s pre-war policy toward the Jews had been right. They said that France should reconsider the status of the Jews. Their opinion was that only the small minority of Jews of old stock, mainly from the Alsace-Lorraine and Avignon areas, should remain French citizens.

“All others, who had come to France from Russia, Rumania and Poland – and even more so those who were naturalized in France after the First World War – should not necessarily have French citizenship. They should be foreigners without civil rights. This has been documented by authors such as Henry Rousso, Asher Cohen and John Sweet.

“Many Frenchmen classified the Jews of France into three groups: non-citizen immigrants and foreigners, naturalized Jews (including their children born in France), and native Jews who had lived in France for generations. Only the latter were recognized as genuinely French. The clandestine journal *Les Cahiers*, which was published in Paris by the center-right underground group OCM (L’Organisation Civile et Militaire), advocated a similar distinction in its discussion of national minorities and the Jewish question.

“The authors of this clandestine publication recognized the existence of anti-Semitism all over Europe. While rejecting racism, they advocated citizenship only for Jews who had lived for at least three generations in France, and even they would have the status of a protected non-Christian minority.”

Bringing the Jews Back: Bad for de Gaulle's Image

"Similar views were expressed in de Gaulle's entourage in London. This was a very mixed bag of people. Some were French nationalists or monarchists. They were anti-Nazis, but belonged to the French Right. Some of them were even members of the Cagoule, an anti-Semitic extreme right-wing organization. There were also well-known Jews like René Cassin and André Weill-Curiel. Their only common denominator was that they were all anti-German.

"As the war progressed, de Gaulle received recommendations from the French underground not to declare that he would bring the Jews back to France, since that would harm his image. In post-war France there were demonstrations in the streets against the return of Jews who wanted their apartments back.

"Leaders of the Free French movement wondered whether discussing the Jewish question in their broadcasts would give Hitler ammunition allowing them to claim that de Gaulle was defending the Jews. De Gaulle was not an anti-Semite, yet it was important for him to keep up the image that the Free French movement was a French one, in which there were also Jews...but not too many.

"When once asked why he had so many people of Jewish origin around him in London he answered: 'I take whoever comes,' implying that he didn't choose them but merely accepted those who arrived. Pierre Mendès France, one of France's post-War prime ministers, wrote in his memoirs that, when he came to London in 1940 de Gaulle received him exclaiming: 'Another Jew!'"

French Anti-Semites in London; Discrimination in Algeria

"One finds negative opinions about the Jews in London in the circle of the Free French even among important figures who had held key positions in the Third Republic. For example, Pierre Tissier, a member of the State Council and Jean Escarra, a leading lawyer. Both suggested that, after the war, the status of French Jews should be reconsidered. In their view, the Jews were not as discreet as they should have been; and they were pushing themselves into places where they were not wanted. They claimed that Jews moving into certain prestigious positions created anti-Semitism. When this was said in private, without public resonance, it could be considered as individual prejudice. When it was published, however, it was more problematic. The American Jewish Congress protested, and these statements had to be retracted.

"An important test case came when the Americans and British invaded North Africa. In Algeria, under the Vichy regime, the Crémieux Decree, awarding the Jews French citizenship, had been abolished. De Gaulle had declared that it would be restored after Algeria's liberation. This promise was not kept for two reasons: Moslem public opinion, and because it would have endangered the civil service positions of those gentiles who replaced the Jews when the latter lost French

citizenship. There was a substantial time lag between the Allies' invasion of Algeria and the restoration of French citizenship to the Jews.

"In France, from 1943 onwards, some Frenchmen organized themselves in a group for the protection of the rights of Aryanizers. They were even counseled by Vichy officials who told them that, in the unpleasant contingency that Hitler would lose the war, they would, as individuals, stand very little chance of hanging on to their formerly Jewish properties. If, however, they presented themselves to the Americans as an organization, their position would be much stronger.

"After the war, one and a half million people returned to France. This included prisoners of war, slave laborers, political refugees, etc. There were very few Jews among them, perhaps only 2,500. At that time people did not believe that they needed to be compensated for their suffering. It would take another 30 years for the magnitude of the Holocaust to be internalized in this way. The French attitude toward the Jews during the war, and thereafter, has been studied in detail by Renée Poznanski and Annette Wiewiorka."

Germany: A Case Apart

"Germany is a case apart, as there was no German government in exile. One must thus investigate what specific groups, in various parts of the world, had to say about the Jews' future. For the socialists, the Jewish question had never been important. They declared that after the war the Nuremberg Laws would be revoked, Jews would return to Germany and their civil rights restored. It is noteworthy that so little was said about the sensitive issue of property. Had one pressed them at the time, they would probably have said that property would be restored to the Jews. The position of the communists was the same.

"Willy Brandt, then in exile in Stockholm, was the only important socialist to contemplate a different solution. He personally wanted all German Jews to return to Germany. He was well aware, however, that they would not; either because they had been murdered or because many survivors would not want to come back. In April 1944, he suggested the establishment of a fund, using money the Nazis had confiscated in their 12 years of rule, to help those Jews who had arrived in Palestine. There the Jews deserved a state of their own.

"There are very few references to the Jews' future in opposition circles within Germany. The Freiburg circle comprised conservative academic teachers at the city's university. They started meeting around November 1942. It was already clear to them that the Jews were being exterminated. Their position was that 'since not too many Jews will survive and return, their full civil rights can be restored.' Constantin von Dietze, of this circle, believed discrimination against the Jews was unnecessary because 'the number of surviving returning Jews would be so small, they would pose no threat to the German people.'

“This implied that if many Jews would have returned these rights should not have been restored. Their views followed conservative thinking in Germany since the 19th century: that one can assimilate only a small number of Jews.”

Goerdeler: No Solution in Europe

“Another example from the conservative circles concerns Carl Goerdeler, the pre-war mayor of Leipzig. He was meant to become Germany’s prime minister, had the attempted assassination of Hitler by Graf Stauffenberg succeeded. He believed that it was impossible to solve the Jewish question in Europe. It could only be resolved by establishing a Jewish state in Palestine, parts of South America or somewhere in Canada. German citizenship should be granted only to a small elitist minority of Jews, willing to assimilate completely.

“Goerdeler’s position can also be found in his writings in 1941. He repeated it in his testament in 1944, while in jail awaiting execution. When interrogated by the Gestapo regarding his solution for the Jewish question, he said the same.

“In his testament, he says, more or less, that what the Germans did to the Jews would remain an eternal stain on their history. He considered the guilt of the German nation unforgivable. He did not say that the Jews deserved what had happened to them; but he felt that they didn’t do much to prevent it either. They were too pushy, accepting positions beyond their station and becoming too prominent in the Weimar Republic.”

Bankier states: “His were the deeply entrenched stereotypes of the educated European. They might be summarized as saying that the Jews got an equality of rights which they did not deserve, as they were not really Europeans. They thus should not fully exploit their rights and keep a low profile.

“Goerdeler, von Dietze, as well as others with similar attitudes, did not subscribe to the crude stereotypes that placed the Jews outside the universe of moral obligation. Yet they viewed them as a category that was separate from their own realm, thus perpetuating the myths of Jewish otherness.”

Jews Adopting German Positions

“Some Jews held similar positions. Hans Joachim Schoeps lived during the war in exile in Sweden. He had previously led a very small organization, the *Deutscher Vortrupp, Gefolgschaft Deutscher Juden*, which advocated a combination of religious Jewish ideas and conservative, extremely right wing Prussianism. He proposed that after Hitler, when the Jews would return to Germany, a *numerus clausus* would be imposed. In his view, anti-Semitism resulted from the fact that there were too many Jewish lawyers, doctors, prominent people in the world of art and cinema, as well as in other prestigious fields.

“He returned to the idea of making the Jews productive. Jews should go to farms and fields; they should work with their hands and not be coffeehouse Jews.

Conservative Jews like Schoeps were greatly disappointed by the dysfunction of the Weimar Republic. A similar feeling had existed in many French circles with respect to the Third Republic. They felt that the concept that Jews could be equal citizens and part of the nation was merely a polite fiction. They analyzed history factually and concluded that the Jews were not really accepted in European society.”

Different Approaches

“One can thus distinguish several disparate approaches to the Jewish problem. The first was to impose the Jews on European societies. Even if their countries could not integrate them, Jews still belonged to these nations. They must be given equal rights and be free to exploit these if they so choose. This might be considered a liberal position.

“The second approach held that, while Jews should be given full rights, they should be asked to better restrain themselves. Alternatively, they could be given a minority status with limited civil and political rights. For instance, they should not be chief of staff, head of the Supreme Court or assume other positions which are sensitive for a country’s image.

“The third approach was to help the Jews settle elsewhere. This is the position taken by center and right-wing organizations in exile. They considered it realistic that sizable populations in Germany and elsewhere did not want the Jews back.”

Socialist Voices: Germans Prefer Authoritarian Regime

“Several theologians, such as Karl Barth, who was in exile in Switzerland, addressed this issue in abstract terms. Political circles, however, have to refer to concrete realities. Paul Herz, an assimilated German Jew in exile in the United States, wrote in 1940 in a memorandum that some socialists said that one had to expect a hostile public opinion toward the Jews in post-Hitler Germany. These people realized that the Germans preferred an authoritarian regime to a democracy.

“They also said that, after the war, many changes would have to be imposed on the Germans. They would have to be reeducated and become more democratic; their state would have to be more decentralized and less authoritarian. There were different opinions among these socialists as to how much the German people would be willing to absorb Jews and whether one should try to impose the Jews on this hostile society.

“The socialists saw Judaism as a religion, not a nation. They disliked religious establishments, and thus also synagogues and their representatives. The socialists in the West knew mainly the bourgeois Jews, rather than the impoverished masses from the East. These Jews did not vote for them and had a mentality the socialists did not like.

“The socialists had another controversy with the Jews. The latter had emphasized, since Hitler’s assumption of power in 1933, that they were the Nazis’ victims. The socialists, however, said that they had been the first ones to be sent to concentration camps such as Dachau. They had taken voluntary risks, whereas the Jews had tried to accommodate themselves, as much as they could, with the Nazi regime. Had Hitler not wanted to kill the Jews, they could have lived in Germany as a community with minority rights, as they did in fascist Italy, fascist Hungary or fascist Romania.”

The Communists: Reconsidering the Jews’ Future

“The communist viewpoint was different. Their writings implied that the Jews had been successfully assimilated. Nazism and fascism, however, had once again segregated them. As integration had failed, another solution had to be found. The future of the Jews should thus be reconsidered.

“Perhaps the Jews should be a recognized minority. Alternatively they should have their own state in Birobidzhan or Palestine. The communists accepted Palestine as a solution because they believed that there would be many Jews who would not want to reintegrate or assimilate, nor wish to live in Birobidzhan and build a socialist state there.

“These positions can be found among German communists in exile in countries such as the United Kingdom and Mexico. One finds the first expressions of this in 1942, when news of the ongoing exterminations shocked them. This stimulated some to start contemplating the future. Later their ideas gained acceptance in non-communist circles as well.

“But there was an additional reason for the communists’ support of a Jewish state in Palestine. Stalin was assessing what would happen after the war. He considered that, to serve Soviet interests, it might be wise to bring an anti-British element into the Middle East and thus destabilize the British Empire.

“This is also hinted in the contacts between Ivan Maiski, the Russian ambassador in London, David Ben Gurion and Chaim Weizmann. Maiski had visited Palestine in 1943 and was very impressed by his visit to Kibbutz Maaleh Hakhamisha.”

American Jewish Positions

To complete the picture, one must also consider the positions the American Jewish organizations had reached. They gradually adopted an increasingly pro-Zionist stance. Many of them had concluded that Jewish integration in post-Hitler Europe would not work.

“They stated their positions explicitly, firstly demanding the total and retroactive nullification of all anti-Jewish measures enacted before and during the war by the Axis powers. Second, they insisted on the rights of all refugees, victims of

Nazi persecution, to return to their places of residence and the former positions from which they had been driven. Third, they claimed the right for survivors to return to their former occupations or to obtain new positions in the post-war economy. Zionists went further calling for complete civic equality and full parity of economic opportunity, and requested the resettlement of the refugees in Palestine.

“The Jewish organizations also understood that, after the war, apart from the criminal courts, special property courts would be created to determine disputes involving restitution of property. Each conquered nation would appoint commissions to investigate and gather evidence concerning the stolen property. Jews unwilling or unable to return to their countries of origin would be in a disadvantageous position, because their stolen goods would be returned to the government of the country from which they were removed. Hardly could they have imagined that more than fifty years later this issue would still make headlines in the world’s media.”

David Bankier was born in Zeckendorf, Germany in 1947. He is a Professor of Holocaust Studies at the Hebrew University where he teaches at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry. He is also the Director of the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem. His research interests focus on public opinion in Germany, on Nazi policy, and on that of the anti-Nazi exiles.

Efraim Zuroff

Filling in for Governments: Chasing War Criminals

“After the Second World War, the main effort to bring leading Nazi war criminals to justice was the Nuremberg trials. That court however, was not a permanent institution. Following the conclusion of those proceedings, the major responsibility for prosecuting such criminals was initially borne by the Allied powers occupying Germany; but it was eventually turned over to the new governments in West and East Germany. In West Germany 90,000 people were indicted from 1950 on; but only 7,000 were convicted.

“The prosecution of Nazi war criminals was carried out in a sporadic and inconsistent manner. It later became known that large numbers had emigrated from mainland Europe. Many were discovered in Latin American countries; but they also emigrated to such Western democracies as the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and even Sweden and New Zealand.”

Bringing a Little Justice to the World

“As it became clear that not nearly enough was being done to seek out war criminals, some Jews began to conduct their own investigations. These included Simon Wiesenthal in Vienna and Tuvia Friedman, who established a documentation center in Haifa. Both had worked for American intelligence agencies in post-war Europe and both tried to convince governments to bring war criminals to justice.

“In some countries, individuals were able to register significant achievements. Serge Klarsfeld in France is an outstanding example. Besides his interest in the case of Josef Mengele, the Auschwitz doctor, he focused on French war criminals within a wider framework of Shoah-related activities on commemoration and education.”

Efraim Zuroff, Director of the Wiesenthal Center in Israel, belongs to a younger generation of Nazi-hunters. He has spent much of his professional life trying to bring a little more justice to the world. He summarizes the situation thus: “There is no question that only limited justice was achieved. Many who bore either primary or secondary responsibility for the crimes against the Jewish people never paid for them. One cannot view this issue from an overall European standpoint, only from the perspective of about 20 different countries.”

Germany after the War

“In Germany a major obstacle hindering prosecution was that only officers, or those who had acted with clear personal responsibility, were ever brought to court. Officially, the ‘superior orders’ defense, i.e. that a suspect could not be prosecuted because he or she had acted upon orders from their superiors, was not acceptable. Yet this became a guiding *de facto* principle of those actively involved in the prosecution of German Nazi war criminals.

“The prosecution of the members of the Einsatzgruppen – the special battalions which carried out the mass murders of the Jews in Eastern Europe – as well as the members of the German police battalions, was thus limited primarily to officers. Tens of thousands of perpetrators were never prosecuted. We are now certain of this, since the files are open and have been investigated. A Wiesenthal Center researcher, Dr. Stefan Klemp, reviewed the files of many of the approximately one hundred police battalions. Invariably, only a very few people, almost always officers, in each one were actually investigated.

“The Cold War led to a steady decline of prosecutions, because the circumstances dictated reconciliation. West Germany had to be built into a bulwark against communism.” According to Zuroff, “East Germany made even less of an effort to prosecute war criminals. While it did conduct Nazi war crime trials, far less were prosecuted than should have been. Those who helped the communist regime were not put on trial.”

Austria: A Failing Grade Even Today

“In Austria, another important perpetrator country, few Nazi war criminals were prosecuted. Indeed, there has been only one since 1978, and that prosecution was ultimately dropped for medical reasons! The accused, Heinrich Gross, a doctor who practiced euthanasia, convinced the court that he was mentally unfit and thus unable to stand trial. Once he left the courtroom, he gave a very intelligent and detailed interview to the press, which proved he had put on a performance inside. The judge thereupon decided to suspend the decision, but nothing has happened since. In Austria, no central office was established to deal with bringing Nazi war criminals to justice.

“The number of Austrians was proportionately high among the main perpetrators of war crimes. Yet the country made a ‘career’ out of claiming to be a victim of Nazism. Its leaders had no political interest in investigating war criminals since prosecution would prove the opposite. On philosophical, moral and historical levels, that only changed in the 1990s.

“In 2001 the Wiesenthal Center gave Austria a failing grade in its annual report on the prosecution of Nazi war criminals. Its ambassador in Israel complained to us, asking, ‘What should we do?’ I answered: ‘If you finally establish a central

office for the prosecution of war criminals, you will indicate that you have, even at this late stage, the intention of achieving at least a small measure of justice.' However, nothing happened."

Eastern Europe

"The other countries concerned can be divided into two groups: the communist countries and the Western democracies. Most Jews had lived in Eastern Europe, where almost all the murders were carried out. Many local citizens assisted the Nazis in these."

Zuroff summarizes developments: "When the Soviets occupied Eastern Europe, communist governments implemented an ambitious program of investigating war criminals and collaborators. Political considerations were an important motivation. The communists wanted to delegitimize the previous regimes by categorizing them as 'bourgeois nationalists.' The official communist terminology referred to 'Hitlerite fascists' who executed innocent Soviet citizens. Tens of thousands were tried, sentenced and punished.

"Most of these were pardoned and freed in 1955. Among the major beneficiaries of this amnesty were Nazi collaborators from both the Soviet Union and central Europe who had been sent to Siberia rather than executed. Ultimately the latter were allowed to return home. The Soviet Union published many documents and books about some of these criminals. In other cases, nothing was made public, which leads one to suspect that they may have become double agents. Well-aware of the crimes committed by these Nazi collaborators, the Soviets were in a position to put pressure on emigré war criminals to provide information and intelligence from their places of residence in Western democracies."

Chasing Nazis in a Vacuum

"The leading Jewish organizations did not take much interest in the war criminals issue, because their priorities were rebuilding and strengthening Jewish communities. They could not focus their major energies on justice or revenge by chasing Nazis. It was much more important to reconstruct Jewish identity, reestablish Jewish pride and rebuild Jewish security.

"The establishment of the State of Israel represented a victory that changed Jewish life for many Jews, and especially for the survivors among them. It was the antithesis of the Shoah. As the country was constantly under attack, supporting it drew much of the effort and energy of world Jewry.

"Gradually efforts to prosecute war criminals petered out everywhere. By the mid-fifties, Simon Wiesenthal also left the chase. He began working for the ORT organization, helping Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe."

A Turning Point: The Eichmann Trial

Zuroff points out that the situation changed again with the 1961 Eichmann trial. "Israel saw in Mossad operatives capturing him in Argentina and bringing him to judgment – on its own soil – the fulfillment of a symbolic role. The Israeli government, however, had never previously considered that it had a major role to play in prosecuting war criminals. From my conversations with Israeli authorities at the time, it became clear that they did not really care about prosecuting any more murderers.

"The issue came up specifically because of the case of a Romanian archbishop by the name of Valerian Trifa, who had been involved in pogroms in Romania in 1941 and who had emigrated after the war to the United States. There he was stripped of his American citizenship. In 1981 the U.S. looked for a country which would put him on trial. Israel refused to receive him. At the time *Ha'aretz* wrote that Israel cannot be turned into a dumping ground for Nazi war criminals. Otherwise each free country would prefer, rather than judging them itself, to ship them off to Israel.

"The Trifa case mainly dealt with incitement. He had given speeches urging his followers in the fascist Iron Guard to murder Jews. There was no evidence that the archbishop had ever killed anyone personally. In the end, he went from the U.S. to Portugal where he died. This case started a public controversy on what role Israel should play in the prosecution of war criminals. A position consolidated that Israel itself only wanted to bring a few of the better known ones to justice, such as Mengele. Yet it wanted to support the efforts of the United States and other countries to investigate and, if possible, to prosecute war criminals."

The Demjanjuk Trial

"That was the background to Israel's decision to ask for the extradition of Ivan Demjanjuk. He was accused of having participated in mass murders, was relatively young, in good health and lived in a country which sought to extradite him. Pressure created the circumstances which led Israel to request his extradition from the U.S. The trial could not prove he was Ivan the Terrible of Treblinka. The problems with the Demjanjuk trial convinced Israel not to take on any more individual prosecutions of Nazi war criminals.

"After the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, Israel advocated prosecution in the former communist countries because they now have relatively independent judiciaries. Latvia and Lithuania are among the prime countries approached in the last decade to prosecute Nazi war criminals locally.

"Once it became clear, in the mid-seventies, that a substantial number of Nazi war criminals had escaped to Western democracies, there was an upsurge in prosecution efforts. This coincided with a major increase in the interest in the

in Bordeaux – and who after the war became a cabinet minister – was condemned to ten years in prison. He has since been released for health reasons.”

Criminals Dispersing over the World

“Thousands of war criminals, almost exclusively of Eastern European origin, emigrated to Western democracies such as the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and Australia. Their motivation in moving to the West was twofold. They sought to escape prosecution by the Soviets or by the communist authorities of their homelands, and they did not want to live under communist regimes.

“German and Austrian war criminals emigrated primarily to Latin American countries, mostly to Argentina and Chile, some to Brazil and Paraguay. Klaus Barbie moved to Bolivia. There were exceptions. A few went to African countries; and some went to Arab countries, such as Egypt and Syria. One well-known war criminal Syria has shielded is Alois Brunner. He was one of Eichmann’s lieutenants at Department IV-B-4 of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, the Reich Security Main Office. He was responsible for the deportation of 128,500 Jews. Of these, 44,000 Jews were from Austria, 47,000 from Greece, 23,500 from France and 14,000 from Slovakia. In March 2001 he was sentenced in France *in absentia* to life imprisonment.”

Sweden: a Very Problematic Country

“Sweden is a very problematic country as far as shielding war criminals is concerned. After the Holocaust two types of Nazi war criminals lived there. The first were Swedes who had escaped to Norway, served in the SS, and were involved in war crimes. They were finally exposed in two books written by the Swedish journalist Bosse Schoen. The second were Baltic Nazi war criminals who escaped to Sweden toward the end of the war. These were primarily Estonians and Latvians and, to a lesser extent, Lithuanians.”

“In 1987 the Wiesenthal Center gave its first list of suspected Nazi war criminals living in Sweden to the Swedish authorities. They responded that they have a statute of limitations on murder, and thus refused to investigate. I have corresponded with Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson over the last two years and Sweden is now finally in the process of changing the current legal situation regarding those accused of genocide and crimes against humanity.

“In fact, the Swedish government now wants to pass a law to eliminate the statute of limitations on genocide-related crimes. This law will not be retroactive, however, and thus it will not change the position of war criminals still living in the country. The government simply doesn’t care.

“The Estonian Historians’ Commission, established by Estonian President Lennart Meri to investigate the Nazi occupation, issued its initial conclusions in January 2001. Some Estonian war criminals were listed, among them Oskar

Angelus, who was a leading member of the Estonian self-government, and shared responsibility for the mass murder of Jews and communists. He lived in Sweden. We passed his name on to the Swedes, about the time he died. This case highlighted the fact that high-level Nazi war criminals escaped to Sweden, a country which has no legal tools to deal with them, and has never taken any steps to change that.”

Croatia: The Sakic Trial

“There are great educational benefits in pursuing these activities. Even if people are prosecuted and not punished, the exposure of what has happened is important. The trials have an incredible effect in terms of the lessons being taught. We helped put Dinko Sakic on trial in Croatia in 1999. He was the former commander of the Croatian concentration camp Jasenovac, also known as ‘the Auschwitz of the Balkans.’ The man would have given his life for an independent Croatia. Then Croatia became independent and put him on trial in Zagreb before a Croatian judge.

“The Sakic trial was broadcast daily on television and was covered very extensively by the local media. It had a profound effect on Croatian society, which included many people who were naturally sympathetic to Sakic. At the same time, however, there were also thousands of people who had fought with the partisans against the Nazis and their Ustasha allies, and they constituted a natural lobby for Sakic’s prosecution. It was a tremendous gamble to put Sakic on trial in Croatia; because Franjo Tudjman, the Croatian president, was a Holocaust denier.”

Justice prevailed and Sakic was condemned to the maximum sentence of 20 years. Says Zuroff: “I will never forget the day of the verdict in that courtroom in early October 1999. It was the first ever trial of a Nazi war criminal in a post-communist country. Half those in attendance were fascists; and the others, anti-fascists.”

The Baltic Countries

“This could not have happened in the Baltic countries because no Lithuanians fought against the Nazis. Yet these trials can have an important effect there. An editorial in *The Baltic Times*, an English language weekly, wrote about a notoriously anti-Semitic Lithuanian member of parliament named Sustauskas, saying that he brought shame on the country and Lithuania’s aspirations to enter the European Union (EU). To them the negative effect of such anti-Semites on Lithuania’s chances to enter the EU were the problem. The real problem, however, is the Lithuanians’ failure to honestly confront their extensive complicity in the murder of Lithuanian Jewry and Jews elsewhere during the Shoah.

“There is a distinct lack of political will to pursue these cases in Latvia and Estonia as well. Whatever activity has been undertaken only came as a response to pressure from abroad and in cases initiated by private Jewish organizations. The local prosecution agencies have done next to nothing. If they do bring any war criminal to justice, they will do so only because it serves their own interests, rather than out of conviction. Any such trial however would have a major impact on society. That is why it is so important.”

Three to Five Years More?

Zuroff expresses his regrets: “As a private organization, the Wiesenthal Center never had the resources to undertake a widespread search for war criminals. If the Wiesenthal Center had had 10 times more money 20 years ago, we might have brought many more people to trial. We substituted for governments which didn’t do their job as far as justice was concerned. We knew that we would find only the tip of the iceberg. Our whole strategy was to embarrass governments so that they would do what, in theory, they were supposed to do.”

These activities also have a multiplier effect. “As long as we continue, Nazi war criminals cannot sleep quietly with the comfort of being certain that they will not be brought to trial. Twenty years ago I was asked how long did I think the chase of Nazi criminals could continue. I answered then: a further three to five years. Today I would say the same.”

Dr. Efraim Zuroff is the director of the Israel office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the coordinator of the Center’s Nazi War Crimes Research worldwide. He was born in New York and moved to Israel in 1970. He holds a B.A. in history from Yeshiva University, an M. A. in Holocaust Studies from the Hebrew University, where he also completed his Ph.D. He has written several books including, Occupation: Nazi Hunter, the Continuing Search for the Perpetrators of the Holocaust, (Jersey City: KTAV Publishing House, 1994).

Yehuda Bauer

From Propagating Myths to Holocaust Research: Preparing for an Education

The publicity focus on Holocaust issues in the last decade may cause one to mistakenly assume that its main aspects have, by now, been well researched. Yehuda Bauer, the director emeritus of the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem explains: "To comprehend where Holocaust research is at, one must assess three very roughly defined categories of interest to the historian: the attitudes of the criminal perpetrators, the victims and the bystanders."

Functional and Intentionalist Schools

"Due to the work of several young German historians, major progress has been made in understanding the attitudes of the perpetrators. Somewhat paradoxically, these researchers have become allies in Jewish research on the Shoah. This 'grand-children' generation's perception of the Shoah is similar to ours. Between 30 and 45 years old, they are sworn anti-Nazis. We see each other often, either at Yad Vashem or in Germany.

"Their work has convincingly clarified the motives of those behind the slaughter of the Jews. It also answers such major questions as: 'Who were those who carried out the murders?' and 'What was the relationship between the central authority, Hitler and local initiatives?'"

"Two schools of research confront each other: the functionalists and the intentionalists. The first claim that murder of the Jews was not the initiative of one man or a group of people, but rather the result of socio-economic developments in German society which had come to a dead end. These prepared the ground for radical mass murder. A leading German historian, Hans Mommsen, said, 'All Hitler had to do was nod his head for the genocide to take place.'

"The intentionalists claim the opposite. Some older German historians, and some younger ones as well, conclude that ideology was the driving force. In their view, the central direction provided by Hitler was the decisive factor. The historian must, therefore, investigate how this ideology developed and how Hitler played a key role as its radicalizing force."

Bauer elucidates: "These findings don't contradict the importance of local initiative in the execution of subsequent murders. Those sent by Nazi authorities to be butchers were people that they were certain would always propose the most radical solution, in line with the central authority's ideology."

Although Bauer concludes that anti-Jewish activity was first and foremost ideological, he agrees that this did not negate the important role played by economics and politics. In his view, both positions must be integrated into a more complete whole. "Overall, however, Marxism is proven wrong once again. Its idea that everything is determined by socio-economic factors is wrong. Yet, in concluding this, we are guilty of some personal injustice to Karl Marx himself, since in the third part of his main work, *Das Kapital*, first published in Leipzig in 1920, he already claimed that it is sometimes ideology that moves everything."

The Importance of Field Research

Bauer provides details on how historians have brought proof for their theses from field research. "Dieter Pohl and Thomas Sandkuehler have done outstanding work on Galicia. Ullrich Herbert from Freiburg – to some extent the teacher of the younger historians – studied France and reached similar conclusions, as did Christoph Dieckmann on Lithuania."

"Sarah Bender's research on Bialystok and Michal Unger's research on Lodz, as well as that of others investigating the side of the Jewish victims, have confirmed these theses, as has the work of Yad Vashem researchers and American scholars specializing in this subject. Christopher Browning, who investigated Warsaw, has also confirmed these findings. Assembling all this independent research greatly clarifies the picture concerning the perpetrators.

"Christian Gerlach, a German researcher, has studied the German occupation and the mass murders in White Russia; and Peter Longerich, a German scholar in London, has published an overview of German genocidal policies. Michael Wildt from Hamburg has published an important book about the Reichssicherheitshauptamt. This central office, part of the SS, largely directed the execution of the Holocaust. Adolf Eichmann was among those who worked there.

"Writing biographies of the people who worked there, Wildt discovered intellectuals, ideologues and staunch anti-Semites who were ideologically motivated to carry out the mass murder. They *drove* the machine as opposed to merely being cogs in its wheels. Hannah Arendt was mistaken when she considered them mere bureaucrats. Yaacov Lozowick, the Yad Vashem archivist, labeled them more accurately as *unusual* bureaucrats."

What Remains to be Done?

"In contrast, the history of inner Jewish life in the destroyed communities remains largely unresearched. Gerlach provides an overview of the extermination of the Jews of White Russia based on German material, but he is unable to understand the Jewish life of these communities. His studies do not prepare him for that, nor is it within the scope of his research, which focuses on the murderers.

“The same is true for Browning’s initial analysis of the German policy of extermination of the Polish Jews. Yet even regarding the murderers, we have minimal material from many countries, including the Ukraine, Greece and Croatia. Regarding Romania, much has been written which has not yet been summarized in a convincing way.

“Not enough effort has been devoted to the victims’ lives before they were murdered. Some studies deal with Jewish communities of big cities such as Warsaw, Vilna, Kovno, etc. It is difficult to obtain material and compare testimonies on small communities in eastern Poland and western Russia. When researching this issue myself, I found one book which described the history of a small community in western Poland.

“Some research had been done on Stanislawow, the first victim of the Shoah. An M.A. student from Australia has described Kolomea’s history. In the various memorial books (*Yizkor Bücher*), writers try to provide an overall picture of what happened. Yet since this research is of a general character, and is not based on detailed studies, it must give a distorted picture. There is no alternative but to research the details, even if that is difficult. Jews behaved differently in various places. It is important to understand what they did and how they viewed the surrounding society.”

Who Were the Jews and How did They Live?

“Jan T. Gross’s remarkable book on Jedwabne focuses on the slaughter of the Jews. His conclusion, that this particular mass murder was carried out by Poles on their own initiative, is both revealing and important. Yet it doesn’t tell us who these Jews were and how they lived. One also has to ask: What was the Jews’ relationship with the surrounding community? How did they perceive the approaching disaster? How did they react to it? What happened to the very small groups which survived?

“My current research focuses on a number of small communities in eastern Poland, such as Baranowicze. It shows how inaccurate *Fiddler on the Roof* nostalgia is as a description of the very difficult lives Jews led in these communities. Shalom Cholawski has done important work on the Jewish partisans in these areas. Yet all available studies concern only isolated cases. Though most survivors have died, there are still some Jews who can give testimony about their experiences. Also, many of those who passed away have left us testimony.

“The work remaining is enormous and the difficulties involved are almost insurmountable. Yad Vashem has pooled resources, exchanging material with the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington. Their investigations focus on Russia; ours focus on the Ukraine. The language problem is a major one. If one knows Yiddish, one has to learn Russian, and vice versa. Some texts are in White Russian or Ukrainian. Archives in Russia, though nominally open, are often inaccessible. The Russian authorities are usually well-disposed toward our desires, but local

problems are manifold. Often local archivists think they have material we will find valuable and then make access difficult or conditional on bribes.”

Western Europe

“The role of Jewish organizations is another important subject to be studied. An excellent book by Raiah Cohen covers the period from 1939 to 1942. Research on the remainder of the war years will have to be completed by someone else. Again, research in this field is fragmented. My own research, for instance, includes some work on the American Joint Distribution Committee’s role in France.

“Another under-explored subject is the Jews’ efforts to keep up their morale and culture. This happened both in Eastern Europe and Western Europe. One can quote many examples from the abundant raw material, but there is a dire need to investigate this subject in many countries, leading to a cross-country comparison.

“Sometimes Jewish reactions in different countries were quite similar. For example, the Zionist youth organizations in Poland refused from the start to collaborate with the Judenrat (the Jewish Council). This was also true in France, where the youth movements went underground in May 1942. At that time, there were anti-Jewish laws, but no physical actions against the Jews had yet been taken. Renée Poznanski has researched both the resistance of French Jews and its social and cultural aspects.

“The writing of Shoah history in Western Europe has progressed significantly over the last few years. The debate on the restitution of stolen property has been accompanied by much historical research. It has given us insights into the role of the bystanders. In Switzerland, particularly important avenues have been opened up. We now have improved insight into the role of the government and how Jewish refugees were received in the country.”

Greece and Romania

“Greece is a particularly difficult country to study, since few historians who know Greek are interested in the Shoah. One needs not only to know two types of Greek (written and spoken), but also German, Ladino and some Yiddish. Some research exists on communities such as Salonika and Yoannina, but this is not representative of Greece as a whole. In the former Yugoslavia much progress has been made; and we now have a good information base. What is available thus differs greatly from country to country.

“Romania is extremely important because there the Jews were murdered by Romanians, rather than by Germans. One has to understand how the mass murders related to the support the Germans gave to the Romanians and to their political and ideological identity, as well as the local Antonescu government and the Nazis. Jean Ancel has just published a major study in Hebrew analyzing

Romania's internal situation. His 1,300-page book in Hebrew is unlikely to be translated in its entirety into English, but an effort to translate at least the gist should be made"

Islamist Anti-Semitism

When one asks what the study of Holocaust history can add to our understanding of contemporary anti-Semitism, Bauer refers to recent radical currents within Islam. He stresses that, in what is commonly called 'Islamism,' ideology is the prime mover, while social and economic conditions also play a significant role in its development.

"Today's extreme Islamic anti-Semitism relates to current issues. Radical Islamic movements, such as Saudi Wahabism, initially did not make any reference to the Jews. Nowadays Islamic societies have a major problem. They are backward, not only compared to Europe and the United States, but even in comparison to Taiwan, South Korea or India.

"In their ongoing backwardness they seek a scapegoat. They find this in the West, symbolized by the Jews, an idea they took from European anti-Semitism. Many Islamists explicitly say that one has to destroy the Jews. Their language is a mix of that of the Nazis and the Koran. The latter makes many negative comments about the Jews as Mohammed's enemies."

Three Murderous Utopias

According to Bauer, "In both the National Socialist and Marxist communist ideology, the liberal West's parliamentary democracy is the enemy. The Jews are its typical expression. Radical Islam identifies the same enemy. One has to realize that not only Islamism, but also these two other fundamentalisms, are religious in essence. All three surrender to a transcendental force while trying to escape from an inconvenient reality."

"It makes little difference whether one calls this the God of nature, dialectic Marxism or the Koran; their key features are similar. Islamic radicalism is the desire for a global utopia, to be achieved through violent means, which aims at global dominance. This is equally true for National Socialism and communism.

"Every universal utopia is murderous and every radical universal utopia produces radical murderers. Despite big differences between these three ideologies which have emerged over the last hundred years, many parallels exist between them. We do not know how much this radicalism has penetrated Islamic society because in these non-democratic countries, opinion polls are forbidden."

Egypt: The Origins of Modern Fundamentalism

"Modern Islamic fundamentalism originates in Egypt. Its main ideologist was Sayyid Qutb who returned to Egypt around 1950, abhorring Western culture.

In 1954 he was incarcerated, along with many other members of the Moslem Brotherhood, by Nasser's regime. He was temporarily released and then executed by the regime in 1966.

"Radical Islam opposes Arab nationalism and, therefore, the governments now in power in the Arab states. Among Palestinians its adherents can be found in Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which are both anti-Christian in nature. Their views are radically different from the extremist groups which support Arafat. The latter have to keep the loyalty of the Christian Palestinians. A similar pattern can be found in Lebanon where the Christians are an important minority. In other Arab countries, minorities are so small – in Egypt the remaining Copts are only a few percent of the population – that one does not have to show them much consideration.

"Two other Egyptian radical ideologues are Mohammed Salih al Awa and Yussef al-Karadawi. The latter now lives in Qatar. One may add to this Osama Bin Laden's deputy, Dr. Ayman Zawahiri, also an Egyptian."

Pakistan as a Source of Islamism

"The second major source of Arab fundamentalism is Pakistan. All extremist Pakistani Islamic organizations draw their ideas from the writings of Abul 'Ala al-Maududi, who died in 1979. Westerners erroneously think that the future will be determined by Pakistani President Musharaf. He may well be only a passing phenomenon with no impact on the crisis-ridden Pakistani society.

"Pakistani society imbues millions with extremist anti-Semitism, as was highlighted by the recent murder of Jewish journalist Daniel Pearl. The West, together with the Jews, is totally oblivious to how fanatic much of Pakistani society is and what extremist literature is published there.

"Neither does the Israeli government realize that, beyond the local controversy with the Palestinians, lies a much greater ideological conflict in which extremist anti-Semitism plays a very important role. This fanaticism of anti-Semitic expressions is so extreme that the Palestinians are relatively moderate. It is an absurd expectation that democracies will emerge in Arab and Islamic countries where such radical ideas are common."

Genocidal Forces in Islam

"Analyses of Islamism are important for Holocaust scholars because the Shoah exemplified how far such ideologies can lead. I have been saying for 40 years that another genocide of the Shoah type is quite possible. In Islam there are major forces which are mentally prepared – given the power – to carry out genocide against all others.

"Radical Islam is such a major source of anti-Semitism that other types become less important even though they are far from harmless. Most of the

synagogue-burners are Moslems. The rise of neo-fascists, such as Le Pen, is also associated with dangerous anti-Semitism. In these circles one finds the Holocaust deniers. In the United States, rightist militias are a major anti-Semitic danger since they are armed.

“Anti-Semitism is also found in the extreme left, for instance among Trotskyites. One also has to fight against them, even though they are not the main danger to the Jewish people. The extreme left uses the terminology of the Islamic world. Islamists, the extreme left and the extreme right, despite their differences, form alliances to fight the Jews.”

Islamist Preparation for Genocide

“We have to distinguish between three man-made disasters. The first one is mass murder, which if it continued could develop into genocide, but which may stop before. Bosnia and Kosovo are examples. The second concerns national and religious confrontations, such as those in Sri Lanka, Kashmir and Macedonia, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The third category is terrorism.

“Between 1900 and 1987, according to American social scientist Rudolph J. Rummel, governments and political bodies murdered 169 million people. Of these, 34 million were soldiers, and 38 million were victims of genocide. Their ranks include the Herrero in Namibia, the Armenians in Turkey, and the Assyrians in Iraq during the 1930s. The Second World War witnessed genocide against the Jews, the gypsies and the Poles, even if the latter cases were different in nature from that of the Jews.

“Genocide cannot be stopped once it has started. One must consider beforehand how to prevent it. When one sees radical Islamists in Pakistan and other places saying ‘Who is the great demon? The Jews!’ the threat of genocide becomes palpable!”

Holocaust Education

“Against this worrisome background, Holocaust education becomes an increasingly important challenge. Now, over 50 years after the war, a sudden awareness has emerged of its necessity. Sweden’s Prime Minister, Goran Persson, was the driving force in the startup of an international project on Holocaust education. His initiative was due to serious problems of neo-Nazism among youngsters and the influence of Holocaust deniers in Sweden. This endangered the values Sweden wished to represent, those of a cultured social democracy. At the same time, there are Swedish government ministers who do not agree with his attitude.

“These concerns led Persson to initiate the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, which convened in January 2000. When I had suggested this meeting, I thought there was a one in a million chance of it happening, yet it did and it was successful. The Stockholm conference was important for the Jews,

as they need allies in their battle against anti-Semitism. It was the first time in history that politicians, among them many heads of state, met to discuss education. The subject of that unique event was the Holocaust.

“Although various national leaders tried to cover up their countries’ pasts, more significant, all these leaders signed the conference’s concluding document.

“As a direct result of the Stockholm conference, in September 2001 there was a memorial day for Holocaust victims in Lithuania. There the designated Ambassador to Israel, a History professor, spoke openly about the Lithuanian slaughter of Lithuanian Jews.”

Apologies of Doubtful Value

According to Bauer, “The apologies of some Eastern European governments are insignificant symbolic acts, mainly designed to help those countries become NATO members. Those in power today are not the ones who murdered six million Jews. They can not request forgiveness for a generation to which they do not belong and which did not authorize them to seek forgiveness. Who is guilty? Not they, but those who murdered the Jews at the time. What price does an Austrian Chancellor have to pay when he finally apologizes on behalf of Austria? He is not the spokesman of the Austrian mass murderers, because he opposes their mass murders.

“Thus, we must continue to bring war criminals to trial, even if only a few very old individuals remain. Their criminal sentence is not as important as telling their story to the public. Still, if a war criminal sits in jail until the end of his days, justice has been done. This should not be confused with moral restitution, which is impossible.”

Teaching the Teachers

“The Stockholm conference resulted in an organization for Holocaust education, remembrance and research, which already operates in many countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Argentina and Uruguay) and is gradually spreading to others. Several of these countries, whose leaders told all kinds of ‘stories’ about their country’s Holocaust past at the Stockholm conference, have since begun Holocaust education programs.”

According to Bauer, “One has to be very careful to ensure that alien concepts do not creep into this teaching. Universalization of the Holocaust, by extending it to many other situations, is very dangerous. Only rarely is this justified, such as when the Czech Republic wished to include the remembrance of the mass murder of the Czech gypsies – 85 percent of whom were murdered – in its educational program.

“More and more educators come to Yad Vashem to learn how to teach the Holocaust correctly. With several countries, such as the United States and Poland,

we have excellent contacts, either directly with the government or with governmental organizations. One can never be sure how far this will go. Politicians in power change. One does not know to what extent the successors of the leaders who attended the Stockholm conference will have the same interests.

“Meanwhile, the picture differs greatly from one country to another. Sometimes one has setbacks, such as the temporary attention a Jewish anti-Semite like Norman Finkelstein received with his book on the ‘Holocaust industry.’ After a few months, this publicity diminished. This phenomenon of Jewish anti-Semites goes back many centuries.”

Continuing the Struggle

“Paradoxically, Germany is most active in promoting Holocaust education. There is a very good reason for that. Given their history, they understand the importance of education as a means of preventing future disasters. The Holocaust today serves as a symbol for what we ought to oppose: racism, genocide, mass murder, ethnic hatred, ethnic cleansing, anti-Semitism and group hatred.

“Descartes once said, ‘I think, therefore I am.’” Bauer adds: “We should say with respect to Holocaust education, ‘we struggle, therefore we are.’ The moment we stop struggling, we stop existing.”

Yehuda Bauer was born in Prague in 1926. He is Professor Emeritus of Holocaust Studies at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He founded the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism in 1982, remaining its chairperson until 1995. He retired in 2001 from his directorship of the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem, where he now serves as Academic Advisor. In 1998 he was awarded the Israel Prize. He has been a member of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities since 2000.

Deborah Lipstadt

Denial of the Holocaust and Immoral Equivalence

In her 1993 book, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, historian Deborah Lipstadt examines Holocaust denial: the myth that the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis never occurred. Once the deniers have absolved the Nazis of this central accusation, their next step is usually to claim that their warfare was similar to that of the Allies.

Holocaust Denier Irving Sues Lipstadt

Lipstadt, and her publisher Penguin Books, were the defendants in a Holocaust denial libel trial in London in 2000. The historical writer David Irving sued them for participating in a ‘conspiracy’ to ruin his career and destroy his academic legitimacy. Lipstadt, who teaches modern Jewish and Holocaust History at Emory University, Atlanta, claimed in her book that Irving knew the evidence about the Holocaust period but distorted it, until it coincided with his ideological leanings and political agenda.

Prior to this Irving had been found guilty by a German court in 1992, having declared, at a 1990 public meeting in Munich, that there had been no gas chambers at Auschwitz. After this verdict Irving was banned from Germany, and he has since been refused entry to several other countries including Canada. Another of his central theses was that Hitler neither ordered nor approved the murder of the Jews. Irving further claimed that, for a long time, Hitler knew nothing about the killings and that those Germans who murdered Jews did so without authorization.

Irving further asserted that at most 600,000 Jews had been killed in the Holocaust and that Auschwitz was not a death camp, but a slave-labor camp with a high mortality rate. This, and the huge death toll at Treblinka, were due to natural causes, such as typhus epidemics. Lipstadt also mentions that Irving refers to the Jews as “the traditional enemies of the truth.”

The trial attracted worldwide media attention and the defendants emerged victorious. Judge Charles Gray, in a 300-plus page judgment in April 2000, described David Irving as an anti-Semite who had “for his own ideological reasons persistently and deliberately misrepresented and manipulated historical evidence.” He ruled that Lipstadt and the publishers had justified their claims.

The Origins of Holocaust Denial

“Holocaust denial has a number of origins,” explains Lipstadt. “As far as deniers go, I could never figure out whether David Irving was first and foremost a lover of Nazism and fascism and thereafter an anti-Semite, or vice versa. I tend now to think that the first was the case. Irving loved Hitler and what he imagined the Third Reich to have been. In his fantasy it was neat and clean; everything was in its place. No outsider groups – such as Jews, blacks and others – could mess around there. Nobody could request special dispensation or wander the streets in different costumes. There was thus no need for any political correctness.

“David Irving’s case is particularly useful for analysis because it shows how the denial process works. He apparently loved the Nazis enough to actually want to reestablish National Socialism as a viable political system. At one point, he may have thought that this would become possible in former East Germany after the fall of communism and its integration with West Germany.

“Irving realized that a pre-condition for Nazism’s resurrection was to strip and wash it of its worst elements. The first important tool to accomplish this was the creation of immoral equivalencies, essentially a balance of bad behavior. For instance, in the same breath, one mentions that, while the Nazis bombarded London in 1940, the Allies bombed Germany in 1945. Less truthfully, one agrees that the Nazis had concentration camps, which were terrible places, but then denies anybody was murdered in them. One can then ‘balance’ that by mentioning that the Americans had camps for American citizens of Japanese descent.

“A further step in the denial process is to search for various excuses for acts that cannot be denied, because there are extensive reports about them, such as the murder of civilians on the Eastern Front by the Einsatzgruppen. The denier then claims that they were carried out mainly by others, such as Estonians, Latvians, Ukrainians, as well as some rogue Germans. Yet another example concerns the many emaciated people in the camps the Allies found in May 1945. One justifies that by saying that it resulted from the Allies bombing the roads to the camps. The Germans were thus no longer able to take proper care of the people in the camps.

“The final step in denial methodology concerns atrocities which simply cannot be excused by any of the above stratagems; hence they must be denied.”

Irving’s Predecessors

“Before Irving there were several other deniers. Their attacks began almost immediately after the war. Maurice Bardèche, a French fascist, asserted that people had died in concentration camps, not because they were murdered, but due to war-related events. He wrote that the expression, ‘the Final Solution of the Jewish problem’ meant, for the Germans, that the Jews would be transferred to ghettos

in Eastern Europe. Bardèche claimed the gas chambers were used to 'disinfect' the concentration camps' inmates, not kill them!

"Another Frenchman, Paul Rassinier, a pre-war communist and later a socialist, had been a member of the French Resistance. He was arrested and interned in concentration camps, among them Buchenwald. In 1948 he published a book entitled, *Crossing the Line*, in which he argued that people might have been killed in concentration camps, but that the perpetrators had acted on their own, not on orders from headquarters.

"Rassinier initially admitted that people had been killed by being gassed, which he claimed was a local initiative and not the responsibility of the central Nazi system. Later he denied the existence of the gas chambers altogether. This argument was repeated by Louis Darquier de Pellepoix, who had been Commissioner for Jewish Affairs of the notorious French Vichy government for several years. In an infamous interview in 1978, which drew widespread criticism, he told the French weekly *L'Express* that the Holocaust was a hoax and that only lice were gassed in Auschwitz. Rassinier also claimed that the concentration camps were not a German invention, and that many other countries had used them, including France. This is an early example of the balancing acts Irving and later deniers applied.

"The first generation of post-war deniers, to which both Bardèche and Rassinier belonged, justified Nazi anti-Semitism by asserting that the Jews were responsible for their own suffering, since they had caused Germany's financial and political problems. Later deniers abandoned this line of argument, because they felt it undermined whatever credibility they had."

More recent Holocaust denial activities in France have often focused on Robert Faurisson, a former literature professor at Lyons University. Lipstadt wrote that he "regularly creates facts where none exist and dismisses as false any information inconsistent with his preconceived conclusions." He asserts, for example, that the German army was given 'draconian orders' not to participate in 'excesses' against civilians including the Jews; consequently the mass murders of the Jews could not have happened. In making his argument, Faurisson simply ignores the activities of the Einsatzgruppen, the units responsible for killing vast numbers of Jews. Faurisson often also became the inspiration for Holocaust deniers in other countries.

A Staunch Believer in Free Speech

Despite her ongoing battle against Holocaust deniers, Lipstadt maintains: "As an American, I'm a staunch believer in free speech. I recognize, however, that the situation in Germany is different and that there might be room for a law against Holocaust denial; but there is also a practical aspect to my general opposition to laws against Holocaust denial. When speech is restricted, it becomes 'forbidden fruit' and more interesting to people.

“It is one thing to state that a country allows free speech, as does the United States in its constitution. That gives deniers the right to say what they wish. But it does not obligate newspapers to print letters or columns by deniers. Some student newspapers misunderstood the First Amendment and assumed it *obligated* them to print this material. It does not.”

Denial: A Threat to Responsible History

Lipstadt stresses that Holocaust denial is a threat to documenting responsible history. “If one history can be denied, any history can be denied. History then becomes totally subjective. It becomes negotiable, i.e. whatever one states, it is.”

“My barrister in the London trial, Richard Rampton, is Scottish. He said: ‘We must fight the battle against deniers because otherwise none of us will be safe in our beds.’ When he said that, he was not expressing a personal fear of persecution. He was expressing his understanding of the kind of liberal democratic society in which he wants to live. That society is threatened by the likes of David Irving. I was very appreciative that Rampton realized that Holocaust denial is not only a threat to Jews, but also to his own society.”

The Battle of Historians

The deniers’ claims should be seen in the context of an ongoing discussion on how subjective history is. Lipstadt comments: “The deniers do not operate in isolation. Since the late 1960s, we find scholars saying that knowledge is created rather than explored. In this methodology, the reader’s perspective becomes a dominant force in what version of the world one accepts. This ‘deconstructionism’ created a permissive climate toward the questioning of historical events.”

Lipstadt notes: “Even those serious historians who consider history very subjective do not accept Holocaust denial, because it goes beyond the boundaries.” She explains that, while some historians may say that Hitler was the worst murderer of the 20th century, others would assert that Stalin was as bad. “Some historians may claim the Soviets to have been a real threat to the West after the Second World War; others may consider this threat not so major, but rather a creation of the American defense industry. As for earlier events, historians may argue that there was no American revolutionary war in 1776, but rather a battle of the farmers against the vested interests of the city. Nobody would claim, however, that there was no war.”

Holocaust Deniers: “Off the Chart of Responsible Historians”

Lipstadt thus concludes: “The Holocaust deniers take deconstructionism and historical relativism to its most absurd extreme. Once one moves into the realm of denial, one is off the chart of responsible historians. No responsible historian

would say there were no gas chambers. One should not take the deniers seriously, because it accords them an undeserved status. That is why I have always refused to debate with them.

“This does not mean there are no legitimate arguments about the Holocaust. One may argue that the Holocaust is unique or that it is one among several genocides. Some historians consider the latter an incorrect professional conclusion, stressing the uniqueness of the Holocaust as incomparable to anything else. Yet I know responsible historians who believe that the Armenian genocide is quite similar to the Holocaust. There are those who say that in Bosnia there were elements of a genocide, if not a Holocaust. I disagree. But in no way can one say that such historians are, in any way, similar to deniers.”

Dangerous Half-way Historians

“Historians such as the German Ernst Nolte are, in some ways, even more dangerous than the deniers. Nolte is an anti-Semite of the first order, who attempts to rehabilitate Hitler by saying that he was no worse than Stalin; but he is careful not to deny the Holocaust. Holocaust deniers make Nolte’s life more comfortable. They have, with their radical argumentation, pulled the center a little more to their side. Consequently, a less radical extremist, such as Nolte, finds himself closer to the middle ground, which makes him more dangerous.

“A very different type of extremist is Norman Finkelstein, who claims that the memory of the Holocaust has been made into an industry. Had he not been a child of survivors, his book would not have received any attention. Yet other voices complain that the Jews try to monopolize their victimhood at the expense of other sufferers.

“It is very important to be able to confront all of these accusers with facts, figures and documents. The methodology followed in a court and the expertise presented there are very useful in such a defense. Prominent historians like Richard Evans, Christopher Browning and Peter Longerich were expert witnesses in the London trial, which gave it much of its importance. History had its day in court and proved victorious.”

Universalization of the Holocaust

“My own position on the uniqueness of the Holocaust has changed somewhat in recent years. I used to be a purist, considering it unique; but I now think that one errs by arguing that stand too strongly. There are other situations with some elements similar to those of the Holocaust.

“If one stops the comparison at 1939, one finds strong parallels between apartheid policies in South Africa and Nazi attitudes toward the Jews. There were times when the apartheid government convinced blacks that they were being taken to new homesteads. The authorities, however, took them to the bush and left

them there without food and water. They died by the thousands, which was a limited form of genocide. Of course, the apartheid government was not intent on destroying the entire black population, because they needed them to do the work that sustained the country. Consequently, it was not a full-fledged genocide. It was horrible, it was inhumane, it was anti-democratic; but it was not intended to wipe out the black population.

“The true uniqueness of the Holocaust starts only after 1941, with the Nazi implementation of a systematic plan of murder. No other example exists of a modern government using all its forces (including post offices, banks, army, etc.) to annihilate an entire people: men, women, and children. This genocide occurred inside and outside Germany’s borders.

“It is not the industrial and technological elements of the Holocaust which make it unique. If the Germans hadn’t created the gas chambers, they would have continued to kill people *en masse* like the Einsatzgruppen did. They probably would have murdered far fewer people in four years. However, sometimes, by focusing on the significance of the gas chambers, we downplay the brutality and incredible horror, as well as the organizational aspects, of the Einsatzgruppen murders.

“While there is no example of a situation that comprises all elements of the Holocaust, we can still use the Armenian genocide as a comparative tool. Likewise there are places in Bosnia where one may conduct a similar analysis, as that too included some elements of genocide.”

History and Memory

“One of the important conclusions of Irving’s trial against me was that, in the future, historians will have to come to the fore to protect and defend history in a way that they haven’t had to until now. That is why my lawyers called historians as witnesses, and not survivors.

“Survivors are witnesses to the facts. It is much more powerful when someone speaks in the first person; but, had a survivor been put on the stand on our behalf, it would have meant we needed a witness of fact to prove the Holocaust had happened. We wanted to make it very clear that our purpose wasn’t to prove that the Holocaust had happened, as that was obvious.

“As more and more survivors pass away, the role of the historian will become increasingly important. Even if many testimonies have been transcribed or video-taped, historians will still have to interpret them. They will have to decide whether a testimony matches up to a document, and whether a side-testimony from the same village can support or help to understand it. When all the survivors have passed away, the only way to make the Holocaust relevant to a large group of people may well be to show how it fits in, compares to and contrasts with other genocides and outrages. Thus one will have to view the Holocaust in a much more comparative context than before.

“Another example: There is a small Holocaust memorial education center in Cape Town in South Africa, which every policeman has to visit during his training. This is not because the authorities are worried about what happened to the Jews in Europe, but because it provides a lesson as to what happened there and how it compares with the situation in South Africa, what is different and what can be learned from it.”

Holocaust Memory Beyond the Survivors

“Many things will remind us of the Holocaust after the death of the survivors, including books, movies, cultural histories and artifacts. Some monuments will be very effective; others will be forgotten the day after they are unveiled.

“Some of the Holocaust museums will do important educational work. These museums shouldn’t be afraid to look at the Holocaust in a broader context, even if the Holocaust is a big picture in and of itself. However, I do not think they should become museums for genocides with a room for the Armenians and another for the Rwandans. The Anne Frank Center in Amsterdam has gone to an extreme and, it seems to me, it is no longer really oriented toward the Shoah. Today it is more of a generalized anti-totalitarian center.

“The Holocaust museum in Washington deals exclusively with the Shoah, but it must also help those who visit it to understand the Shoah in the context of other outrages. This museum shows us what can happen in specific places if the world does not protest early enough. Thus it was important that a scholar from Rwanda, who had researched what happened there, could present his data in a lecture at the museum. It helped remind those who heard him that the world has learned relatively little since the Shoah, or from the Shoah.”

The Meaning for Israel

Many motifs which Lipstadt has analyzed in the deniers’ publications on the Shoah return nowadays in a wider context *vis-à-vis* Israel. “There are people who say, ‘I don’t think there should be a state of Israel or any Jews in the Middle East, because they do not belong there.’ By pulling the argument to one extreme, other extremists suddenly sound more reasonable. For instance, there are those who say, ‘I am against the State of Israel but the Jews can live peacefully in a democratic Palestinian state.’ Destroying the Jewish character of the state suddenly seems far more moderate than wanting the total expulsion of the Jews.”

Lipstadt agrees that criticism against Israel is as legitimate as that against any other country; but she stresses the difficulty of sharply defining proper boundaries: “What is not permitted,” she concludes, “is false historical analysis and the use of immoral equivalencies. One cannot compare the 2002 Jenin battle to the Shoah. Such a comparison shows either ignorance of history or misguided intentions.”

Lipstadt sees this comparison as a new expression of denial. "When one speaks about Israeli soldiers as Nazis, that is a denial of what Israeli soldiers are and what the Nazis were. This is a misuse of history for political purposes. One may not like Israel, but that is different from lying about history in a court. Much current criticism of Israel is based on anti-Semitism and denial. Some of the exaggerated talk about Israeli power, Israeli strength and Israeli ability is very similar to what one has seen for decades in the writings of the Holocaust deniers and, before that, in those of the Nazis and other anti-Semites."

Deborah E. Lipstadt is Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish and Holocaust Studies at Emory University in Atlanta where she directs the Rabbi Donald A. Tam Institute for Jewish Studies. Her book, Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory (Free Press/Macmillan, 1993), is the first full length study of those who attempt to deny the Holocaust. She is currently writing a book about the libel trial in London she won against David Irving who sued her for calling him a Holocaust denier and right-wing extremist.

Nathan Durst

Europe: From Guilt Feelings to Repackaging Anti-Semitism

Holocaust psychologist Nathan Durst claims that Hitler showed how, with respect to the Jews, the most murderous fantasies could be realized. Comparing anti-Semitism to negative attitudes levied against other groups is therefore grossly misguided. Jews must be extremely wary whenever anti-Semitism reemerges.

“There have been several occasions when oppressors have killed large numbers of people, such as the Russian revolution. The Holocaust, however, was unique. Hitler’s death wish was realized: the mass murder of Europe’s Jews. This genocide was thus also a major event in the Second World War from a psychological viewpoint.

“The Holocaust mass murders also satisfied the hidden desires of others, including many who did not identify with the Nazis. Among them were believers who considered themselves Christians. A great variety of reactions before and during the Second World War attest that the genocide realized an ancient wish for these people. The Jews were removed from their lives and sent to where they belonged – hell. Many of these non-Nazis eagerly aided Hitler in various ways.

“Those who dreamed of the mass murder of the Jews before the Second World War thought that it was no longer acceptable and would not take place. It might have been possible in Western Europe in the Dark Ages, hundreds of years before, or at the beginning of the twentieth century in Russia or the Ukraine, but, in cultured Western Europe, genocide was unthinkable after the French revolution. Yet Hitler accomplished it.”

Post-traumatic Shock

“The Jewish survivors’ return to their hometowns after the war had a major psychological impact on them and, to a lesser extent, on the surrounding society. Jews had suffered countless traumatic experiences during the war. They had been taken out of their houses and countries, terrorized and forced to watch murder, while they fought for their own survival. After liberation, those who survived hell were often forced to remain in their camps or move to other ones. Many were starving and ill; others died. The survivors wanted to return to their homes and pre-war living conditions. The Allied forces in shattered Europe could do little more than keep them in camps again.

“Another vain expectation of the survivors was that the societies which had participated in the evils perpetrated against them would show some signs of remorse about what had transpired. Their society might have claimed they had not intended for this to happen and that they were somewhat ‘sorry.’ This rarely occurred. Survivors discovered that their families had been murdered; their belongings and apartments taken.

“Many experienced post-traumatic shock, according to today’s psychological terminology. They were overwhelmed and only gradually grasped the magnitude of the catastrophe, still doubting the fate of their relatives, hoping that some might be alive, but fearing the worst. Such circumstances rendered it impossible to undergo a normal grieving process of separating from the dead with rituals of mourning.

“Child-survivors fared even worse because of their age. They hardly understood what had happened to them or around them. They were adopted into new families or were cared for by organizations like Youth Aliyah; but nobody told them about the whereabouts of their relatives. Many had to wait decades before learning about themselves, their past and the fate of their families.”

The Europeans: Standing Aside Again

“Many surviving Jews were kept in displaced persons camps in Germany. As nobody took care of them, they themselves had to organize schooling, medical care, employment and rehabilitation. The Western countries were primarily interested in their own reconstruction, attempting to create some semblance of normalcy. From a psychological viewpoint, this may partially explain why nobody cared about the returning Jews. In addition, the authorities often disclaimed responsibility for the Jews’ specific problems and considered that these should be somebody else’s responsibility. It was not their concern who that might be.

“This behavior resembled Western society’s attitude to what had occurred under Hitler. What happened to the Jews had been the Germans’ business; others stood by, participating passively. The latter did not feel responsible for the Jews’ deaths and, after the war, nobody wanted to be liable for the survivors either. This was a big slap in the face for the Jews of Central and Western Europe. They had been alone when they were taken away in the war. They were alone a second time when they came back after the war. Nobody cared.

“Germany was a special case because it had been divided into four occupation zones. After their defeat, Germans were wandering all over the country. They often lost contact with their original surroundings. Hundreds of thousands of Germans were taken to Poland and Russia. This embittered the German population, made them feel victimized, and enabled them to more easily ‘forget’ the difficulties of the Jewish survivors.”

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Rebuilding Societies

Says Durst: "The great powers were warned about the psychological difficulties of the survivors, but were not particularly interested in them. Becoming aware of the Jews' problems would require one to deal with them.

"The Western authorities lacked the insight and understanding that, just as some soldiers broke down under stress, camp survivors were severely traumatized. The authorities also lacked the manpower, knowledge, and resources needed to meet the troubles of the surviving Jews. They thus opted not to tackle such problems, denying their existence.

"The Marshall Plan, through which the United States extended economic help to Western Europe including Germany, is an indication that there were politicians who understood that one had to consider the after-effects of the destruction and how societies could be rebuilt. It is too simple to say that this plan concerned a macro-issue, whereas the Jews' problems were individual ones. Many other Western and Eastern Europeans had been displaced and returned to their countries. In France, for instance, there were organizations that helped returnees.

"Jews, however, received far less hospitality. They were, for all practical purposes, foreigners. This was seen much more clearly after the war than before. The Jew had become the so-called 'other,' a stranger, even if perhaps no longer the 'enemy' as he had been labeled during the war. There was far less understanding of psychology and the needs of victimized people then, than there is today."

Durst adds: "I do not accept the apologies of certain politicians and countries in the last few years. This is merely a fashion. One who suddenly takes responsibility, having only recently denied the Holocaust, cannot be trusted. Actions speak louder than words in this case."

Guilt Feelings

"Immediately after the war, the radio and newspapers reported numerous details about the slaughter of the Jews. The main facts were already known then; yet there was no outcry. People may have been shocked, but they were silent. I do not trust those who claim not to have understood what was going on. Perhaps they meant that they did not *want* to understand.

"The reason is simple: these facts about mass murder made people feel uncomfortable. Being a passive bystander during the war aroused shame and guilt feelings, even if one had not actively cooperated with the Nazis. It raised thoughts about morality, good and evil, and the hidden potential of what 'normal' human beings could inflict on others.

"Europe's postwar coolness after the slaughter indicates that people found it hard to hide how they felt about having participated in, or having been passive toward, the Jews' suffering. Worse, many people knew that they might have wanted

it. When they looked back and saw how many Jews had been killed, they were shocked. Some had told their Jewish acquaintances something like: 'If all Jews would have been like you it wouldn't have happened. All the other Jews were unworthy.'

"Around 1942 many Europeans shared this sentiment. Yet after 1946, it became difficult to admit or confront. Thus silence reigned on both sides. Many Jews suffered from undigested mourning and many non-Jews had feelings of shame, and even guilt.

"Many survivors worked hard over the following years, achieving much in their lives. They did this despite the great emotional difficulties they had to overcome. After the war probably none of them imagined they could rebuild their lives so successfully."

The Establishment of Israel

"Psychologically, the establishment of the State of Israel was a very important event for many survivors. It gave even those who had been non-Zionists a sense of pride. Those survivors who had come to Israel had many pent-up emotions. They were now able to identify with a country and belong to its army. After a period of total powerlessness, they felt able to defend themselves. Living in Israel fueled this newfound identity. Being among their own made them feel whole again. They could now invest their energies in rebuilding their futures and families, directing their aggressive energy in army duty and, most of all, be in control of their own destiny.

"For those Holocaust survivors living in Western Europe or the United States, however, establishing an identity was much harder. Studies indicate important differences, such as problems of acculturation and lack of integration, being once more 'in exile.' They were again a minority and had to adapt themselves to the needs, ideals and culture of their host country. In that sense, absorption in Israel was much easier for the survivors. They were in their own free and democratic homeland. This strengthened their shattered self-worth, ideals, and identity.

"In the beginning of the 1950s, most survivors were in their late twenties or early thirties. The majority was traumatized. This manifested itself in numerous ways, such as sleep disturbances and over-sensitivity. For many, who had been totally destabilized during the war, living in Israel helped their social and mental integration."

Wiedergutmachung

"In the 1950s, some survivors received reparations. The German government's *Wiedergutmachung* program intended to improve the survivors' material wellbeing. Yet it also reopened psychological scars and stimulated more bitterness. The survivors had to bring evidence of their suffering. They were forced to prove that

they were Jewish, that their relatives had been murdered, and that they had indeed survived the horrors they reported.

“Many needed the money urgently, due to severe debilitation and impoverishment. To present a health claim, however, a survivor had to complete the necessary forms in German and bring witnesses and medical certificates. In most cases, the authorities then demanded more information and evidence, a procedure that often took many years.

“The German authorities were not indisposed to pay reparation for physical injury, when it was evident that this had been sustained in the camps. However, they strongly resisted acknowledging that the survivors suffered emotional distress resulting in mental incapacities. They wished to consider these as the results of predispositions or malingering.”

Psychological Torture

“Survivors were frequently subjected to humiliating interrogations in which German doctors with a Nazi background investigated them. In the 1950s West Germany was trying to rebuild itself. It needed a professionally staffed medical and judicial system. The doctors who were old enough to assume responsible positions had been Nazis, either willingly or for professional reasons. Since there was no one else suitable for such positions in postwar Germany, key positions in the medical and judicial systems were routinely filled with ex-Nazis.

“How did a Nazi doctor or judge react to a Jew complaining of a dysfunction resulting from the Nazi past? By admitting such a claim, the investigator accused himself. How could one live with that? To escape this psychological bind, the former Nazis made it extremely difficult for the victims to prove that the cause of their complaint originated in their Holocaust experiences. For the survivor, the person who decided whether to give him money was identified with the ones who had hurt him. This was extremely painful.

“One must also realize that very little was known after the war about its psychological after-effects. The investigations of the victims were cruel. Once a government had decided to help victims, it should have realized there was a simultaneous need to understand what bothered them.”

Durst comments that, although this was especially true for Germany, “many shortcomings were the same, for instance, in the Netherlands, where support legislation for war victims – linked to that for the handicapped – was only approved much later. Making the same laws for Holocaust victims as for the handicapped tells us much about the Dutch. By then, it should have been clear to the authorities that surviving the cruelties of the Holocaust had left mental scars that did not have to be proven. But nobody considered that all those who survived had been traumatized.”

Some historians and Jewish leaders see the restitution process as most successful for the Jews. Durst, however, points out: “When money becomes so central

to the discourse, my personal Holocaust is being trivialized. It becomes to some degree a denial of genocide. I then wonder whether one still thinks about all those who had been murdered.

“Once, when lecturing in Germany about ‘psycho-trauma,’ I was asked about my attitude toward *Wiedergutmachung*. I had not broached the subject at all and saw the question as offensive. I replied that my mother had been murdered in the Shoah. She had a gold bracelet which must still be somewhere in Germany. My mother did not return. Yet I still would have liked to have the bracelet back. I hope this gave the audience some sense of the relative proportion of the issues.”

Israel's Changing Attitude Toward the Survivors.

“Survivors in Israel faced other painful issues. The Israeli government negotiated reparations with Germany for heirless property, yet paid little attention to the physical, emotional or social needs of the individual survivors. Many felt that they had been rejected not only by their former enemy, but also by their own representatives. This deepened their sense of isolation and bitterness.

“Since the 1970s, in Western Europe and North America, mainstream society has respected the Holocaust survivor, viewing him as a strong individual who had fought for his survival. The change in attitude of Israeli society toward Holocaust survivors took far longer – about 40 years. Only at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s did Israeli society develop a less ambivalent, more positive and respectful attitude toward survivors.

“Before then, the survivor was neither respected nor accepted. Perhaps Israel needed the Yom Kippur War to understand what being besieged and living with despair means. It was only a second generation of public figures in the 1980s – actors, writers, and singers – who talked about themselves and their Holocaust survivor parents and, in this way, broke the conspiracy of silence about the topic.

“A very important program has since developed in Israel: ‘Everybody Has a Name,’ in which the names of all the survivors are recorded. This enabled the Holocaust survivor to address Israelis publicly about his murdered relatives. The names of those murdered are read out on Holocaust Memorial Day in the Knesset. Today Israelis mourn the murdered six million together with the survivors. This has had a major impact on both Israeli society and the Holocaust survivors themselves.

“In those 40 years, we saw an attitude shift from rejection and denial, to learning the facts through the Eichmann process, and – during the 1967 and 1973 wars – to recognizing existing emotions and growing toward solidarity.

“Such new attitudes meant that the survivor did not have to hide anymore and that he could discuss his suffering openly. He was no longer seen just as a ‘lamb being brought to the slaughter.’ Rather he was viewed as someone who had suffered, but who had also struggled in his own unique way. Earlier, Israel had been a macho society; it was not inclined to listen or try and understand

survivors. Israelis took a long time to realize that there was more to them than machoism and more to the Holocaust survivors than being passive victims. This culminated in an equalizing of the two groups.”

Emotional Wounds that Never Heal

“The Holocaust survivor’s emotional wounds never healed. In Israel, the permanent threat and the many wars triggered reminiscences of a gruesome past; and new anti-Semitic outbursts in Europe reopened old wounds.

“Anti-Semitism in Western Europe forever remained latent. Even if being vociferously anti-Semitic was politically incorrect, anti-Semitism was always present after the Second World War. The realization of the horrors of the Holocaust made many Europeans very uncomfortable. Some felt guilty, even if they did not assume any personal responsibility.”

Says Durst: “Several events that happened at about the same time caused a change in Western attitudes. With the collapse of communism, the major enemy of the West no longer existed. In such a situation, one must redefine oneself. (When what had bound people together disappears, the feeling of belonging may fragment or disappear entirely.) The globalization process accelerated. This led to counter-developments such as the search for national self-determination, which has become a sacred value.

“Many other groups, like radical black Americans, saw Holocaust survivors receiving financial reparations. Their jealousy concerning this became their new uniting factor. The Jews thus evolved into a subject of envy for some groups which nothing else bound together. A new common denominator emerged – the Jew one could envy and hate – as became so clear at the United Nations Anti-racism Conference in Durban in 2001. The old stereotypes returned: Jews never learning their lessons; Jews always seeking and finding money, being in control of the media, and wanting to rule the world.”

The European Left

“Left-wing groups in affluent countries politically use the Palestinians – by identifying with them – to develop their own identities. This enables them to fulfill deeper wishes, such as their desire to fight an oppressor. For this they have to define targets: the Americans, the globalizers, the multi-nationals, Western capitalism and, of course, Israel.

“In the past, when Israel and the Jews were seen as eternal victims, reminding the world about the evil done to them, left-wingers could easily identify with Israel. They claim to have higher ideals and moral values, wanting to change society, help minorities, assist oppressed people and bring social justice. But now, even in times of suicide bombers, it is still politically correct to identify with the Palestinian people as the accepted victim, even if this comes at the price of twisting

the facts in the name of morality and emotions, even if this might lead to new persecution.

“Postmodernism has become identified with a progressive political outlook. This also includes giving credit to those cultures or people who have been undervalued throughout the ages. It prevents one from accusing oppressed cultures of holding unjust views. One encounters here a double standard. It is only permitted to criticize those who are in power and not the oppressed. Such an attitude lacks intellectual integrity.

“Once left-wing groups had defined Palestinians as the real victim, they became a love object in certain Western European circles. Then it is not difficult to establish a hate object: Israel. Not necessarily all members of these groups are anti-Semites. The discussions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and oppression or the liberation of the territories are politically legitimate. Many anti-Semites, however, are happy with the conflict. Now they can publicly criticize Israel and the people connected to it: the Jews. Prejudice comes first and justifying it is easy. In an uncommon coalition, the extremes on the right and left, usually fighting each other, find themselves standing on the same side against the Jews.

“Outbursts with anti-Semitic undertones are also connected to Europe’s guilt *vis-à-vis* the Holocaust. If the guilty person is bad, the Jewish victim becomes good. The moment it can be shown the latter is bad too, the ‘other’ – that is, the European – is relieved of his guilt feelings. To claim that Israelis behave like Nazis reduces the sin of the grandparents. Then the children of the victims can no longer be the accusers. This equalizes everybody.

“Some Europeans thus have to claim that Jews are capable of doing what was done to them. The Portuguese author José Saramago, who paralleled Ramallah and Auschwitz, did precisely this. When one calls everything Auschwitz, you deny the Holocaust. As everything becomes terrible, there is no absolute evil anymore. This is a great relief for the heirs of guilt.”

The Indigestible Lessons of the Shoah

“Some argue that Israel’s behavior causes anti-Semitism; others explain anti-Semitism as stemming from Jewish claims for financial reparations. Both theories are incorrect. Where anti-Semitism is not latently present, it cannot emerge. Once it exists, if one issue does not make it surface, another will. People are not born anti-Semites, they learn it from their school, home or society.”

Durst concludes that it is impossible to digest the Shoah’s lessons intellectually: “One cannot believe that one’s father, grandfather or so many others of their contemporaries were eager murderers, or their assistants and supporters. It is impossible to live with the feeling that ‘my grandfather has quietly murdered people.’ Very few books admit ‘we have been guilty.’

“It may take several more generations to learn how to digest this information. The Jew can live with latent anti-Semitism, but knowing recent history, one realizes

that this can lead to mass destruction. Within the collective Jewish memory, it becomes difficult to think in terms of objectivity. We have been in extreme situations of helplessness and we would not like to repeat that experience. Lately, anti-Semitism has violently surfaced again; synagogues are again being set on fire. It seems that there are three options for Jews: to protest (without much success), to emigrate to Israel, or to give up Judaism.

“I often speak to Germans. They want Israel to be a ‘light unto the nations.’ When we do not live up to their illusory standards, we become demons again. Others project similar desires upon us. That is the core of the double standard toward Israel and an expression of anti-Semitism. The aftermath of the Holocaust and the not so ‘new’ anti-Semitism are thus directly linked.”

Dr. Nathan Durst was born in Berlin and came to the Netherlands in 1939. He has a doctorate in clinical psychology from Groningen University. He came to Israel in 1971 and worked as chief psychologist in a psychiatric hospital for 15 years. He is a past chairman of the Israeli Psychotherapeutic Association and teaches at Tel Aviv University. He is co-founder of AMCHA (Israeli Center for Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation) and works as its clinical director. He lectures in Israel, the United States and in Europe – mostly in Germany – about trauma and the Shoah.

Aharon Lopez

Jewish-Vatican Relations: The Possible Beatification of Pius XII and other Unresolved Issues

The attitude of the Catholic Church toward the Jews has radically changed in recent decades, followed by a transformation in its position *vis-à-vis* Israel. Aharon Lopez, Israel's former ambassador to the Vatican, illustrates this turnaround by citing two events.

"In 1904 Theodor Herzl requested Pope Pius X's support for Zionism and the return of the Jewish people to their homeland. In response, the Pope said: 'I cannot support you, as you have rejected Jesus. If you go to the Holy Land, I will gladly open our church doors so the priests can baptize you as Christians.' Nearly a century later, in 1997, Pope John Paul II's personal representative, Cardinal Edward Cassidy, president of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, lit the Hannukah candles initiating the festivities for the State of Israel, marking its 50th birthday."

Theological Change

When asked what major factors led to this turnaround in the Church's position toward the Jews, Lopez answers: "One important element in the transformation was theological. According to Catholicism, the 'despised Jewish nation' was dispersed throughout the world for its rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. Now this nation has gathered in its land and become independent, complete with an army and a multifaceted existence. Catholic theologians perceived a different reality than did earlier Christians.

"Another major reason was the shock of Catholic leaders after the Holocaust when they realized what anti-Semitism had led to. The Pope and other Church leaders defined Nazi anti-Semitism as pagan and unchristian. There can, however, be no doubt that Nazi anti-Semitism was embedded in religious anti-Semitism. Catholics had been indoctrinated with religious anti-Semitism from their youth.

"These two factors combined, have led to a new way of thinking. A few years ago the American Cardinal O'Connor referred to them by saying to me: 'The ways of the Lord are hidden.'"

The Nostra Aetate Declaration

“The major official turning point in the Church’s attitude toward the Jews came at the second Vatican Council, which met in 1962 on Pope John XXIII’s initiative. Its position was approved by his successor Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965, with the publication of the Nostra Aetate declaration. This text eliminated the Jews’ collective guilt for Jesus’ crucifixion and stated that ‘Jews were most dear to God’ and that ‘the great spiritual patrimony was shared by Christians and Jews.’ Hatred of the Jews thus became incompatible with formal Church doctrine.

“Until then Church doctrine had asserted that, due to Jesus’ execution, God had removed the covenant from the people of Israel and transferred it to the Church, the ‘true Israel’ (*Verus Israel*). Now the Church accepted the existence of an ongoing covenant between God and the Jewish people, which constituted a major theological breakthrough in its relationship with it.”

Change Permeates Slowly

Lopez points out that the change in attitude became effective over the years in some parts of the Church, but not in many others. The major turnaround at the highest levels has yet to permeate the entire Church, which is quite extensive: “For example, one Jewish expert told me that, even when he visits some parish churches in Rome, sermons do not reflect the change in official theology of 40 years ago. In Sicily, every year around Easter, a passion play is enacted depicting the Jews in a very negative light. During my ambassadorship, my request to change this yielded no result.

“Just before my appointment in 1997, an anti-Semitic book was published in Italy by a senior lecturer at a Catholic University. When I discussed this during my first meeting with Cardinal Cassidy, he responded that implementing the official change would be a lengthy process. During my ambassadorship, I always stressed that, despite the dramatic change introduced by Nostra Aetate, major emphasis would have to be given to education. Otherwise, the new theology would never permeate the entire Church structure.

“I often realized how difficult effecting change is, even at the highest levels. In 1998, for the festivities celebrating 20 years of John Paul II’s papacy, a mass was held, preceded as usual with the recital of texts from the Tanach and the New Testament. The Tanach text chosen spoke about the Israelites’ battle against Amalek, which relates that when Moses raised his hands the Israelites were victorious and when he lowered them Amalek was victorious. Thereafter the Pope asked: ‘Is anybody more suited to fight the Amalekites than the “true Israel,” the Church?’

“Despite these occasional inconsistencies, the Pope considered it important that the new theology toward the Jews permeate the Catholic community. He

mentioned the need for such education several times, saying that Jesus was Jewish, thus referring to the Jewish origin of Christianity. The Catholic Church has indeed come a long way. There is also no longer a centrally organized effort to convert Jews.

“It remains, however, difficult for the Church to reverse its 2,000 year-old position. This may take another generation or two. Education has started at the Gregorian University – the most prestigious Catholic academic institution – where Jewish academics also teach. Yet it is important that the new Christian-Jewish relationship is also introduced into training colleges for priests and other educational institutes. Pupils have to hear from their own teachers – not Jewish ones – that the Jews did not crucify Jesus. Doctrine is crucial to education, and spreading it will require endlessly repeated efforts.”

The Document on the Shoah and its Dilution

“The Church has also made substantial official reference to the Holocaust. The Vatican’s document on the Shoah, published on March 16, 1998, was an important milestone in the reconciliation process between the Church and the Jewish people. It was prepared by the Vatican’s Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. The Pope praised its chairman, Cardinal Cassidy, in a letter sent to him. The document said the crime which has become known as the Shoah – using the Hebrew term – remains an indelible stain on the almost ended century. Toward the end of the text, however, the Middle East, Cambodia and other political events are mentioned, which were undoubtedly inserted by Vatican politicians to dilute the document’s significance.

“My own reaction was that, if the document’s purpose was to discuss the tragedies of the 20th century, it should have been entitled as such. Two interpretations were possible. Either the Church wanted to elevate the Middle East conflict to the level of the Holocaust, or it wanted to minimize the significance of the Shoah to that of the other conflicts. The document on the Shoah also spoke only about individual guilt and was thus inadequate.

“Despite many terrible acts undertaken by the Church during the Second World War, several churches also did much good when they opened their doors to persecuted Jews. Some claim this attitude was influenced by the Vatican: others, that it was done despite it. Earlier, Pope Pius XI, who died before the Second World War, intended to publish a document sharply condemning Nazism and anti-Semitism. He was close to signing it when he passed away. Pius XII, a cardinal in his predecessor’s cabinet, shelved the document. The Vatican today tries to present Pius XII in a more favorable light by publishing documents by Pius XI. The issue, however, is not what the Church’s positions were before the war, but *during it.*”

The True Litmus Test: The Beatification of Pius XII

The question is thus: If the change in the theological attitude toward the Jews, even after several decades, has only permeated the Church to a limited extent, how can one determine whether there is ongoing progress in the Church's reconciliation with the Jewish people? Lopez considers the true litmus test to be the possible beatification and canonization of Pope Pius XII. "The first step toward this is for a committee to determine whether the candidate – who must have passed away more than five years ago – is suitable. This has already been answered in the affirmative.

"If the candidate is not a martyr, he has to perform one miracle to be beatified and another to be canonized, usually in the health field. A commission of doctors must testify that the medical problem concerned was incurable, and that the patient was close to a certain death.

"I have tried to explain the sensitivity of Jewish feelings with respect to the possible beatification of Pius XII to Church leaders. At a press conference held in November 1998, I was asked about my attitude on this issue. Shortly before, a full-page article appeared in the *Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican's official paper, in which a former chairman of the Austrian parliament defended Pope Pius XII's war-time behavior. I maintained it to be the Church's prerogative alone to decide whom it beatifies."

Justice must be Seen to have been Done

"Justice, however, should not only be done, it must be seen to have been done. Hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors are alive. They are entitled to have all their questions on Pius XII's and the Church's behavior answered. It was the least one could expect from the Vatican, an important component of the international community.

"I explained how emotionally loaded the subject was. Whatever one side says, provokes the other in an imbalanced way. I wondered why the beatification could not be delayed for another 50 years. Why rush into it? I had attended, in my diplomatic capacity, many beatifications and canonizations of people who had died hundreds of years ago. Thereupon, Father Gumpel, the priest who has worked for almost 40 years on the beatification process of Pius XII, sharply attacked me saying that anywhere else I would have been sent home.

"In order to defend Pius XII's behavior, Father Gumpel brought Jewish testimonies and said that the Pope was praised by Israeli Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog, whom he received after the war. Furthermore Israel's Prime Minister Golda Meir eulogized Pius XII in 1958 as someone who had helped the Jews during the Holocaust. Opinions on the Pope's behavior only changed after Rolf Hochhuth had written his play *Der Stellvertreter* (The Substitute) in the early

1960s. That portrayed Pius XII as the Pope who remained silent about the Jews' fate during the Holocaust.

"These developments have made the beatification of Pope Pius XII a traumatic test case. Even more so, as the Vatican speaks about expiation and atonement and its desire to contribute to the correction of the terrible moral evil done to the Jewish people."

The Irrelevance of Early Testimonies

"It was the Eichmann trial in 1961 – not Hochhuth's play – which altered the world's perceptions," says Lopez. "During the process many new important facts about the Holocaust became widely known, which gave Hochhuth the stage on which to present his accusations. Thus, one can no longer base oneself on what Chief Rabbi Herzog or Prime Minister Meir had previously said about Pius XII.

"In many conversations with key figures in the Vatican, I noted how the changed relations between the Church and the Jews are like a new sapling, which might be destroyed if not dealt with carefully. The Church often demonstrates total unawareness of Jewish sensitivities. Father Gumpel argued that Rome's chief rabbi, who converted to Christianity after the Second World War, adopted Pius XII's first name, Eugenio, in gratitude for what he had done for the Jews.

"In a meeting with the president of the Gregorian University, I had the occasion to explain how this reflected major ignorance. Whether somebody wants to become a Christian or not is his personal affair. It was absurd to try using this as a supporting argument for convincing Jews that Pius XII was a just man."

Giving Historians Adequate Time

"I proposed an alternative to the current beatification process and suggested that historians should be given enough time to research the period's events in detail. After discussions at the aforementioned press conference of the Israeli embassy and subsequent developments, the Vatican and the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations appointed a mixed committee of Jewish and non-Jewish historians to study the issue. From 1965 until 1981 the Church had pulled many documents related to its role during World War II out of its archives. These were bound into eleven publicly available tomes. Yet they admitted that, for various reasons, other relevant documents were not included.

"The two parties asked the historians to study this material telling them that additional requests should be made in writing. After studying the documents, 47 preliminary questions were put forward by the entire commission. Thereupon the Vatican got cold feet, and refused to give the scholars access to the unpublished material in its archives. In July 2001 the mixed committee suspended its activities. This was followed a few months later by the resignation of two of the three Jewish members, Professor Robert Wistrich and Professor Bernard Suchecky.

“During all these discussions I never uttered one detrimental word about Pope Pius XII, consistently declaring that the historians had to give their professional judgment and, therefore, it was imperative to give them time to investigate all relevant material. Any other approach by the Church would indicate that it was ignoring the feelings of the Jewish people on the sensitive subject of the beatification. I believe this to be the best test to determine whether a new attitude indeed prevails in the Church’s thinking, and whether it truly desires to undo the past’s injustices.”

Ongoing Difficulties

Other important hurdles have been encountered in recent years on the road to reconciliation. Lopez notes how difficulties in bringing the two parties together continuously resurface. “In March 2000, before his visit to Israel, the Pope spoke about a *mea culpa* with seven chapters entailing seven demands for pardon. One referred to the Jewish people and included a far-reaching request for forgiveness read out by Cardinal Cassidy. My public reaction was that this request only mentioned the mistakes made by individuals who did not stand up to the evil of the Holocaust, rather than the Catholic Church as a collective.

“It is difficult for the Church to take that additional step. Cardinal Biffi of Bologna publicly announced that the Church cannot make mistakes and thus does not have to request forgiveness for anything. In other words, if the Church admitted its errors, its theology would be destroyed. My response was that the Church was quite capable of bridging the gap between its theological problems and the facts and, therefore, it should admit collective responsibility. Only if one accepts responsibility for one’s deeds can the demand for forgiveness become meaningful.”

Israel-Vatican Relations

Another important issue concerns the evolving relations between the Vatican and the State of Israel. Says Lopez: “The Vatican was moderately negative toward the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Yet it did not approach Catholic countries to vote against its recognition. The Vatican assumed Jerusalem would become an international city. When King Abdullah of Jordan conquered Jerusalem’s Holy Places, the matter was laid to rest until the Six Day War, during which the Jordanians were defeated and Israel took over the Holy Places. The Vatican then realized internationalizing Jerusalem was no longer realistic.

“Initially, the Vatican, rather strangely, saw Israel as a protagonist of communism, because its establishment was backed by the Soviet Union. Only when Nasser, with the support of the Soviet Union, began stirring up trouble in 1955, did the Vatican realize that the Soviet Union was not only their enemy, but also that of Israel.

“Although the Church changed its relationship with the Jewish people in 1965, it did not establish diplomatic relations with Israel due to its unsolved political situation *vis-à-vis* the Arabs. Indeed, many Catholics in Israel and neighboring countries were Arabs. Only after the Madrid conference in 1991, did the Vatican realize that, without relations with Israel, it risked being left out of discussions concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which would also weaken its position with respect to the Holy Places.”

Fighting Anti-Semitism

“The main turning point in the Israel-Vatican relationship came on December 30, 1993, when the two parties signed a ‘Fundamental Agreement’ that they would establish diplomatic relations, which happened six months later. This also further changed the relationship between Catholicism and Judaism.

“A central element in the agreement was Article 2 which adopts a decisive position against anti-Semitism. The Vatican’s commitment is expressed in its condemnation of the hatred, the persecution and other manifestations of anti-Semitism perpetrated against the Jewish People and individual Jews anywhere. ‘Never again anti-Semitism, never again genocide,’ said John Paul II at the ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp.

“One would thus have expected the Catholic Church to become a forerunner in the fight against the recent rash of major anti-Semitic outbreaks, particularly since it has promoted hatred for so many centuries and since it now holds that anti-Semitism is a sin in the eyes of God and man. A major complication is, however, that many in the Moslem world are hitching a ride on Christian anti-Semitic models and motifs. Although the Church should show courage and continuously fight anti-Semitism, it also has opposing political considerations. The position of Arab Christians in the Middle East is already difficult; and the Christian Holy Places will be increasingly empty.

“When I presented my letters of accreditation, I quoted the text from Habakuk ‘the righteous will have to live by their belief’ to the Pope. I said that only by walking on parallel roads, where each side sticks to its heritage, dialogue on subjects of common interest would be possible. When there is no threat to the smaller party, then moral principles, the Tanach, the vision of the prophets and other issues can be more readily discussed. This may not suit Catholic theology, because it recognizes only one truth. Yet I am convinced that dialogue is only possible if one recognizes the principle of parallel ways.”

Three Spheres

“The main aspects of the relationship between Israel and the Vatican concern three spheres. The first one is the political and diplomatic relations between Israel

and the Vatican, two political entities. The second concerns the relationship between the State of Israel and the Church in Israel. In this sphere the Fundamental Agreement referred to honoring the Church's rights in Israel, in accordance with the laws of the Jewish State: freedom of religion, freedom of worship and freedom of access to the Holy Places.

"Extensive negotiations went on for years, thereafter, regarding the legal status of the Church and its institutions in Israel. A Legal Agreement was concluded on November 10, 1997 and ratified on February 3, 1999. It regularized the status and legal personality of the Catholic Church and its institutions in Israel. This status had not been defined for 500 years under the Ottoman Empire, the British mandate and Israeli rule. In this context, there have been discussions about plans to build a major mosque in Nazareth, which would hurt the Church.

"The third sphere deals with the relationship between the Jewish people and the Catholic Church, which cannot be compared to any other relationship. The Vatican's document on the Shoah relates to this sphere. This relationship is tested in many ways.

"Another complicating factor in Israel's relationship with the Vatican is the personality of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, who should be a religious not a political leader. A religious leader has to speak about consolation, understanding, justice, love and hope. The Latin Patriarch, however, makes anti-Israeli political statements also in international forums."

What will the Future Bring?

How will the Church's attitude change following the passing of Pope John Paul II? Given his major role in transforming Catholic-Jewish relations, one wonders what one might expect from his successor. Lopez offers some perspectives: "Pope John Paul II's attitude toward the Jews was influenced by Polish reality. He was raised among many Jewish friends who were murdered in the Shoah. One indication of how his personality was influenced by his upbringing is his usage of the Hebrew expression Shoah, rather than Holocaust.

"In his book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, the Pope wrote: 'Then came World War II, with the concentration camps and the planned extermination. First it was the Jews who suffered, just for being Jews. Anyone living in Poland at that time had contact with that reality, even if only indirectly... this was, therefore, my own experience too; an experience that I carry with me to this day... Auschwitz, perhaps the most eloquent symbol of the Holocaust of the Jewish people, shows how far a system built on premises of racial hatred or a passion to dominate can lead a nation. Auschwitz continues to sound its warning to this day, reminding us that anti-Semitism is a grave sin against humanity; that every racial hatred inevitably leads to the infringement on human dignity.'

"It is impossible to make detailed forecasts what the future holds in almost any field. Whoever the next Pope will be, he is, however, unlikely to make a radical

political turn, let alone a radical change in theology, as far as Catholic-Jewish relations are concerned.”

Aharon Lopez' last posting before retirement was as Israel's Ambassador to the Vatican from 1997–2000. Prior to that he was a career diplomat in Israel's Foreign Service and served previously as Israel's Ambassador to Cyprus. He also served in diplomatic posts in Burma, Finland and Australia.

Michael Melchior

The Israeli Government, Holocaust Issues and Anti-Semitism

Rabbi Michael Melchior was the Minister for Israeli Society and the World Jewish Community in Ehud Barak's cabinet from 1999 to 2001. Thereafter until 2002, as Israel's Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, he was responsible *inter alia* for Israel's relationship with the world Jewish community. This includes Shoah restitution payments as well as problems of international racism and anti-Semitism. Melchior confirms that, in the first decades of its existence, Israel neglected many Diaspora and Shoah-related issues. He attributes this to the new state's more immediate problems: "First and foremost Israel had to look after its existential problems. The Jewish world was mostly seen from this angle.

"At the same time, the international situation was not propitious for dealing at an international level, with many of the financial and other aspects of the aftermath of the Shoah, such as the persecution of war criminals. Fairly rapidly after the end of the Second World War, the world became divided between West and East. The Cold War made the Americans give priority to building a new Germany and creating a Western block to confront the Soviet Union and its satellites. They were no longer interested in pursuing the many unfinished elements of World War Two.

"There was also an ambivalent attitude toward Shoah survivors in the decades after the Second World War. It took a long time for this to change, along with Holocaust education. The Eichmann trial played a major role in gradually altering the Israeli conscience. I visited Israel for the first time in 1972. Today the attitude toward Holocaust Remembrance Day is totally different and much more appropriate than it was then. At the time the great American Jewish scholar Rabbi Saul Lieberman said that, as long as they do not know how to commemorate Holocaust victims, Israelis will likewise be unable to celebrate Independence Day."

Claims against Germany

Some issues however, were dealt with relatively early. "The payments for Israel's financial claims against Germany in the 1950s became extremely important for Israel's economy. With respect to the restitution issues – which did not concern Israel directly – I do not think anyone consciously decided not to deal with them. Israel had many immediate matters to take care of and Holocaust aftermath problems were hardly present in the minds of its leaders. World Jewish

organizations fought a valiant battle up to a certain point. Thereafter, they passed the problem onto Israel and, from thereon, it was suppressed in their leaders' awareness.

"The claims against Germany in the 1950s were economically important for Israel and assisted the building of the state. They helped finance the absorption expenses of many immigrants, including Holocaust survivors. It was justified that Germany took some responsibility to assist Israel, which was a haven for refugees. Germany pays pensions and other support to individuals in Israel directly and also since the beginning of the 1990s the funds the Claims Conference received from Germany are for more than 50% invested in Israel to help Holocaust victims. This sometimes creates the erroneous impression that Germany was the main source of funds for Holocaust survivors in Israel.

"Much of the money for that purpose comes, however, from Israel's own budget, mainly from the Ministry of Finance as well as from the National Insurance Institute. I am not claiming that we do enough for the survivors, who are unfortunately neglected all too often; but Israel is morally committed to assisting a population that has suffered in an unprecedented and unfathomable way. One should not focus too much on the economic aspects of the restitution money, but should understand that it primarily enables some justice to be done toward the survivors.

"We have also done far too little for the 'righteous gentiles,' people abroad who helped the Jews and some of whom now have major financial problems. Once again this was not a conscious decision, but an issue which has also been suppressed and neglected."

The Reemergence of the Restitution Issue

"The fall of communism over a decade ago was the main reason the restitution issue could reemerge. Another was increased public interest in the Holocaust. Suddenly restitution came to the forefront. The huge robbery of Jewish property is one of the many dark sides of the liquidation of European Jewry. However, until a few years ago, there was no public awareness of its magnitude and multifaceted character. It had never been researched properly, but now circumstances created the opportunity to do so.

"Israel left this new round of restitution battles to the international Jewish organizations. The government did not want to enter into direct conflict with European states out of political and economic considerations. This position was also convenient because of the continuing lack of awareness at the highest level of the country's leadership about this issue. There was no political interest in the subject and only a moderate economic one. So Israel gave its backing and moral support to the Jewish organizations to carry out the restitution fight.

"Today there is, perhaps, more public interest in restitution; but it remains mainly a curiosity. In Israel so many storms rage at the same time that it is

difficult to face them all. Yet attitudes are also influenced in a major way by the difference between Jewish identity in Israel and abroad. Even the subject of the assets of the Holocaust victims in Israel was not properly dealt with. When it emerged recently, it did not raise much interest.

“It is not incidental that when Diaspora subjects are raised in government sessions only a few ministers show any interest. These include Sharon and Peres, for whom Jewish identity is a different matter than the younger generation. Another one is Natan Sharansky, who immigrated to Israel from abroad and had been a prisoner of Zion. I am simultaneously an immigrant and obsessed with the Jewish people so that does not really count.”

Lack of Interest and Education

Melchior elaborates: “The lack of interest in Diaspora issues reflects secular Israeli education, which keeps Jewish identity out of pupils’ consciousness. Many secular educators see Judaism as a monopoly for national religious and ultra-orthodox Jews. Even for these communities Diaspora issues are not of major concern and the subject thus finds itself in a void.

“Against this background, it was easy for Israel to leave the reemerged restitution struggle to others. Some politicians also realized that there was a conflict of interest between handling these claims while promoting Israel’s interests politically, economically and militarily. When I became a minister, I tried to change the situation and to increase Israel’s involvement; I discovered little opposition. It was more a matter nobody had wanted to deal with.

“There are many considerations, such as economic, military, political, human rights and Jewish interests in Israeli policy-making. Nevertheless Israel – as the center of the Jewish people – must take its responsibilities in the cultural, religious and social spheres seriously. Israel, thanks to the triumph of Zionism, also has a responsibility as the demographic center of world Jewry. When we raise Diaspora issues today, there is almost wall-to-wall support in the cabinet and other government bodies, with a simultaneous lack of interest in the subject.

“Looking back, I think that Israel still played an important role in the restitution struggle. Although I do not think the Israeli government must always stand in front and fight alone, as the Jewish state we must take responsibility for dealing with such issues and participate in relevant discussions and processes. Otherwise, the Americans could justifiably ask: Why should we be the spearhead, if the Israeli government takes no interest? There were indeed some such reactions in the United States.”

Norway: A Personal Vantage Point

“Great differences existed with how various countries handled the new restitution process. Where it was handled responsibly, background discussions created major

awareness of the Shoah. I watched this closely in Norway, where I was Chief Rabbi at the time.

“Thousands of articles on Shoah-related issues were published. Through them an entire generation that knew nothing about the Holocaust, became familiar with its relevance. This led to a situation in which the Norwegian parliament supported restitution payments unanimously. This vote reflected a broad popular desire to do something. What was restituted in recent years is minor – both materially and morally – compared to the damage done during the Holocaust and the negligence thereafter. Yet the importance of this positive process, through educating a new generation, far exceeded that of the payments made toward survivors and heirs for assets stolen.

“Bureaucrats on the government-appointed investigation commission did their best to eliminate the restitution issue as fast as possible. Public opinion however, did not allow this. A crucial role was played by the Jewish community, which did its homework and provided the correct figures. Particular credit goes to Bjarte Bruland, a non-Jewish historian who had never seen a Jew before he became interested in the subject, and to Berit Reisel, who led the battle in the commission for the Jewish community. All this work, and broad support in the media, resulted in a public opinion that didn’t allow the bureaucrats to kill the project in an immoral way.”

A Center for Information of Holocaust Survivors

“Restitution concerns half a million Israeli citizens. National newspapers have always found it difficult to write on Shoah-related issues, in spite of significant readership interested in the subject. They should have dealt with restitution in more detail and in a more balanced manner.

“Besides Itamar Levin, of the economic daily *Globes*, who played a pioneering role, and a few others, restitution has not received due attention. This is regrettable because survivors occasionally see sensational headlines, which frustrate them. They read about agreements to disburse billions of dollars and wonder why they receive nothing from such huge sums. They have not understood that the main beneficiaries from payments for slave and forced labor are non-Jews. Nor is the German population aware of this.

“Therefore I have taken the initiative to establish an information center for Holocaust survivors, together with the survivor organizations and the Claims Conference, which is partly financed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. This center helps those who do not know their rights to navigate the bureaucracy. It resulted from a survey by the Brookdale institute, which showed that the survivors lacked knowledge on how to exercise their rights. As a Jewish state, we are obligated to provide information so that anyone entitled to restitution can receive it easily. Not only do interested individuals address themselves to the center, but many volunteers seek out survivors

to help them obtain what is due, sometimes even by filling out the application forms.”

Anti-Semitism's Reemergence

“Another major subject in Israel-Diaspora relations is the reemergence of anti-Semitism. In Israel people have started to take an interest in this subject, not through orderly study, but due to the attention it receives in the media. There is a renewed interest to learn more about what has been a suppressed part of our national ethos. People understand that there is an important yet poorly explained relationship between the Shoah and the renewal of anti-Semitism. I hope we will be able to teach this subject in a balanced way.

“Here Israel must also take responsibility and become more involved in the protection of the Jews abroad. This struggle is part of our national and Jewish identity. We also have a universal task to undertake; anti-Semitism is a problem for the non-Jewish world as well. We can and must contribute to combating it, using our long and bitter experience regarding the consequences of silence regarding this prejudice.

“The de-legitimization of the Jewish national identity and the dehumanization of the Jews opens the gates for physical attacks. We try – via worldwide connections and an Internet site – to obtain systematic information on all anti-Semitic events. The number of physical attacks is so huge today that we can no longer keep track. This physical violence, however, gives only a very partial glimpse of the development of anti-Semitism.”

Relating Anti-Semitism to the Shoah

“The current wave of anti-Semitism must also be related to the Shoah. The horrors of Auschwitz did not originate in Auschwitz. They are rooted in the demonization of the Jews, which afterwards found a political expression in the theories of the Nazis. Yet we should not simplistically equate today's situation to that of Germany in 1938. Synagogues were burned then and now, indeed, but the circumstances are radically different. First and foremost, today Israel exists. Secondly, almost all Jews in the world live in democratic states with equal civil rights.

“In every generation, however, the sickness of anti-Semitism reemerges with new characteristics. It is important to understand these and to learn how to fight them. The most dangerous new proponent of anti-Semitism is radical elements of fundamentalist Islam, with its deep popular roots from which violence rises. This totalitarian fundamentalism tolerates no other opinions. It not only attacks Israel, but Christianity, American society, Europe and even the Arab states. While a phenomenon of ‘new’ anti-Semitism, Islamic fundamentalism uses all the tools of its classic counterpart: de-legitimization, dehumanization and demonization.”

Confronting State Anti-Semitism

“Given the many new mutations of anti-Semitism, it is crucial we establish an appropriate research capacity, which can follow and analyze developments. We do not even have detailed definitions of anti-Semitism. For example, Holocaust denial has become an important issue again. It originated in Europe, but it has now become part of Arab anti-Semitism. Nothing is impossible: one author claims in one place that the Holocaust did not occur, but was a Jewish invention. Yet, elsewhere, he states that the Jews merited the Shoah!

“The Internet has, over the years, become an important tool for anti-Semites, who in the past had great difficulty in finding an audience. Today one can sit within the four walls of one’s home, without public censorship and shielded by tolerant laws which permit the spreading of hate theories. In the United States, the First Amendment of the Constitution provides protection for those who incite. In many other countries it is important to work on legislation against incitement.”

Israel’s Role

“Israel must also be involved in the battle and research on the anti-Semitism emanating from rogue states. They combine their theories about the Jews with a desire to possess means of mass destruction. They also hamper states which do not possess such weapons, to reach peace in the Middle East. These are complex interrelationships which we know far too little about and which should be researched much more.

“To confront the danger of anti-Semitism, we have to find partners. Our opponents have created ‘impossible’ coalitions, such as the triangular one between fundamental Islamists, fascists and extreme leftists. The tools of modern anti-Semitism are transborder in scope. Arab satellite television stations daily spread their poison broadcasting to the entire Moslem world, including countries such as Bangladesh, Tunisia and Malaysia. Recently, when I was in a hotel in Geneva and turned on the television, I found about the same number of Arabic channels as those in all other languages combined.”

A More Sophisticated Combat

“Israel must become more sophisticated in its fight against anti-Semitism. Fortunately, we are no longer in the situation of the pre-war Jew who could only suffer when attacked. As an independent state, we can also use force when we have to. One aspect of our struggle must be to better explain our complex reality.

“When we fought for the freedom of Soviet Jews, it was clear who was the victim and who was the oppressor. We must be sophisticated enough to avoid accusing people of anti-Semitism where it does not exist nor should we

neglect anti-Semitism when it passes the red line of criticism and turns into demonizing the state of Israel and the national identity of the Jewish people and its history.

“The United Nations’ Anti-racism Conference in Durban in September 2001 was a watershed in the anti-Semitism debate from several viewpoints. The Arabs succeeded in kidnapping the conference in order to demonize the Jewish people, focusing on Israel. Yet they went too far and turned their proposals into explicit anti-Semitism. Suddenly, for the first time in many years, the Islamic bloc was defeated. World public opinion was not with them. Today the Arab world is asking itself, ‘What went wrong in Durban?’

“Durban gave us the feeling that it *is* possible to fight anti-Semitism and sometimes win. It is important to build coalitions as there are many people who are not anti-Semitic. Nor is the world willing to support everything the Arabs want, even if at Durban the Western democracies woke up very late.”

Developments in the Arab World

“At the same time, we do not understand either the negative or positive complexity of developments in the Arab world. One of the positive ones is the Alexandria process, which tries to bring together religious leaders of Islam with those of other religions. I have participated in such a dialogue in Norway where, on certain occasions, the Norwegian Islamic Association asked me to represent them to the government and arranged for me, before I became an Israeli Minister, to meet representatives of countries who officially refused to meet Israelis.

“Some Arab leaders realize that they have to counteract the image that Islam is a recipe for the explosion of the future of humanity. These people understand that one way to prove that is the ability to tolerate a small Jewish state in the huge sea of Arab population.

“Though the overall picture is problematic, we should not neglect the positive phenomena. While the number of anti-Semitic incidents in France is major, we have seen Moslem leaders in Paris, Marseilles and Lyon who were willing to take public positions against them.”

Europe’s Dehumanization of Jews

“Europe is another subject for research, as its attitude toward Israel and the Jews is so complex. The main issue there is Israel’s status and the morality of its position. To a certain extent, in Europe today there is a process of dehumanization of Jews. One way this expresses itself is through multiple efforts to delegitimize Israel, by presenting it as another South African apartheid state, a target of all enlightened people. When I was a child in Copenhagen, even before the official boycott, we refused to purchase any South African products. That was the right thing to do. This campaign against Israel is the wrong thing to do.

"If we look at individual countries we find diverse reactions. The current Scandinavian government's official positions toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are balanced. The Scandinavians, who always support the underdog, are often willing to condemn suicide bombers while simultaneously showing understanding for their actions as a means of last resort. They do not understand that combating such terror is a fundamental issue for humanity, not just Israelis. Nor do they comprehend the cultural, religious and social background for this phenomenon, and how dangerous it is for the future of democracy and civilization.

"Norway, for instance, has only marginal economic interests in the Arab world. It owns more oil deposits than most Arab countries. It has few Moslem inhabitants, most of whom originate from countries for which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not very relevant. Classical anti-Semitism plays only a minor role.

"Why, then, do so many anti-Israel positions come out of certain elements in that country? There are various explanations. Several extreme anti-Israeli journalists have almost monopolized the media information on the Middle East. If the average viewer sees very one-sided pictures, day after day on the television, he needs much resistance in order not to take anti-Israeli positions. In most Norwegian media, there is no true reflection of the problems and dilemmas of the nations in the Middle East. They have lost every sense of proportion, of democracy and of basic moral values.

"On the other hand, one finds a basic sympathy toward Israel in all parts of Norwegian society, especially among Christians. And today, due to a specific political constellation, the Christian Party holds a key position in the Norwegian government."

Better Information Policies

"Israel must distinguish between national information policy and our dealings with anti-Semitism issues, which I do not think are identical. As far as the first is concerned, we have not successfully clarified to the Europeans that our war is not against the Palestinian people and their desire for independence. In the United States this is easier to explain and, therefore, there is far more identification with the Israeli position. One finds, in particular in the American written press, a much more balanced position than in most Scandinavian newspapers.

"We should not ignore that part of the problem is due to conceptual problems in the Israeli public relations effort, which has failed in refuting the image of the Israeli Goliath with its strong war machine against the poor and suffering Palestinian people.

"We should have made it consistently clear that the Arab world has the option to live with us in peace. The Palestinian people can live honorably next to us, but not instead of us. In such a scenario both Israel and the Palestinian state will have recognized borders. But this solution is incompatible with simultaneous

incitement and terror; and it is our task as a government to explain this. Public relations are crucial in all modern warfare. Yet, in reality, both the Foreign Office's information budget and our national information effort are very minor."

The Public Trial of Anti-Semitism

"In 1983 I helped organize an international hearing in Oslo against anti-Semitism, which dealt with the anti-Semitic outburst at the time of the Israeli-Lebanese war. The main anti-Semitic expressions which we find now, were already in use then. It was the first time European anti-Semitism had targeted the Israeli national identity.

"One could take the speeches from that meeting, without changing a word, and print these anew. All what was, is unfortunately still valid. What always happens in such collective hatred is that, if one does not react appropriately, the anti-Semites raise the volume. In each wave of anti-Semitic outbursts, both the violence and verbal attacks become stronger.

"In that public trial Professor Leo Ettinger, an Auschwitz survivor, spoke. A Norwegian psychiatrist, he had been among the first to investigate the Holocaust syndrome. He analyzed what the Norwegian newspapers wrote about the 1982 Lebanese war and interpreted it as an effort to cover up the guilt of Europe. Many Europeans had collaborated with the Nazis or stood passively by when the Jews were being murdered. Now Europeans tried to claim that the Jews were doing something somewhat similar. This implied that apparently what had happened to the Jews was deserved or not so terrible.

"Other psychological aspects of anti-Semitism, including prejudices against Jews, are deeply rooted in European culture. After the war these were suppressed, because what they had caused had become so evident. Now they could come out into the open, as Europeans could convince themselves that there was something true in those prejudices. This enabled the 'new' ancient hate to erupt.

"We must also better understand the connection between totalitarianism and anti-Semitism. It is against this background that we are trying to establish a worldwide organization in which Jews and non-Jews will collaborate in fighting anti-Semitism."

Rabbi Michael Melchior was born in Copenhagen. He is the eighth generation of Scandinavian Chief Rabbis in his family. In 1980 he became Chief Rabbi of the Norwegian Jewish community. From then until 1999 he divided his time between Oslo and Jerusalem, where he served as International Relations Director for the Eli Wiesel Foundation for Humanity. In May 1999 he was elected to the Knesset as Meimad's first candidate on the One Israel list. In July of that year, he was appointed Minister for Israeli Society and the World Jewish Community. From 2001–2002 he has been Deputy Foreign Minister. At present he is a member of the Knesset.

Yair Sheleg

Israeli Media Attitudes toward the Shoah

How does the Israeli media deal with the Shoah and related news items? According to Yair Sheleg, Jewish affairs reporter for *Ha'aretz* daily, the Israeli media's attitude on most issues is determined by its business structure and the society it portrays. The Holocaust and broader Jewish Diaspora subjects are thus presented accordingly.

A Small Competitive Market

"Israel is replete with dramatic events and an excitable media. The Hebrew language press starts with a very limited target market in which ratings are crucial. The papers have access to less than five million potential readers. Many Russian immigrants do not speak Hebrew. For others, English is their preferred language.

"The country's small, competitive market has led to a unique, delectable press mix. The English-speaking daily, *The Jerusalem Post*, as well as *Ha'aretz's* English edition cater to very specific niche markets. Many Russian non-Hebrew speaking immigrants obtain their information from the local Russian press. Hebrew party-owned quality newspapers have almost entirely disappeared. Only three significant Hebrew dailies remain: the liberal *Ha'aretz*, which seeks to be a quality newspaper and the more widely sold *Yediot Aharonot* and *Ma'ariv* tabloid-style papers, which cater to a more popular readership.

"The style of Israeli tabloids is different from that of foreign ones. In *The Sun* in England or *Bild* in Germany, a tax or sex scandal may be on the front page. In contrast, Israeli popular papers usually deal with topics similar to those of the quality press, but with a different presentation and emphasis. They may even put an economic issue up front, if it affects the pockets of their readers. To some extent the popular press fulfills an important role, as it introduces a public – which would not read a quality newspaper – to serious issues. Israeli radio and television likewise follow the popular trend." Sheleg considers this to be indicative of the democratic character of the country's public discourse.

"Since profitability is the prime consideration of most publishers, this determines what the papers' journalists deal with. Among the Hebrew media, only *Ha'aretz* and *Kol Yisrael* radio have an employee specializing in global Jewish issues. One important Shoah-related topic they have dealt with extensively in recent years is Holocaust financial restitution in various countries."

Providing Information and Entertainment

"*Ma'ariv* and *Yediot* each have journalists who, as part of their assignment, deal with Jewish Agency issues, the only Jewish-related subjects they cover. These papers also have correspondents in many cities in the world who report on Jewish issues, including Shoah-related ones, when they are of sufficient interest.

"*Yediot* and *Ma'ariv* gave minimal coverage to the financial restitution debate even when it became a major issue in the Western media. The main reason the tabloids did not deal extensively with this subject was that substantial non-dramatic detail had to be reported.

"The Israeli popular press believes it has to provide not only information, but also entertainment, which financial restitution issues do not embrace. The tabloids only mention them when large amounts of money are involved or a major agreement is reached, like the one with Germany concerning slave and forced labor."

Understanding the Fragility of Life

In Sheleg's view, Israel's drama-infested reality has stimulated interest in the Holocaust. "The conflict with the Palestinians and the accompanying casualties have caused a new generation of Israelis to understand the fragility of life. This has made *Yom Hashoah* (Holocaust Memorial Day) in recent years, an extremely important annual event, even for the young."

"*Yom Hashoah* falls after *Pesach* (Passover) in the springtime, near *Yom Hazikaron* (Remembrance Day for the Fallen in Israel's wars). That period is thus associated with mourning in both the Jewish and Israeli collective memory, and has become a time of intense awareness. The similarities between the two memorial days are underlined, and the Jewish population senses an intertwined Jewish-Israeli mourning.

"Regardless of its affiliations, the media – sensitized to this somber mood – begins writing about *Yom Hashoah* and other issues of bereavement by the end of *Pesach*. With the *Yom Hashoah* ceremonies and publicity, the Holocaust has gained respect in Israeli society and has become an expression of its Jewish character.

"Since it falls within a week of *Yom Hazikaron*, Israel's educational network has followed suit. A visit to Poland's concentration and extermination camps has often become an integral part of the school curriculum. Such experiences have greatly affected the pupils. Seeing the places where some of the extreme horrors took place inscribes the subject far more intensely into the consciences of youth than attending Holocaust remembrance ceremonies in Israel."

Sheleg comments: "This educative approach has been criticized for linking the youths' Jewish identity in such a central way to the Shoah experience. The critics suggest relating it to positive issues rather than the danger of extermination.

The debate on how to maintain the state's Jewish character by identifying more with non-tragic events continues.

"Yet with the Ministry of Education's current policy on Holocaust education, *Yom Hashoah* has become meaningful to far more Israel youngsters than in previous years. If one were to ask what primary issues define an Israeli's national identity, both Remembrance Day and Holocaust Day would figure high on the list.

"Another important aspect in the Shoah's rise as an identifying factor in Israeli society is the decline of Zionism. In the past, Zionism led Israelis to look down on the Diaspora and claim that those who realized the aspirations of the Jewish people settled in Israel. The main role of the remainder of world Jewry was to support them either financially or politically. Beyond that they were not of interest to most Israelis. In the recent partial ideological vacuum, the memory of the Holocaust more easily finds its place."

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Associations with the Shoah

Sheleg speculates as to whether Israeli interest in the Shoah is still increasing or has stabilized: "Many feel the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will never be relegated to history. We live in a period where Israel continuously has its back against the wall. While Israel is much stronger than the Palestinians, there is the increasing perception that the conflict may at times be mitigated but never resolved. Today, Israel is the only country whose enemies express an explicit desire to destroy it. This sharpened perception of Israel's existential problems accentuates Shoah associations.

"Such an attitude is not new. During the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War and the Gulf War similar issues arose, especially during the Gulf War when the country's population was on high alert in sealed rooms wearing gas masks. Associations emerged with the gas of the death chambers. And now, once again, there are talks about attacks with non-conventional weapons.

"The Holocaust is now presented as a period of which Israelis are no longer ashamed, unlike they often were in the past. They have become increasingly aware that not only those who fought in the Resistance and ghetto uprisings were courageous people, but so were those who survived.

"With society's increasing focus on the Shoah, by commemorating past events as well as current associations, the media has largely followed suit. There is, however, some whispered reluctance in the office corridors of editors to continue to support this trend. The leftist elite which dominates the media mainly criticizes the government. Their hushed suspicion is that the Israeli government is using the Shoah to divert attention from its current actions to an historical event. The government may wish to strengthen the feeling of Israeli victimization, the argument goes, so as to blunt the public's criticism of its activities."

Of Focus and Omission

"The media focus on the Shoah is concentrated almost exclusively in the country's approximately fortnight mourning period. During the other 50 weeks of the year, the subject is avoided as much as possible, almost regardless of any new scoop.

"During the remainder of the year Holocaust-related issues are mentioned in the media only when there is a corresponding drama. An Auschwitz monastery is visual and thus can be captured spectacularly in a photographic depiction, which is also easy to describe in words. Hunting a war criminal could make the newspaper, not for its Holocaust content, but rather for its dramatic and exciting details. Restitution payments do not fit the bill, since they are too complicated to readily understand.

"Violent anti-Semitism abroad is another way of reminding readers of the Shoah. The spate of burning synagogues and other Jewish institutions – mainly in France – combined with violence against Jews, and the United Nations' Anti-racism Conference in Durban in September 2001, fall into this category.

"The Israeli popular press has painted the Durban Conference exclusively in anti-Semitic colors without understanding the complexity of its events. Parts of the conference had an anti-Semitic character, but the European countries' positive attitude toward Israel, as well as the importance of the slavery issue on its agenda, were completely neglected. The black African countries did not want to make the Shoah the central issue. In the Durban text, slavery was considered the symbol of human evil. The event was reported in a distorted way in several Israeli newspapers, again demonstrating that the media is a major determinant of the country's attitude toward the Shoah."

The Eichmann Trial: A Turning Point

"Israel's public awareness of the Shoah today is very different from that of the first years of the country's independence. The 1961 Eichmann trial was probably the turning point. Until then the Israeli mainstream suppressed the subject.

"Common wisdom is that survivors were unwilling to detail their experiences. A study by Ben-Gurion University historian Hanna Yablonka, a daughter of Holocaust survivors, in her book *Ahim Zarim* (Foreign Brethren), published by Yad Ben Zvi and Ben-Gurion University in 1994, claims this is untrue.

"Many Shoah survivors were willing to tell their stories often in their own journals, such as publications of the Kibbutz Hameuhad movement. The surrounding society, however, was not interested in hearing about the subject. One possible reason was guilt feelings about having been saved, while being unable to help the murdered. Another was that Israelis wished to stress heroism, rather than the acts of those they perceived as having gone 'like lambs to the slaughter,' an expression coined by poet Aba Kovner, a leader of the partisans in the Vilna

ghetto. It is thus incorrect to consider it a typical metaphor of Israeli arrogance toward Holocaust survivors.”

Little Interest in Diaspora and Jewish Issues

“The media’s limited interest in Shoah-related events is true for Diaspora and Jewish subjects in general. If one were to measure the inches devoted by the popular press to other Diaspora issues, one would find them to be even less than those devoted to the Shoah.

“Diaspora events are rarely dramatic – certainly not headliners. One item however, which made it into the Israeli media during the first year of the current Palestinian uprising was the U.S. Reform movement’s announcement that its youth organization members would not visit Israel due to the security situation. This statement, discussed both in the press and on the radio, was interpreted as meaning that, in Israel’s time of need, the Diaspora didn’t show solidarity. It remained, however a one-time issue. The Israeli press focuses on events rather than processes. The latter are not analyzed in a systematic way thus, by definition, an important dramatic event like Durban is always a surprise.

“The popular press ‘discovered’ the Durban conference only one day before it began. Its editors didn’t realize the gathering potentially embodied a major disaster for Israel. Only at the last moment did they decide to send staff members there, who had no idea what the essential issues for Israel at the conference were. Their reporting created the impression of a substantive anti-Semitic festival. These people, two days earlier, had no clue about the conference’s main issues or what might happen there.”

The Diaspora is Secondary

“Many Israelis regard the Diaspora as secondary: Israel is the natural place for all Jews to be, so those in remote locations are considered less important. This attitude determined Israeli interest in Argentina’s economic crisis. Most Israeli media almost exclusively focused on how many Argentinean Jews would immigrate to Israel. They started from the assumption that, in the event of a crisis somewhere in the world, the Jews living there should come to Israel. Why should Israelis care about their problems, if they rejected Israel’s offer to live in a permanent homeland?

“This attitude is related to the Zionist education of many Israelis, which has left a deep impression until today. To some extent, that may also determine the Israeli position toward current anti-Semitism in France. In addition there is the normal factor of ‘what is remote from the eye is remote from the heart.’

“Israel’s attitude toward the Diaspora is also influenced by generational factors. Before and after the Shoah, Jews were dispersed throughout the world. This spurred close familial ties between many people living in Israel and those abroad; several generations later this family bond has weakened.

"This is less true for French Jews of North African origin, who immigrated to Israel later. Many of those in Israel still have first generation connections with family members in France. If anti-Semitism continues in France this relationship may lead to greater emigration, most notably to Israel. Jews in other countries of crisis would determine where to move based on human rather than ideological factors."

Differences between the Media

"In order to better understand the Israeli media's approach to the Diaspora, the Jewish Agency conducted a survey on how many articles on Jewish issues appear in the various media. It found that *Ha'aretz* leads the *Jerusalem Post*, while both are far ahead of *Ma'ariv* and *Yediot*. As far as electronic media is concerned, the state-owned *Kol Israel* radio is the uncontested leader. The television stations rank near the bottom, with the commercial Channel Two broadcasting virtually nothing on Diaspora subjects.

"This confirms the media's general attitude, which expresses itself in so many other fields. The quality press is interested in subjects not only because of their immediate popularity, but also because of a desire to supply information. To some extent, their approach to publishing is not only what already interests their readers, but also what could be important for them to know.

"It is particularly disappointing that the state-owned TV station, Channel One, gives Jewish issues so little attention. Hardly anything is known about differences in attitude between the right- and left-wing press. What is clear, however, is that the ultra-orthodox press has an above average interest in general Jewish subjects. A journal such as Agudat Yisroel's *Hamodia*, which appears each Friday, devotes a full page to news from the Jewish world. The emphasis is on ultra-orthodox societies, yet the overall relationship with the Diaspora is felt much stronger than in the secular press. Also the right-wing paper *Makor Rishon* gives Diaspora and Holocaust issues far more attention.

"For the Russian press, some very specific Diaspora issues are important. One of these is restitution payments. Another is Jewish world war veterans, an issue which is not reported on at all in the general Israeli press."

One Exception

Sheleg points out that there is one major exception to what he has mentioned. "Israeli journalist Itamar Levin of the financial daily *Globes* has played a leading role in bringing the conflict concerning dormant Jewish bank accounts in Switzerland to the world's attention. He developed this theme and gathered data on it, including major discoveries. To some extent his work has stimulated the World Jewish Congress to focus on this issue. This is the one exception of an Israeli journalist playing a major role in the Holocaust restitution issue.

“The discussion on the Swiss banks which Levin initiated was picked up by the international press. Some American papers devoted aggressive articles to it. On *Time’s* cover a cuckoo clock appeared where, instead of a bird, Hitler came out, suggesting that the Swiss were Nazi sympathizers. They were justifiably offended by it.

“Discussion on restitution issues in other countries, such as Norway or France, was major but mainly limited to their national press. The Shoah has become the symbol of ultimate evil and the restitution issue played against this background. Perhaps one reason important Western media paid attention to this subject is that some of them felt guilty for their role during the Shoah.

“Media interest led to the establishment of commissions of historical and financial enquiry in several countries. Verifying how locals helped the Nazi machine became an important issue for them. Itamar Levin continued to cover this intensively. This major process, which he helped initiate, shows what a lone journalist can do, if he is willing and able to operate outside his society’s culture.”

Yair Sheleg was born in 1964 in Israel, and was a pupil in the National Religious School system. He went to the Hesder Yeshiva in Gush Etzion. Sheleg studied for his first degree on the history of the Jewish people at the Hebrew University. For a number of years he has been writing for Ha’aretz and, for the last three years, has been its full-time reporter on Jewish affairs. Before that he was with Kol Ha’ir, Nekuda and the army paper Bamahane.

Avi Beker

Restitution Issues Destroy National Myths

For decades it was inconceivable that the issue of financial restitution for Jewish properties looted and stolen during the Second World War would be reopened, other than by historians. A few years ago, however, this subject rather suddenly received major international media attention. Gradually, European governments became preoccupied with published data incriminating their predecessors on many accounts. This led to more than 50 inquiries, instigated mainly by governments, followed by much-publicized negotiations and a number of financial settlements with Jewish bodies.

Avi Beker has been a key player in this renewed interest in financial restitution in many countries. Elected Secretary General of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in 2001, Beker discusses why, after so many years, Europeans suddenly wanted to confront their countries' pasts more honestly.

The Coming Together of Several Elements

"A number of elements came together, which unlocked a window of opportunity for the Jews in a world which had changed. One was the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War. The West had been united by this threatening enemy and had remained heavily armed against it. This prevented their occupying themselves with a fairly recent past. Now people wondered how they would function in a world without a major adversary. This vacuum enabled a new discourse to emerge.

"At the same time, Holocaust survivors began speaking more openly about their suffering. Further, the generation of those guilty or responsible for what happened during the war left the stage to younger representatives who were more willing to break longstanding national myths about the Second World War. Their common denominator was that Nazi Germany had been responsible for all the evil. It alone had planned and implemented the destruction of the Jews."

Entering into the Post-Communist Seam

Organized Jewry penetrated the post-communist seam, putting the restitution issue forward. Some observers considered the WJC's approach too aggressive, but Beker asserts that challenging longstanding national legends can only be done emphatically.

“The Jews were able to prove to the world that many European authorities had been active partners in expropriating Jewish properties; and their nationals had provided lists for the theft. They also stole Jewish-owned art which, after the war, was concealed in the cellars of their museums while their banks hid Jewish deposits. The media made it clear that these authorities had long tried to suppress what they had done and shared the guilt.

“Austria created one of the strongest national myths, presenting itself as one of the Nazi’s first victims, rather than as their partner and fellow perpetrator. Another major legend was that Vichy France was not the ‘real’ France. The Swiss national myth centered on its fake neutrality. Once organized Jewry presented claims based on documented figures, everyone realized that many countries still possessed major amounts of stolen Jewish property. These financial demands simultaneously led to a discussion of national myths.”

Restitution Process Breaks National Myths

“The connection between confronting national myths and the progress of the restitution process can easily be proven. Dealing with the concrete financial claims’ issues illustrated that throughout the entire expropriation process thousands – sometimes tens of thousands – of local nationals were profoundly involved in the prelude to the destruction of the Jews. The same can be demonstrated with respect to governments and financial institutions.

“The restitution process benefited from major publicity and media attention. Many facts were published which undermined national myths. Not only did new archival material become accessible, it was also discovered that much documentation available after the war had been forgotten or not even studied.

“Another factor influencing perceptions was the ‘personalization’ of the Holocaust. Austria provides the most obvious examples. Many Austrians were active Nazis, holding very senior positions in the German system. Hitler was the most prominent Austrian national, while others included extermination camp commanders.”

The Fake Neutrality of Switzerland

“The Swiss case is more intricate and therefore more revealing. The Swiss government hid behind the quite common legend of its neutrality in international relations. Even today, international law allows a neutral country to remain aloof from all hostilities, while maintaining economic relations with the belligerents. The Swiss benefited intensely from this, claiming that they traded with both the Allies and the Nazis. With this, Switzerland constructed the myth that its neutral behavior had protected it from being drawn into the war. The national legend presented neutrality as a heroic attitude, enabling the country to live through the Second World War unharmed.”

Since it is so difficult to deconstruct the neutrality concept, the Swiss case is particularly important for a moral discussion on war attitudes toward the Jews. Beker clarifies: "The problems of this notion were raised in a report coordinated by U.S. Under-Secretary of Commerce Stuart E. Eizenstat. In his first report of May 1997, he explicitly accused the Swiss of systematically helping to prolong the war. Under Swiss pressure, he had to soften his conclusions in his second report. As a U.S. government official he could not speak freely. The WJC, however, could."

An Intimate Swiss-German Partnership

"To present its own version of events, the Swiss government instituted the Bergier Commission (1996), named after its chairman Jean François Bergier, whose scholars investigated the country's war-time past. It was particularly gratifying that the commission reached the same conclusions as the WJC, comprehensively proving that the Swiss-German partnership was most intimate, reflecting a low level of morality. Many Swiss knew what was happening in Germany, including facts about the extermination of the Jews.

"One example concerns the laundering of gold and other Jewish valuables from the extermination camps. Swiss involvement in this was not restricted to a few individuals; and those involved handled it methodically. Banking then was quite different from today. The bankers who dealt with the Germans could not execute international financial transactions by simply pushing a few computer buttons. Almost daily, convoys of trucks loaded with valuables crossed the German-Swiss border. Thousands of Swiss were occupied with this. Some transported the goods, while others registered them. Yet others determined their destination or transmitted necessary information."

Beker clarifies: "I am not claiming that they knew the origin of every single truck; but they were well aware that, throughout the extermination, considerable Jewish gold and valuables were being stolen. Any intelligent person involved on an ongoing basis in such a process would have made the connection. This became very clear in the advanced stages of the war, as testimonies attest.

"The Swiss supplied not only food to the Germans, but also weapons. Witnesses claim that they knew that Germany was going to be defeated anyway, and that the weapons transferred to it in the money-laundering process would only help prolong the war. Toward the end of the war, Switzerland was already preparing the ground for commercial relations with post-war Germany."

The Cold War's Influence

"The Swiss were under heavy pressure from the United States, between the end of the Second World War and the outbreak of the Cold War, due to their attitude.

At the same time, the Swiss preemptively levied accusations of anti-Semitism against some Americans.

“It is amazing to see how, despite fresh memories of the Holocaust, Swiss negotiators in Washington made anti-Semitic remarks when describing American political pressure. The Swiss resentment against the large Jewish presence – in their eyes – in the American delegation was reflected in their reports. The Swiss chief negotiator, Walter Stuckey, referring to Seymour Rubin, exclaimed: ‘Why do I have to negotiate with a Jewboy?’ Others referred to a Jewish conspiracy against Switzerland.

“William Rappard, chairman of the Swiss delegation in the 1946 negotiations in Washington, wrote to his superiors: ‘since Morgenthau left the Treasury, all my friends here believe we are now experiencing a gradual demobilization of the Jewish lobby, which has had the upper hand for some time under President Roosevelt’s influence.’ Fifty years later a report prepared for the Swiss Foreign Ministry by two Swiss historians, Peter Hug and Marck Perrenoud, confirmed the existence of anti-Semitic attitudes in the Foreign Ministry after the war.

“Swiss post-war policy on this issue was one of procrastination to gain time. The Swiss government understood that it risked severe economic punishment. The Cold War changed the situation radically, dividing the world again into two camps. The United States’ prime interest was diverted in another direction: building NATO to contain the Soviet Union.

“The change in U.S. policy allowed the Swiss and others – including the Austrians and the French – to avoid confronting their wartime behavior in any major way. The Swiss, now undisturbed, embellished their history, creating their neutrality myth. Yet it is too simple to identify the Cold War as the sole reason for enabling them to avoid confronting their past. Time also had to pass before a new and non-involved generation could ask profound questions.”

The Psychology of Nations

In Beker’s view, besides a collective memory, each nation has a common psychology. “They suppress truth at the national collective level like individuals do on theirs.” In a book he edited entitled “*The Plunder of Jewish Property during the Holocaust*” Beker wrote: “As in the case of a patient suffering from a mental disorder, the suppressed traumas tend to resurface and topple the psychological balance of the collective national memory.”

He now adds: “When at present some European leaders viciously attack Israel, this must be seen in the context of their country’s Shoah past, which also explains why some politicians use anti-Semitic motifs. Nations try to console themselves about their own misbehavior and guilt by claiming that among Jews there is also moral degradation. This may stimulate their leaders to overstate what the Israelis are ‘doing to the Palestinians’ in an attempt to balance that with the horrible acts their countries committed against the Jews during the Shoah. To salve their

consciences requires them to become hypocritical and apply more severe standards to Israel and the Jewish people than they ever did to themselves.”

The Globalization of Holocaust Memory

“In most European countries, the financial restitution process led to a debate far beyond the figures. Movies on this issue and related subjects were screened on television. Investigations on stolen art were undertaken in many museums. The financial issues also raised many moral questions.

“Together, these events contributed to the globalization of Holocaust memory. Earlier public screenings such as the NBC series *The Holocaust*, Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah* and Steven Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* made significant contributions to this, *inter alia* influencing two individuals who would play a significant role in the restitution process. Bjarte Bruland, a student at Norway’s Bergen University researched the confiscating of Jewish property in Norway after seeing Lanzmann’s *Shoah*. In 1997 Christopher Meili, a security guard at the Union Bank of Switzerland, exposed the destruction of war-time documents by his employers, after having been affected by *Schindler’s List*.

“The recent establishment of so many Holocaust museums is both a further indication of, and a contributor to, this globalization. These museums facilitate a moral confrontation with Holocaust issues. Without such stimuli, it remains difficult to even imagine that the Shoah happened, and thus to analyze it.

“The French now regularly write that they did not face the bitter truth about Vichy. Many accuse former President François Mitterrand of being a falsifier of history. Sometimes individuals embody or symbolize collective national memories. Mitterrand is a typical example of France’s longstanding inability to confront this indelible stain on its history. In 1994 Pierre Pean published a study which proved that, in his youth, Mitterrand had been an extreme rightist, employed within Vichy structures. Later he changed sides and joined the Resistance. For years Mitterrand refused to bring Nazi criminals to justice, publicly admitting he had intervened to delay the investigations against Maurice Papon, thereafter condemned to ten years in prison.

“Mitterrand even voiced his opinion that reopening unhealed wounds was wrong. He claimed it was bad for France’s memory and sense of cohesiveness. The press and public intellectuals collaborated with this attitude, both out of respect for Mitterrand and an inability to confront their country’s complicity in what had happened.”

Waldheim Symbolizes Austria

“Kurt Waldheim similarly symbolized Austria. He obscured a few years of his biography. Many details about Waldheim’s past were only revealed when he became the presidential candidate of the Austrian Popular Party running against

a socialist opponent. During the campaign it became clear that he had lied about his wartime past. He recorded in his biography that he had been wounded on the Eastern Front in 1941 and hospitalized in Vienna. Then, in 1944, he reappeared in the Austrian Foreign Office, after he had studied law. Waldheim omitted the time he had spent as an intelligence officer of the *Wehrmacht* in war zones and areas where the extermination of the Jews was being prepared, such as Salonika, or where partisans were liquidated, as in Yugoslavia. He worked very closely with several people who were active in exterminating the Jews. In short, it was documented that he had been a consistent liar for many decades.

“The Austrians did the same on a national level, trying to eliminate these years from their collective memory. They also made believe that they were victims rather than perpetrators. Only thereafter, so they claimed, did they return to their normal ways. This fake history enabled them to avoid facing their own crimes and guilt. The attacks Waldheim suffered during the years 1986 to 1991, when he was President of Austria, forced the country to confront its national myth many years earlier than other European countries.”

Anti-Semitic Reactions and Guilt

“Waldheim’s past became a major issue in the international media, because he had been the Secretary General of the United Nations for ten years and, as such, was nominally the world’s prime defender of human rights. When his past was comprehensively publicized, the Austrians could no longer avoid the difficult confrontation with their bloodstained wartime past. In response, Austrian latent anti-Semitism became overt. It took several years before the voices of truth got stronger and guilt feelings emerged.

“Toward the end of the 1980s, senior Austrian politicians finally started saying the right things. In 1991 Austrian chancellor Franz Vranitzky admitted that the Austrians had been willing Nazi collaborators. He apologized on behalf of his government and took responsibility for what had happened during the war. The issue of financial restitution was only discussed years later; and it was always the Jewish side which had to start moving issues. Elsewhere in Europe one had to wait for the restitution debate to initiate a major demystification process.

“The triggers for national reevaluation have greatly differed. Sometimes it was a moral issue, such as the Waldheim case. On other occasions it concerned financial restitution, with its many moral dimensions.”

Bitburg: A Landmark

“Another important landmark in the demystification process was President Ronald Reagan’s visit to lay flowers on the German war cemetery in Bitburg, where members of the Waffen SS are also buried, at the beginning of May 1985. It was

to say that, as a compensatory act, both countries have supplied important parts of Israel's nuclear reactor?

"Norway never had a significant Jewish community, but repressed guilt feelings definitely existed. In the country's internal discussions on restitution, moral considerations played a major role. It was the first country to establish a commission of enquiry with wide support; and the Norwegian parliament wholeheartedly supported restitution payments."

Fifty Years Earlier

Beker concludes that many things which have become almost self-understood in recent years already existed in an embryonic form after the war: "Even in the run-up to the vote of the United Nations on November 27, 1947, one already sees the representatives of the Jewish Agency mentioning the Holocaust in their pleas to recognize Israel. They also pointed out the great debt which Europe owed the Jews."

Dr. Avi Beker is the Secretary General of the World Jewish Congress. He received his Ph.D. in international relations at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and served on the Israeli delegation to the United Nations. He has published extensively on Jewish affairs and international security. He is the editor of The Plunder of Jewish Property during the Holocaust (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001).

Ronald Zweig

Restitution: Why did it Take 50 Years, or did it?

By 1943 the Allies were convinced they were going to win the war. They started preparing for the invasion of Italy and for moving into northern Europe. Simultaneously, they initiated detailed contingency planning in many fields. Among these was the care of an estimated 14 million displaced persons in the areas they intended to occupy. These included prisoners of war, slave laborers, voluntary workers, concentration camp inmates and others. Ultimately the number of displaced persons totaled less than half their estimate. According to Ronald Zweig, a Professor of Modern Jewish History at Tel Aviv University, the future of Europe's surviving Jews was analyzed within this much larger framework.

The Future of the Jewish Survivors

"The planners were hampered by both factual and policy uncertainties. They did not know how many Jews remained alive in Western and Central Europe nor what the situation would be further east. Policy questions included whether the Jews should be dispersed and resettled, like everyone else, throughout Europe, and who would be responsible for rehabilitating their communities. The American and British authorities turned to the one Jewish organization with which the Americans had particularly close relations, the American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC). The official American position more-or-less came down to 'whatever the American Jewish lobby wants, we will support.'

"One of the Allies' ideas was to use Jewish communal and heirless private property to resettle the refugees, most of whom were not thought to be Jews. The Jewish organizations vehemently opposed this, arguing that Jewish property should be exclusively used to rehabilitate Jews. When the American and British forces liberated many Jews, the American authorities accepted this position. They had expected far fewer Jewish survivors."

Claims against Germany

"Discussions were held on the general claims to be brought against German assets, as reparations for Germany's having initiated the war. Jewish organizations argued that not only could the Soviet Union, the U.S., Britain and France bring

claims against the Germans, but that the Jews could too. The Americans accepted this position, proposing that the Jews receive 2% of whatever reparations payments were made. The British however, strongly opposed this proposal. They said the Jews were not an allied nation and had not fought in that capacity against the Germans, nor did they have a government. They thus should not be entitled to any such assets."

Zweig claims that the British used this rationalization in line with their approach in their 1939 White Paper. "They considered the idea of a 'Jewish nation' a Zionist canard. The British also assumed that much of any money received would go to illegal Jewish organizations in Palestine, such as the *Hagana*. They did not want to encourage the concept of Jewish nationhood, stating that Jews should be regarded as nationals of the Jewish faith of whatever individual European country they should be resettled in. The Americans rejected these views. They were dominant in the discussions; and they had a tendency to decide things unilaterally and then, more-or-less impose their decisions on the other countries involved."

The Assets Available

"Among the assets that became available for distribution, were selected German possessions in such neutral countries as Sweden, Switzerland, Portugal and Turkey. It was decided that the Jewish people would receive \$25 million of these, plus non-monetary gold found in Germany, which the Germans had stolen from their victims. Major discussions were held on these assets. Initially the non-monetary gold was estimated at many hundreds of millions of dollars (several billions of dollars today) but the amount ultimately available was far less. In the end, the Jewish organizations received not more than 3.5 million dollars from the non-monetary gold account, a tiny fraction of the anticipated sum.

"In 1946 the Americans ran into conflict with the British over the Palestine question. The British had initially said they would accept the conclusions of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, whatever these would be. They then reneged on their commitment to allocate 100,000 certificates for Jewish immigrants to Palestine. The Americans – who saw this as a solution for the displaced persons camps, where less than 100,000 Jewish survivors remained – viewed this British turnabout very negatively. They wanted to give the British a diplomatic slap in the face on the reparations issue, to express their displeasure with the British position on Palestine.

"In the spring of 1946, the Americans convened the 'Five-Power Conference on Reparations for Non-Repatriable Victims of German Action,' in Paris, to deal with Jewish reparations. Eli Ginzberg, a previous director of the American United Jewish Appeal (UJA), was appointed chairman. The Conference decided that the Jewish victims would be represented exclusively by the AJDC and the Jewish

Agency. The money would be first sent to the International Refugee Organization (IRO), which had been established to take care of displaced persons. The IRO, in turn, would send the money to the two Jewish organizations.

“Other organizations, such as the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress, also tried to play a role in aiding the Holocaust survivors in the displaced persons camps, but did not succeed in obtaining official recognition.”

Palestine and the Fate of the Survivors

“As far as Jewish public opinion was concerned, the two main issues were the battle in Palestine and the fate of the Holocaust survivors. The status of the AJDC and the Jewish Agency in the Jewish world was strengthened by the importance of the latter issue and non-Jewish recognition of their role in helping the survivors.

“In April 1945 the American army discovered a potash mine in Merkers, Thuringia, where valuables were stored, including approximately 150 crates of Jewish assets. There are photographs, taken when these were opened, showing Shabbat candlesticks, *kiddush* cups, etc. The Americans developed a very broad definition of the ‘non-monetary gold’ to be transferred to the Jewish organizations. It comprised not only gold from teeth and Jewish silverware but also items such as securities, coins and other valuable collectables.

“By 1946 it had already become apparent that the monies set aside for the non-repatriable victims of Nazi persecution were inadequate. In the meantime much heirless Jewish property had been found, mainly real estate but also other assets. For instance, when the Americans liberated the Buchenwald concentration camp, they discovered many Jewish valuables which SS staff members, without the knowledge of their superiors, had hidden in a cave nearby.

“The biggest single discovery of looted Jewish assets was a gold train in Austria. The British declared that since Austria was not Germany, the Jews had no claims there. The Americans said that, as far as the fate of victims’ loot is concerned, Austria should be considered similar to Germany. The one and a half tons of Jewish silverware discovered there were partly sold at auctions. Another part was melted; and the remainder was sent to displaced persons camps to be used in courses teaching various professions to the survivors.”

Communal and Private Properties

“Yet another issue was Jewish communal property. Where no Jewish community remained, the property was transferred to the AJDC and the Jewish Agency. There were many complicated cases. What was to be done with a Jewish community like Augsburg, where 3,000 Jews had lived before the war? It owned substantial property at central locations in the city. After the war, however, the community numbered a mere 50 Jewish refugees from Poland. Should this community be

considered the property's owners, or should the assets be taken over by the AJDC and the Jewish Agency for the more general benefit of Jewish survivors?

"There were many similar dilemmas. Surviving heirs could present their claims for private property; but tens of thousands of houses previously owned by murdered Jews *without* surviving heirs were inhabited by Germans. The Jewish organizations tried to convince the American military occupation authorities that such problems had to be resolved."

Zweig elaborates: "For the Americans, the right to private property was an important principle. They considered returning such property to its rightful owners after the war as part of restoring morality to the world. On the other hand, the Americans wondered whether they should antagonize the Germans, whom they were trying to reeducate to become good democrats.

"So the occupying American, British and French authorities did nothing effective on this issue during 1946–47. The Russians remained equally inactive; but it was rumored that the Soviet authorities had decided to return Jewish-owned real estate. The Americans had always believed the Jewish pressure was justified, since the property concerned had been stolen from the victims. The possibility that the Russians might precede them shocked the Americans and gave them a great impetus to deal with the matter.

"The German authorities, however, did not want to return any property to the Jews. Ultimately the Americans imposed legislation. In October 1947, a military law was passed requiring all property 'Aryanized' by illegal seizure to be returned to the original owners. Current owners would have to prove their legal ownership. This would be tried before German courts; but there was a right of appeal to an American tribunal."

The JRSO

"The Americans inserted an important clause in the law entitling Jewish restitution 'successor organizations' to claim heirless property. It took the Jewish world 10 months to establish a special organization for this purpose. Although many Jewish bodies participated in its establishment, the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) was dominated by the AJDC and Jewish Agency.

"By December 1948 the JRSO had presented 163,000 real estate claims, based on files from German 'Aryanization' offices. When the available data was inadequate, the JRSO's executives went through 1938 telephone books and claimed all properties with a Jewish sounding name! This rather broad and haphazard procedure was deemed necessary because one could always withdraw a claim, but no new claims could be submitted after a certain deadline. Approximately 40% of the claims presented under this legislation were actually non-Jewish ones.

"In the period's disorderly circumstances, the JRSO occasionally won unjustified court cases, although this property was ultimately returned. Eventually

the procedure became more routine and, for a brief period during the early 1950s, the JRSO became the largest real estate operator in Germany. Expelling Germans from such properties was politically unpopular and various German state governments proposed paying a global sum for the JRSO's rights, without investigating individual cases in detail.

"The Bavarian government, for instance, reached such a global settlement with the JRSO and paid the money immediately. The Bavarian authorities then proceeded further with the claims themselves, and even made a profit out of them. The Jewish organizations involved were agreeable to such arrangements as they desperately needed the money for displaced persons. It also helped them end an ongoing unpleasant confrontation with German public opinion."

Reparations and Indemnification

"By the early 1950s it had become clear that the Jews wished to claim damages for many other matters besides properties stolen by the Germans. The issues at stake then became reparation and indemnification. Such claims referred to immaterial damage, such as damage to health, incarceration in camps and subsequent suffering as refugees. Jewish organizations did not want to negotiate such sensitive issues with Germany directly. They tried to pressure the occupying powers to deal with them; but the Americans, British and French responded that, while they agreed with such claims, the Jews would have to take the initiative.

"This became an extremely sensitive issue both in Israel and the Diaspora. The initial talks were kept secret. Germany wanted to reach a settlement with the world and, in this context, also the Jews. Germany was not yet a member of the United Nations, while Israel was. Israel and the Jewish organizations embarrassed Germany at every possible opportunity. When Germans spoke at international conferences, the Israeli delegation walked out.

"The Israelis also claimed that the Allies' conception of a 'new Germany' was fictional. They showed that Germany's current representatives were bank managers, military officials and politicians who had held important positions under the Nazis." Zweig mentions that, for a short time, there was a higher percentage of Nazi party members in the post-war German civil service than under Hitler.

"When Germany gained independence in 1951, international organizations began winding down their activities, with the intention of handing over the responsibilities for the remaining refugee camps to the Germans. The latter didn't want the embarrassment of taking care of these people and hoped that the Jewish world would look after them. By 1956 only one camp, with 4,000 people, remained. These were survivors who had gone to Israel and returned, who were too sick to go anywhere else, or who had become accustomed to living off public funds. In short, they were the hard core of the refugee problem."

Israel's Involvement

"Meanwhile, the Jewish organizations involved had reached a dead-end by the early 1950s. They found unyielding opponents in the Swiss and Austrians; and they were also unable to achieve anything regarding restitution in Eastern Europe. Widespread destruction during and after the war made the latter task very difficult. Now that a Jewish State had been created with its own government, the Jewish organizations gracefully bowed out and transferred all restitution matters to Israel's foreign office, in the hope that it would continue the fight. However, Israel had different priorities regarding relations with these countries, and reparation issues were neglected.

"Meanwhile, Germany wanted to be able to say that it had started negotiations with Jewish representatives and had made a reasonable offer. It proposed transferring \$100,000,000 of cash – which it barely had – to Israel. Although Israel needed this cash to finance its oil purchases, it rejected the offer in 1952. The Jewish world also imposed one important moral condition for progress: It insisted that modern Germany acknowledge its responsibility for the Holocaust. It could not continue blaming the Nazis. Israel persisted in its position that it could not negotiate forgiveness and that Germany could not 'buy' it. At the same time, it made clear that Germany had to pay for the damage inflicted upon the Jews.

"In September 1951, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer made a statement before the Bundestag, the German parliament, in which he talked about the indescribable crimes 'committed in the name of the German people' against the Jewish world. This expression, to some extent, adroitly avoided the issue. He did not say 'we did it,' yet he came as close as politically possible at that time."

The Beginning of Negotiations

"Israel thereupon started to negotiate with Germany, in 1952, in the name of the Jewish world, together with a newly established organization, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference). The Germans said this was a first step toward spiritual reconciliation. The Israelis did not disagree, considering that such reconciliation might take many years.

"The legal background for these negotiations was complex. The Jewish state was not a sovereign entity when the crimes were committed. Approximating the size of Jewish material losses was another problem. A rough estimate in 1948 of the material claims of the Jews totaled approximately \$8 billion in dollars of that year. These covered the period from the rise of the Nazis until the end of the war. The Jewish organizations involved used relatively primitive tools to estimate this figure, since most of their efforts were directed toward studying the legal side of the issue, rather than its economic aspects. Israel and the Jewish diaspora were not sure how much Germany was willing to offer. The diaspora representatives

felt Israel's claims should take priority, but that their claims must also be addressed. They made an agreement with the Israeli government that, if Germany was not willing to pay their organizations, 15% of what Israel would receive would be given to diaspora Jewry.

"Negotiations began in Wassenaar in The Netherlands. Germany negotiated separately with Israel and the Jewish organizations. Although Israel had not been a sovereign state at the time of the Holocaust, it based its legal claim on the absorption of half a million Nazi victims between 1933 and 1952, at an estimated \$3,000 per capita. Israel thus presented a total claim of \$1.5 billion. The Jewish organizations said that the diaspora had absorbed many refugees as well, and claimed \$0.5 billion. This should be compared with the original total German offer of \$0.1 billion.

"The negotiations with Israel broke down and the delegations returned home. Thereafter, the Germans accepted one billion dollars of Israel's claim, but stated that West Germany represented only 72% of the former German Reich; Israel would have to claim the remaining 28% from East Germany (which refused to pay anything). Germany offered the diaspora organizations 450 million German marks, spread over 12 years, less than a quarter of their formal claim.

"The Claims Conference was to deal with the money the diaspora received. Ultimately, about 50% of these funds were used for Jews living behind the Iron Curtain. That had to be done secretly, because communist governments did not want to admit that there were needy people in their countries."

The Jewish Decision Makers

"The Claims Conference's decisions were, in practice, made by three Jewish leaders: Nahum Goldmann, Chairman of the Jewish Agency and President of the World Jewish Congress, Jacob Blaustein, President of the American Jewish Committee, and Moses Leavitt, Executive Secretary of the AJDC. Goldmann had a diplomatic background, a genuinely cosmopolitan outlook and deep roots in European Jewish culture. He was much better prepared to handle negotiations with the Germans than the Americans. Blaustein controlled major oil interests and was one of the wealthiest men on earth. He was also influential because of his good connections with the White House."

Despite his many business interests, Blaustein involved himself greatly in the Claims Conference. Zweig relates an anecdote: "Each year the Claims Conference prepared a summary of all applications for funding for the coming year. These were compiled into thick folders called 'Black Books.' Blaustein heavily annotated his copy. Goldmann was only interested in the political aspects of the allocations and never opened his. Blaustein reproached him: 'You do not even look at these books before you vote!' Goldmann calmly replied, 'You deal in retail, I am in wholesale.'"

“All in all, German restitution after the war to Israel and the Jews amounted, in today’s terms, to about \$70 billion. This was far more than the Germans had originally intended to pay; but more and more categories of victims were added as beneficiaries over the years.”

Austria

“Austria remained a separate problem, because it claimed to be a victim of the Nazis rather than its partner in the perpetration of war crimes. Wartime damage caused a post-war shortage of 65,000 Austrian housing units, so the Austrians staunchly opposed returning Jewish property. At a famous meeting between Nahum Goldmann and the Austrian Chancellor, Julius Raab, the latter asked Goldmann what was on the agenda. Goldmann cynically replied that he had come to discuss how much the Jewish world owed Austria. The Chancellor understood the absurdity of the situation. From then on negotiations started with – as elsewhere – Goldmann as the key negotiator. The first stage of restitution began only in the mid-1950s, and it was always niggardly. Not until the early 1990s did Austria finally face its true war history.”

“It was also difficult to negotiate with Austria because a 1943 Allied agreement in Moscow stipulated that Austria should be considered the first country occupied by the Nazis, rather than the first country to collaborate with them. Further, there has never been significant support in the Austrian parliament for restitution. Later international attacks on President Kurt Waldheim, who had concealed his wartime past, first seriously dented the Austrian position. Public pressure began to have a modest success; and the Austrians began making some restitution payments, initially only to those victims still living in Austria, but later also to those outside the country.”

The Reemergence of the Restitution Issue

Zweig concludes that while restitution matters were neglected by Israel for decades they were not entirely forgotten. They remained one of the many war issues unclosed. Finally, in the mid 1990s, restitution became an item of considerable worldwide interest. New negotiations started with several countries and these received much publicity.

Zweig warns against the creation of a new myth that the main restitution negotiations were those of recent years. He points out that the total monies received in these highly publicized renewed negotiations still total no more than about 5% of what had been obtained in the first post-war round described above.

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University (U.K.). He is the author of three books, including 'German Reparations and the Jewish World: A History of the Claims Conference' (London: Frank Cass and Co., 2001), 2nd edition. His most recent work is The Gold Train (New York: William Morrow, 2002). It is a study of the looting of Hungarian Jewry and the fate of their assets.

Isaac Lipschits

The Dutch Government: Discriminating against the Survivors through a so-called Egalitarian Approach

The Small Shoah: Jews in Post-war Netherlands, by the political scientist Isaac Lipschits, was published in 2001 in Holland, where it became a bestseller. In its first chapter the author writes: “In the liberated Netherlands, the Jews were not endangered physically; but we see other symptoms of the Shoah return. Verbal anti-Semitism became sharper. The robbery of the Jews continued, and the Jewish community was belittled. Deportation and extermination of the Jews ended; but the singling out and isolation of the Jews continued. The Shoah was a blaze. In May 1945 the flames were extinguished, but the fire continued to smolder.”

In his interview, Lipschits elaborates: “In minimizing, in trivializing, in playing down their special experiences, the reintegration of the decimated Jewish community in post-war Holland was hampered. The government claimed that, while during the war a major distinction had been made between Jews and non-Jews, this should no longer be the case. This seemingly egalitarian approach was actually highly discriminatory because, during the war, the Jews were persecuted as Jews not Dutchmen. Other government measures were also disadvantageous for the Jews.

“When the Jews returned, or came out of hiding in 1945, their experiences and circumstances were so different from a normal situation that they should have been treated differently. The Jews had undergone a disaster which was, quantitatively and qualitatively, radically different from the experiences of the average Dutchman. Of the 140,000 Jews living in the Netherlands before the war, at least 105,000 had been murdered. This was a higher percentage than in *any* other Western European country.”

Jewish Orphans

Lipschits' book shows how the post-war Dutch government discriminated against the Jews in many other areas: “One major issue was the treatment of Jewish orphans. During the war, it had been even more difficult to find hiding places for adult Jews than for children. An adult had to have an identity card, which a small child didn't need. A child could always be passed off as a visiting relative.

“One resistance group, which found homes to hide Jewish children, was led by Gesina van der Molen and Sander Baracs. The first was a reformed Christian,

convinced that the Jews should recognize Jesus to save their souls. Baracs was an assimilationist Jew who proudly wrote how his grandmother celebrated Christmas with her children and grandchildren. He himself married in a Dutch reformed church.

“They said after the war ‘We took it upon ourselves to find a place for these children; now that they are orphaned we want a say in what will happen to them.’ They even smuggled a draft law to the Dutch government in exile with wild proposals. One was that parents who did not take care of their children for three months should no longer have custody.

Had this law been enacted, returnees from Auschwitz would not have been allowed to take their own children back! Says Lipschits: “Had my parents survived – which they didn’t – they would have lost their custody over me, as we were not hidden in the same place for more than three months. It was quite common for children and their parents to be hiding separately.

“The Dutch government did not accept this radical proposal. It should, however, have gone further and regarded these people as extremists. Instead, it named van der Molen as the head of the government committee determining the fate of these children. A new name was coined for them: they were not ‘war-orphans,’ but ‘war foster-children.’ Baracs became the director of the committee’s office and also held other key positions in it.”

Changing Pre-war Tradition

“In the pre-war Netherlands, it had been customary for every religious community to care for its members who needed help, such as: the aged, orphans, the sick and the mentally disturbed. In Amsterdam alone there were four Jewish orphanages and several Jewish hospitals. There were many Jewish old age homes in the Netherlands. One important central Jewish institution cared for the mentally ill. It would have been normal for the Dutch Jewish community to care for the large number of Jewish orphans after the war. The community could have reasonably expected the government to help finance this effort.

“Instead van der Molen’s committee, in which the Jews themselves formed only a minority, was created to determine the destiny of the remaining Jewish war orphans. Its consciously Jewish members were often outvoted by others, some of whom had a specific anti-Jewish agenda. Several Christians saw this committee as a conduit to convert Jewish children. Van der Molen even accused Jews of being racists by looking for a Jewish solution for this problem. Most committee members felt that, even where Jewish family members had survived, the child should remain with the family with which it had been hiding. They stated this explicitly.

“It would have been normal and ethical to have said: ‘We saved Jewish children during the war and now, after the war, are returning them as Jewish children to their Jewish environment.’”

From ‘Stateless Jews’ to ‘Enemy Citizens’

“Another case of discrimination concerned the stateless Jews of German origin. The Hitler government decreed that whoever fled Germany would lose his nationality. After the war, the Dutch government decided not to recognize Hitler’s legislation. The stateless refugees from Germany – mainly Jews – thus became German citizens again and were treated as German nationals, that is, as enemies of the state.

“The Dutch authorities, with madman’s logic, now considered these doomed and rejected German Jews as ‘enemy citizens.’ More than 100 such Jewish survivors, returning from Bergen-Belsen, were arrested at the Dutch border. Eighteen were interned in a camp together with Dutch collaborators and arrested SS members. They had to work in a gravel quarry and were beaten by the Dutch like the others. When they complained to the commanding officer, he told them that he was no friend of the Jews. He made the Jews, whom he considered difficult people, work extra. Later he was fired. The remaining assets of these survivors were taken away as enemy property. It took their lawyers a long time to recover them.”

Belittling the Jews and Neglecting their Interests

“Jewish authors often mention their negative experiences in the liberated Netherlands. Gerhard Durlacher, an Auschwitz survivor, wrote that they were handled more like cargo than passengers. When he asked his parents’ former neighbor whether anything remained of their family’s belongings, this was denied, although the neighbor was dressed in a suit of the author’s father.

“Dutch anti-Semitism immediately after the war was actually much stronger than before the war. The Dutch Jewish weekly *NIW*, week after week, published many examples in a special column devoted to this.

“The authorities belittled the Jews and neglected their interests. Public feeling was that the Jewish community no longer represented anything. Before the war, organized Jewry was consulted by the government whenever its interests were at stake. Now the community had become so small that it was often not heard on issues of concern to it. For instance, a government-appointed committee which dealt with payments for damage to religious buildings had no Jewish members, although no other religious community had encountered so much damage to its buildings.

“Another example: during the war, institutions in towns along the coast had been evacuated out of fear of an English invasion. This included the Clara Foundation, which cared for tuberculosis-infected Jewish children. After the war, all organizations were reimbursed for the extra costs they had incurred. The Clara Foundation, however, was excluded, because the post-war Dutch authorities considered that it had been moved to prepare for the deportation of its inmates.”

Reconstructing the Netherlands with the Jews' Money

“Even then, catastrophes in the Netherlands were dealt with differently than normal situations. However, the government’s ‘egalitarian approach’ disadvantaged the Jews through the application of the pre-war inheritance law, designed for a society with a standard death rate. The Jews, however, didn’t count their dead, but rather their survivors.

“The country was economically troubled in 1945. Finance Minister Piet Lief-
tink’s policy was for all Dutchmen to contribute to the country’s financial reconstruction. The Dutch government, however, let the Jews pay substantially more than their share. One can put it more strongly: a disproportionately large part of the Netherlands’ reconstruction was financed by the Jews.

“A number of Dutchmen had suffered material damage of various kinds, but every single Jew had lost much if not all of his property. The Dutch government knew this but refused to recognize this exceptional position, as that would have been to its disadvantage. It went a step further and knowingly profited from it.

“No attention was given to the specific material damage of the Jews, radically different in magnitude from most others. The Dutch Communist Party had proposed in Parliament to assume one fictitious date of death for all the deported who had not returned. Lief-
tink opposed this stating that the Treasury would thereby lose much of its taxes from the property of the dead Jews. By reconstructing each death date, the government could often tax the same inheritance several times, because so many family members had died. Thus the Jewish community on average contributed significantly more tax than other Dutchmen.”

The Dutch Role in Deportations

“Many Jews were also disadvantaged by another pre-war law. If one had been renting an apartment which had been rented to others after deportation, the new tenants were entitled to remain. In the post-war Netherlands there was a dramatic shortage of housing. No measures were taken to help the Jews with accommodation, despite their extenuating circumstances.

“The Dutch government denied its responsibility for what Dutch authorities had done to the Jews during the war. In nearly all cases the Dutch police had removed – upon German orders – these Jews from their homes. They also took children out of Jewish orphanages, the elderly out of Jewish old people’s homes and the sick out of Jewish hospitals. After the Jews were arrested, the Dutch police made an inventory of the furniture in their houses before it was sent to Germany as ‘a gift to the German people from the Dutch people.’ The policemen knew they were executing inhuman policies, which could not properly be considered the task of a police force.

“In the wartime police journal one reads ‘wanted notices’ to search for Jews who had hidden their own belongings rather than bringing them to the LIRO,

an institution established to rob the Jews of their property. The same paper also listed names of Jews who did not come to the meeting points to be taken to a concentration camp. The Dutch post-war government denied all responsibility for the acts of these and other government officials.”

The Restitution Process

“In the lengthy post-war restitution process, the Jews were never given the benefit of the doubt. They always had to bring proof, which was often impossible. Under another pre-war Dutch law, Jews who had not returned from the concentration camps were considered ‘missing.’ Only in 1949 was it changed so that these people were registered as dead. Thus, for four years, inheritance rights could not be applied in these cases.

“Financial discrimination manifested itself in many other ways. The Dutch government in exile had announced from London that damage caused by the Germans during the war, would be compensated. Commissions of enquiry were established for this purpose. Despite major post-war inflation the committee determined the value of one’s possessions on the basis of pre-war prices, taking into account depreciation. Proportionally many more Jews had lost their possessions than others. Furthermore, it was difficult for surviving children to explain, to the satisfaction of the committee’s inspectors, what had been lost in their parent’s homes.

“Another consequence of the law that considered those who had not returned ‘missing’ was that survivors could not remarry. In those years that was particularly problematic because, unlike today, people did not live together without marriage. That was frowned upon.”

Favoring Nazi Collaborators over Jews

“After the war, many Dutch who had collaborated with the Germans were arrested. The authorities confiscated their possessions. Later a Dutch court decided it had to be returned. As it often could no longer be found, the collaborators were reimbursed according to *post-war* prices. Thus, if a Jew and a collaborator had bought the same furniture on the same date before the war and it had been confiscated, respectively, upon German orders during the war or by the Dutch government after the war, the collaborator might be reimbursed three or four times more than the Jew.

“In 1946 J.C. Tenkink, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice appealed to the Jewish community to help reintegrate the freed collaborators in the Dutch community according to the Christian principle of ‘loving one’s neighbor.’ After much discussion the Jewish community decided not even to respond to the letter.

“The liberated Nazi collaborators were awarded payment for every day they had been under arrest after the war. The Dutch post-war government considered itself responsible for their arrests. No such payments were made to the deported Jews, as the government did not see itself as responsible for what had happened to them during the war. The Dutch government in exile, however, had never instructed the Dutch authorities in the occupied Netherlands to disobey the German orders against the Jews.”

The Dutch Government: Refusing Responsibility

“The Dutch post-war government thus unjustifiably shirked responsibility for crimes perpetrated against the Jews in the Netherlands during the war. After the war it asked: ‘How could we have instructed the Dutch police not to implement the German orders?’ This was a very weak argument because, in 1944, the Dutch government in exile told the rail workers to strike, which they did.

“Shortly after the war, the Minister of Transport and Energy Th.S.G.J.M van Schaick specifically praised the Dutch railway workers for not striking during the transport of the Jews to the concentration camps, but only much later when the government in exile instructed them to do so. He pointed out that the railway was a pillar of the Dutch economy, which should not have been risked prematurely.

“After the war a parliamentary inquiry on the performance of the Dutch Government in exile in London took place. A Jewish civil servant Henry Dentz told the commission that, in 1943, he had written a report on the murder of the Dutch Jews by the Germans, which was circulated. His testimony illustrated that the London government had shown no interest in the fate of the deported or those in the concentration camps.”

1960: The Robbery Continues

“In 1960 the Netherlands and West Germany settled all outstanding war issues. The then Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joseph Luns, requested that the German government make a one-time payment for immaterial damage caused to Dutch citizens during the war. The Germans inquired about the Dutch claim, whereupon Luns asked the JMW, the Jewish Organization for Social Work, to present an estimate concerning the Jewish community, the gypsies and a persecuted Christian sect.

“The resulting figure of 125 million guilders was presented to the West Germans. The West-German government agreed to pay this sum of money, insisting that it be given to the Dutch government which should decide how to distribute it. Thereafter a discussion took place in the Dutch cabinet, which opposed paying this money only to the three groups for which it had been requested. The government then decided that the money should also be given to Dutch resistance members.

“Ultimately the government awarded the majority, 55 percent of the money requested for the three persecuted minorities to resistance group members, the great majority of whom had never done anything for the persecuted. Thus the Jews were robbed again. The method of dividing the money was also shameful. A point system was established reflecting a ‘scale of suffering.’ Thus a Jew would have to declare: ‘I have been sterilized against my wish; this entitles me to so many points.’ This system hit the Jews particularly hard given their mental scars. The Dutch government itself also profited from the money. Throughout the year-long deliberations they collected the interest on the 125 million guilders for themselves!”

The War Compensation Law

“In 1973 the Dutch government created a special law for support – not a pension – to war victims. Resistance members had already been paid real pensions since 1945. This late gesture, more than 25 years after the war, meant needy survivors were no longer considered welfare cases.”

The parliamentarian Joop Voogd made a major effort to get this law approved. Lipschits reflects: “I thought, at the time, that it was very nice of him to fight so hard for the Jews and considered him a ‘righteous gentile.’ Then I learned his mother was Jewish. I realized again that the effort to obtain justice had to be made by the Dutch Jews themselves. The same had happened with the writing of the history of the Dutch Jews during the Holocaust. All the major historians who dealt with it were Jews.”

The Restitution Issue Reemerges

“In the late 1990s the restitution issue reemerged. Then too the Dutch government did not accept responsibility for the role of the Dutch authorities during the war. It either lacked the courage or, perhaps, was afraid of additional claims. The new debate focused exclusively on post-war issues.

“This new restitution debate left a bad taste in one’s mouth in particular due to the cold and negative attitude of Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok. It reminded one of the reconstruction of the Jewish community in the Netherlands, when the post-war government had shown such a lack of tact and commiseration. Kok’s ministerial colleagues forced him to apologize to the Jews against his wishes. I think it was a mistake for the Dutch Jews to request apologies.

“The Dutch Minister of Finance, Gerrit Zalm, took a different approach. Once, when I visited parliament, he presented his apologies to me. I reacted: ‘But you were still in short trousers when all this happened.’ ‘It doesn’t matter,’ he replied, ‘it was done by my predecessor as Minister of Finance.’ That was correct, even if it concerned only the post-war period.”

More Negative Factors

“Judith Belinfante, a Jewish member of parliament, was another politician who played a negative role in this second restitution process. She asked publicly whether the renewed payments to the Jews were really necessary. When, in such situations, Jews lead the way, it becomes easy for non-Jews to line up behind them.

“It was painful for the Jews to negotiate so long about the additional restitution money. This gave the non-Jewish Dutch population the feeling: How much more tax do we have to pay for the Jews? In my opinion, though I cannot prove it, this helped rekindle anti-Semitism.

“There is another unpleasant aspect of this belated restitution process. The Dutch government agreed to pay 400 million guilders to the Jews, but stipulated that 50 million guilders of it should be put in a fund for various non-Dutch purposes. The Dutch government should not have decided for the Jewish community how its money should be distributed.”

Anne Frank: The Dutch Fig Leaf

“It is incomprehensible,” concludes Lipschits, “that the Netherlands, as far as its wartime past is concerned, has such a positive image abroad. Anne Frank became the fig leaf for the Dutch people’s behavior. Focusing on one girl, among more than 100,000 victims, must inevitably create a false image.”

Recently Lipschits, who is retired from university, has initiated a major memorial project called, ‘The Digital Monument of the Jewish Community in the Netherlands.’ When complete, its website will contain data on all the Jews who were persecuted in the Netherlands during the Shoah and perished. This includes the Jews who fled from Nazi-Germany, Austria and Poland.

“We collect all data we can on everybody,” Lipschits notes. “Among them, for instance, the thousand children taken from the Vught to the Westerbork camp and from there to Sobibor where they were gassed. The story of the mentally disturbed mute child who could whistle entire operas will also be part of the monument.”

Lipschits summarizes: “The importance of the project is that it concerns the remembrance of all who were persecuted during the war for being Jews: religious or not, young and old, men and women, rich or poor. So their names ‘will not be blotted out from Yisrael.’”

Isaac Lipschits was born in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, in 1930. He holds doctoral degrees in political sciences from Amsterdam and Paris universities. He has taught at the Universities of Amsterdam, Haifa, Jerusalem, Rotterdam and Leiden. In 1971 he became Professor in Contemporary History at Groningen University. He now heads the Digital Monument of the Jewish Community in the Netherlands.

Naphtali Lavie

Fighting for Crumbs: Financial Restitution in Eastern Europe

After the fall of communism in 1989, the issue of Jewish property restitution in Eastern Europe gradually reemerged. Its main proponents were Polish and Czech Jews, but the subject was raised in Jewish organizations as well. As a result, in 1992, the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) was established by the Jewish Agency and the World Jewish Congress. The latter's Secretary General, Israel Singer, was the driving force behind its creation.

Naphtali Lavie, WJRO Executive Vice-Chairman, discussed how the Israeli government was consulted about this issue but showed little interest, since it wished to avoid bilateral conflicts with countries newly-liberated from communist rule. "Shimon Peres, then Israel's foreign minister, agreed to have Israeli diplomats accompany us in meetings with foreign governments. He had, however, to give in to opposition from the Foreign Office, which was not even willing to set up meetings for us, something which we ultimately had to do ourselves."

Relations with Local Communities

"Before the WJRO began approaching Eastern European governments, internal discussions took place on how to relate to the local Jewish communities in these countries. I opposed those who suggested we try to circumvent them, which would be especially wrong in Hungary, with its sizable local Jewish community.

"In Poland we asked the Jewish community and four other Jewish organizations to accompany us to a meeting with the Polish government. They fell silent, until one leader – Wildstein – said something like: 'You will go home, but we have to stay and live with the government, our neighbors and the local environment. For us it is not easy to create a conflict and thereafter live with the consequences.' The Union of Jewish Communities and Organizations in Poland then signed an agreement permitting us to speak on their behalf.

"We met them on Friday. The following Monday we met the Prime Minister, Mrs. Hanna Suchocka. Her cabinet head, Jan Maria Rokita, said the Polish Jewish community should represent the Jews. We presented our power of attorney from the local organizations, which greatly surprised him. It turned out that the government had discussed with them the need to exclude world Jewry from negotiations. This pattern recurred, in various versions, in most countries concerned.

“Rokita said, ‘We Poles have not murdered the Jews,’ to which I responded: ‘But much Jewish property was stolen by Poles. Large segments of the civil population participated in the looting.’ I then related my own experience: I was in a work camp near a town with 30,000 Jews living in its ghetto. They were deported over a period of a few days, to Treblinka, to be murdered in October 1942. We were brought from outside the town to empty the houses the Germans wanted to use. Toward the end of the deportations, the ghetto walls were already broken. Hundreds of Poles from the neighborhood stood outside, each with a horse-and-carriage waiting for the remaining Germans to leave. Then they stole whatever they could and later settled in the Jewish homes.

“Following initial contacts, the WJRO began collecting relevant material and documentation on Jewish communal and private heirless property. Without any cooperation from local and central authorities in Poland, the WJRO managed to locate many thousands of relevant documents, which they verified and compiled into a detailed list of about 6,000 communal properties.”

Enrichment at Somebody Else’s Expense

“Our reasoning concerning material restitution has both moral and legal foundations. Decades ago the Polish government signed several human rights treaties including the Helsinki and Paris conventions. These explicitly stated that people have rights to their property. International law forbids one to enjoy enrichment at the expense of someone else. The Polish government still benefits from much stolen Jewish property.

“In 1946 the communist government issued a decree transferring all ‘post-German’ property to the government. The property the Germans left in Poland after their defeat was all expropriated from Jews. Today it remains in the hands of the Polish treasury.

“I went to the land registry in my birthplace, Cracow, and looked up the transfers concerning a specific building acquired in 1906 by a Jewish family. At the beginning of 1940, there is a stroke in the registry indicating that the property had been transferred to the General Government, which meant that the German occupying authority – having stolen it from the Jews – registered it in the name of their authority.

“In 1946 a new stroke appears in the registry, indicating that the property had been transferred to the Polish treasury. Further transfers occurred when the municipality became the owner, and when the municipality donated or sold it to an external organization. This case is typical of ‘enrichment at somebody’s else’s expense’, which, as I pointed out, is a highly immoral process. None of the Polish government authorities I talked to had any response.”

Poland: The Properties of 1,500 Communities

"The WJRO's first official contacts in Poland took place in May 1993. We held meetings with the Prime Minister, cabinet members, parliamentarians and journalists. It took us considerable time to arrange these meetings. In the negotiations, the government's senior representatives told us that, in the near future, a re-privatization law would be enacted, which could solve the claims concerning Jewish private heirless property. As for our claims for the restitution of communal property, we were told to follow the precedent established with regard to the claims of the Catholic Church, whose property was returned.

"We had decided to focus on Poland because before the war, there were about 1,500 organized Jewish communities in many hundreds of villages and other localities. Each one maintained a synagogue, a ritual bath, a school, and a cemetery.

"Over time we came up against a brick wall, since our Polish counterparts neither said yes nor no. Poland is still dragging out this process and demonstrates a very negative attitude toward restitution. In private conversations, our counterparts explained that, if they accepted the Jewish demands, an endless claims process would ensue. They would have to return land to the Germans they annexed for instance, in Silesia. Others would come with various additional requests, which the country would be unable to refuse. This was however, a subterfuge, because there are no other potential major claimants.

"Their second subterfuge was that we were claiming 30% or even 40% of all Polish real estate. There is proof that in big cities, such as Warsaw and Lodz, much real estate was Jewish-owned; but that was not the case in most other places. They added: 'We are a poor country just beginning to get organized and cannot carry such a heavy financial burden.'

"We told them, in turn, that we wanted justice. The properties that had belonged to Jewish individuals or communities would have to be returned. We made it clear, however, that we did not want to oblige them to return these properties outright. Rather, wherever the tenants of formerly Jewish-owned apartment buildings in Poland pay rent to a Polish government agency, we claimed that – since this property rightfully belongs to the original legal owner – the former owner or his heirs should receive the rent and take responsibility for the property's maintenance.

"I have also conducted many private conversations with Polish media representatives on the moral aspects of restitution. They usually react like Rokita, claiming it was not the Poles who killed the Jews. I always answer that this was not our claim, although it has since been proven that some mass murders were initiated and implemented by Poles without German orders, most notably at Jedwabne. My main argument was always that Poland inherited what the murderers of the Jews took from them, which is immoral. This argument found its way back to

articles in serious papers such as *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, *Polityka* and others. Today it has sunk into the consciousness of the politicians, even if they do not like to admit it.”

During the War: Making Plans for Confiscation of Property

Even during the war, some Nazi opponents made it clear they expected the Polish post-war government to confiscate Jewish property. A leading clandestine publication of the Christian Democrats, *Narod*, dated January 20, 1942, reported:

“The Jews, both morally and economically, were always a burden on the life of our nation... The events of the last two and a half years have created a situation that has made it impossible to agree to restore the Jews to their privileged position, without exposing our country to upheavals that would undermine the well-being of our new statehood. We have to state it openly. Not only do we refuse to restore to the Jews their political and property rights [lost during the war]; but we want them to leave our country altogether.

“[The] Jewish problem must be resolved through the gradual emigration of those Jews who, after the German extermination policy, remained alive, using the resources supplied by world Jewry for this purpose. The starting point [for the Polonization of our economy] will be the state seizure of heirless Jewish property, confiscated German property and proceeds from war indemnification.”

International Support

In view of its negative experiences, the WJRO and other Jewish organizations tried to mobilize international opinion. On February 7, 1994, Secretary of State Warren Christopher pledged United States support for restitution claims. In a letter dated April 10, 1995, congressional leaders from both parties urged Christopher to take action in this matter. Among its leading signatories were Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, Senate Minority Leader Thomas A. Daschle and House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt. They wrote:

“It should be made clear to the countries involved... that their response on this matter will be seen as a test of their respect for basic human rights and the rule of law, and could have practical consequences for their relations with our country. It is the clear policy of the United States that each should expeditiously enact appropriate legislation providing for the prompt restitution and/or compensation for property and assets seized by the former Nazi and/or communist regimes. We believe this to be a matter of both law and justice.

"In December 1995 the European Parliament adopted a resolution demanding the return of what was looted from the Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe. It referred to Article 1 of the first additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights: 'every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions.'"

Local Leaders: Not Representing Polish Jewry

"On my numerous visits to Poland, I found some counterparts agreeing to our position in private conversations, among them Leszek Miller, the present Polish Prime Minister. Finally, under pressure, the authorities gave in somewhat. In 1997 Prime Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz's government enacted a law stating that the properties of Jews *still living in Poland* would be returned.

"These are very few indeed. According to some estimates, about 5,000 Jews still live in Poland. The preamble of the 1997 law, published in parliament only counted 1,260 Jews. On all my visits, I have never heard of even one circumcision. There have, however, been many Jewish funerals. Less than 1,000 Jews are formally organized in nine registered Jewish communities. When the American Joint Distribution Committee distributes food for Pesach, a few more Jews surface.

"A few Jewish leaders took communal power years ago, through the communist government's instructions, rather than elections. During that time I was in contact with a retired senior Polish army officer, who had been made head of the Jewish community by the government. He has since been replaced by another, who is close to the post-communist regime.

"The few remaining Jews are entirely pro-Polish. One declared to a local newspaper on his own initiative, 'Restitution concerns Polish property, title to which must remain in Poland.' These people said that they would oppose any transfer of property to Israel, the United States, or any other foreign locale. This small, assimilated local community cannot claim to represent former Polish Jewry in any way; it is rather a hindrance to Jewish interests.

"Furthermore, in a number of cases, local Jewish activists, communal professionals and others, took advantage of the fact that nobody else was present, and sold communal property, such as synagogues, cemeteries and other public buildings, like others did in Slovakia and Lithuania.

"When the Polish government proposed the 1997 law, the local Jewish community told them to give legal status only to it and not the WJRO. I then met Mr. Miller who, in his capacity of Minister of the Interior and Administration, was responsible for the Law of Restitution. I informed him we did not intend to be 'extras.' Initially the law called for the local communities to realize their property rights together with the WJRO. At the last moment the government changed one word in Polish, altering the meaning so that the local community could consult us, if they so desired, but did not have to adopt our opinion."

A Million Polish Jews Abroad

“We are now discussing the establishment of a common fund. Run by both Poland’s Jewish community and the WJRO, this fund would receive the communal property. For four years the local community has sabotaged this process; we can only hope that it will now proceed. Meanwhile, various groups of Polish-born Jews abroad are trying to get organized.

“The tiny local community is the remnant of the 3.35 million Jews who lived in Poland before the Holocaust, representing nearly 10% of the country’s population. After the war, when many of those who had fled to the Soviet Union returned, 240,000 Jews lived in Poland; but subsequent murders by the Poles of many returnees caused massive emigration. By 1968 only approximately 30,000 Jews remained. Due to anti-Semitism and overall conditions in the country, most of them also left.

“According to our estimates, nearly a million Polish Jews and descendants live outside Poland. In Israel alone there are an estimated 400,000 such people. A similar number live in America. They are the main legal and moral claimants for the communal properties of Polish Jewry.”

Words in Exchange for Moral Claims

“As far as private – rather than communal – property is concerned, the Polish government is stalling even more. The previous government proposed a law on this issue to parliament, but it did not even reach the discussion table. The Polish President, who declared that Poland couldn’t meet such a multi-billion dollar financial commitment, vetoed it. Since then the government has started to introduce ‘corrections.’ The latest version says that anyone who can prove his right to a property will only receive 10% compensation. This proposal has not yet reached parliament and it will, of course, not satisfy us.

“Even this law may not be enacted because various parliamentary factions – representing constituencies which will be economically affected – will oppose it. Many major city high-street shops belonged to Jews, and were not purchased by any of the current owners. We continue to stress that we are not seeking cash payment for the outright transfer of ownership, but rather rent, which is usually paid to a governmental or municipal agency.

“Poland has become a prototype of the situation in Eastern Europe. Those in power do not think our claims are unreasonable. They do not give answers; and once they agree on something, they create both bureaucratic and political obstacles.

“The Polish government’s approach indicates that reasonable solutions can only emerge when pressure is exerted. Poland wants to be a member in various Western organizations, such as the European Union, and seeks support from others, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The Polish

authorities do not expect to be received everywhere with open arms. This may well create opportunities for pressure. In their world, claims of justice and morality alone carry no weight. By now it has become clear that, in exchange for moral claims, the Polish authorities are only willing, at best, to say nice words without any content.

“Many elements of these discussions were reproduced in other countries. We have used the same arguments we employed in Poland in our negotiations in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic and elsewhere. Hungary and Romania were satellites of the Nazis and not their victims. Their peace treaties with the Allies obligate them to restitute all heirless Jewish properties – communal, private and public – to the Jewish communities and organizations.”

Hungary

“Negotiations with Hungary – home to approximately 80,000 Jews – began in 1993. An estimated 30–40,000 Hungarian-born Jews live abroad. We encountered great difficulties with the local community there too.

“We reached an agreement with (then) Prime Minister Gyula Horn, in which the WJRO would set up a common fund with the Hungarian community. Its chairman would be Ronald Lauder, whose foundation actively supports Jewish schools in Hungary. The fund would receive the communal property, which it would distribute among the local communities. The Hungarian government also promised to return stolen art objects currently in various museums. So far we have received only five, not very valuable, paintings. Of some 3,000 Jewish communal buildings, a mere 18 have been returned.”

The Czech Republic

“We first visited Czechoslovakia in 1993. Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus arrogantly refused to discuss property restitution. Mid-conversation he mentioned how much Pilsen needs the big school in its center. When I asserted that it was a former Jewish school, he responded ‘I don’t really know.’ To this I retorted, ‘Then why did you mention that school at all?’”

“‘Let’s assume you’re right,’ he suggested, ‘Pilsen needs that school. Should I tell the municipality to vacate the building?’ I replied: ‘To our great regret there are no Jewish children who can learn there anymore. The Czech authorities did not legally acquire the building, so it is reasonable to expect them to pay rent for it.’ This led to another outburst on his part.

“The Czech community told us they had given the government a list of communal assets they wished returned. The full inventory of Jewish communal assets totaled 1,200 properties, but the Jewish community presented a much smaller list of only 202 assets. They thought that, if their demands were more modest, they would more likely receive at least something.

“Later I met a former Czech Prime Minister Petr Pitthart who told me that he had tried to rush the Jewish community to hand in their requests when he was still in office. They were too late, however, and presented it when Klaus had become prime minister. When I discussed the community’s list with Klaus, he simply said it is being ‘studied.’ Today, almost nine years later, only 42 properties have been returned in this most liberal of Eastern European countries.

“Before the war almost a quarter of a million Jews lived in Czechoslovakia, more than half in Slovakia, today an independent state. Another part of the country’s territory is now Ukrainian. Today up to 3,000 Jews live in the Czech Republic, an estimated 25–30,000 Jews of Czech origin live abroad. The Czechs have used various subterfuges not to return Jewish property. For example, the parliament passed a law that unless one is living in Czechoslovakia, one cannot reclaim stolen property.”

Slovakia

In November 1993, co-Chairman of WJRO, Israel Singer and Lavie, met the then Slovakian Prime Minister, Vladimir Meciar, and his Deputy and Foreign Minister, Moravcik, in Bratislava. At the lengthy meeting – in which they discussed Jewish property restitution in Slovakia – the Prime Minister promised to amend a law that had been tabled in the Parliament in favor of the WJRO claim. According to the existing law every building being restituted to a religious community of whatever denomination must be used for the original purpose.

Lavie explained that of the many hundreds of synagogues which are Jewish communal property, only a very small number can be used for the original purpose since most of the Jews from these communities had been extinguished by the Nazis. The Prime Minister promised to introduce an amendment allowing for the restitution of all communal properties to the Jewish people without the precondition mentioned in the original law.

At the same meeting, WJRO representatives raised the issue of private property in Slovakia, explaining that at least 25,000 Jewish households consisting of apartments, shops and all kinds of businesses had been appropriated during the fascist regime and subsequently by the communist one. The Prime Minister responded to this claim by saying that the government will deal with private property once the communal property issue is settled,

“The following day, Prime Minister Meciar called a press conference in the presence of the two WJRO representatives where as promised, he stated his policy about the restitution of Jewish communal property. WJRO submitted a detailed list of communal properties to be claimed to the local Jewish community leaders. Repeated WJRO requests to the local Jewish community concerning the fate of that list and the response to it by the Slovakian government remain unanswered to this day.”

Says Lavie: "The Government of Slovakia signed an agreement with the local Jewish community to establish a mutual fund of approximately \$19 million on October 9, 2002. This money will be at the disposal of Slovakian Jews as compensation for their properties that were confiscated. It is not clear if Slovakian Jews who live outside the boundaries of Slovakia – whose numbers are estimated at nearly 20,000 – will be eligible to receive a portion from this fund, like the 2,000 Jews who live today in Slovakia."

Romania

"In Romania I went with (then) Chief Rabbi Moshe Rosen in 1994 to meet President Iliescu. Rosen asked me to be the spokesman. In subsequent meetings I went alone. I also met Foreign Minister Theodor Malescanu, who was very pleasant, but would not commit to anything concrete.

"The WJRO members presented themselves as the representatives of Romanian Jews throughout the world, as well as in the country itself. Of the 800,000 Jews living in Romania before the war, 400,000 were murdered, many by the Romanians themselves. The Foreign Minister said that there is an internationally well-known legal rule of *bona vacantia*, which means ownerless property passes into government hands.

"I said this rule could not be applied to the Jews, who did not leave Romania of their own free will. Those who were murdered could not return. They were not killed because they were criminals, but because they belonged to a certain community and people. If none of their family members survived, their property became unclaimed heirless property. Thus, today, the wider Jewish community is entitled to reclaim it. The moral issue of the suffering caused by the Romanian authorities to the Jews was not even discussed."

Lithuania: A Fictitious Jewish Community

"The situation in Lithuania is problematic for other reasons. In August 2001 I visited Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas, a former Lithuanian president. Lithuania had established a law to restore communal property; but it was made conditional upon the property's return to a religious community.

"One local individual and some acquaintances set up a fictitious Jewish religious community. This individual managed to acquire two or three buildings by the Lithuanian government in the old city of Vilna, which he sold. What happened to the money remains unknown. Most local Jews have assembled in a more general organization, which does not qualify legally as a religious community, and thus could not prevent these transactions.

"Before the war there were 250,000 Lithuanian Jews of which, today, only 5,000 remain in the country. Their community must obtain the appropriate status for it to reclaim communal properties. While the Lithuanian authorities amended

the law, the Jewish community has yet to reclaim any properties. I also discussed with the country's president the status of the many Lithuanian Jews living outside the country who owned private property, which they could not reclaim under current Lithuanian law. I told him that in neighboring Latvia those who live abroad can forward such claims.

"There has been no progress since. The Lithuanian government has, however, carried out a successful public relations exercise. It sent the remains of some 300 Torah scrolls to Israel. The Lithuanians had no other use for them and were unable to sell them. Less than 20 scrolls were usable, even if substantial money was allocated to repair them. All the others could have been buried in Vilna, rather than being transferred to Israel for burial, according to Jewish custom."

Other Countries

The restitution process is equally problematic in other Eastern European countries. Lavie reports: "In some countries we are entirely ignored. I visited the Ukraine to discuss the restitution problem for the first time in 1995, when Leonid Kravchuk was President. I presented our memorandum to the Deputy Prime Minister Ivan Kuras and we have yet to receive a reply. Last year I wrote to the Serbian government, which also hasn't responded. The same happened in Croatia where I conducted negotiations with the Government, in particular with the Minister of Justice."

Lavie summarizes the situation: "After all those years, we now have a list of 22,000 Jewish communal properties in the former, communist countries of Eastern Europe. We can only conclude that what we are being offered does not even comprise the crumbs of what the Jews possessed before they were persecuted and murdered.

"Unfortunately, some Eastern European governments, which remain reluctant to restore the Jewish properties to their original owners, gained the collaboration of local Jewish community officials who demanded the exclusive right to receive the properties to be claimed. It was, and still is, more convenient to deal with the local communities who have minimal claims instead of the representatives of world Jewish organizations who have the lists of vast amounts of Jewish communal and private properties still in the possession of those governments.

"In their effort to bypass the legitimate claims of property presented by the WJRO, some Eastern European governments also enjoyed the cooperation of a few Jewish organizations, mainly in the United States, who appeared on the scene in the last few years as claimants of these properties. At least two of these organizations are WJRO founding members. Nevertheless, together with another Jewish American organization, they knocked on the doors of the governments in some Eastern European countries to discuss restitution, thus undermining the major effort being made by WJRO on behalf of world Jewry. The divisive approaches made by some Jewish organizations for the same purpose jeopardize

the concentrated efforts being made by WJRO over the last 10 years, with partial success in some of those countries.

“Only due to the WJRO’s efforts since 1993, have some governments, such as those of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Latvia and Lithuania, responded positively to the claims of restituting the communal properties, either by enacting laws through the government and parliamentary system or by issuing government decrees where legislation was not possible. But thousands of communal properties are still being claimed with no positive results.”

Naphtali Lavie was born in Cracow in 1926. He came to Israel in 1945. For 15 years he was a member of the editorial board of the Ha’aretz daily. In 1970 he became the spokesman of the Ministry of Defense and adviser to the late Minister Moshe Dayan. He continued to work with Dayan when he was Minister of Foreign Affairs in the years 1977–1980, and participated in talks for the peace treaty with Egypt. He was Israeli Consul General in New York with the rank of ambassador. He has held the post of Vice-Chairman of the Executive of the WJRO since 1993.

Laurence Weinbaum

Poland: Changing Holocaust Perceptions

For Laurence Weinbaum, director of research at the Institute of the World Jewish Congress, Jerusalem, the notion of moral restitution is a misnomer *vis-à-vis* the reception of the surviving Jews in Poland after the Holocaust. “There were many instances of murder and intimidation against survivors returning from concentration camps, the forests in which they had hidden, or their refuge in the former Soviet Union.”

He explains: “One does not know precisely how many Jews lost their lives in Poland after the Germans had been driven out. I say ‘driven out’ because many Poles did not consider the substitution of German occupation for Soviet rule – even if cloaked in ostensibly Polish garb and certainly more benign – as genuine ‘liberation,’ certainly not the way Jews did. The surviving Jews who came back were often the only survivors in their family. They returned to their hometowns, seeking relatives and to recover what remained of their belongings. In many cases they were greeted with hostility and often violence. Estimates are that, until the end of 1946, Poles murdered between 1,500 and 2,000 Jews. Although the largest pogrom took place in Kielce, there were also smaller ones in other cities and towns and numerous individual acts of murder.”

Postwar Violence

Jews often faced terror. Some killings were organized, others spontaneous. “A Jew would return to his hometown to face squatters in his house who feared that he would repossess his property. In other cases, there was a reaction to rumors about Jews engaged in ritual murder. Many Poles, especially in the countryside and small towns, believed the blood libel. Mischievous children were traditionally told that a Jew would come and take them away – and the meaning of that threat was clear.

“Hatred of the Jews, who had received a death sentence during the war, was very deeply rooted. The violence only ceased toward the end of 1946 when the political situation stabilized as the country was brought under total communist control. These events earned Poles an enduring reputation as people who ‘ingest anti-Semitism with their mother’s milk,’ to quote an unguarded remark by former Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir, who was born in Poland, and whose father was killed by Poles during the Shoah.”

Weinbaum adds: "Even today, the background of these murders is not entirely clear. They took place in the context of a civil war and a general atmosphere of lawlessness. There is evidence that communist functionaries were also involved in the anti-Jewish violence, partly because, at least on the grassroots level, many were imbued with hostility toward Jews. On a higher level, it was understood that political capital could be generated out of this unrest by blaming it on reactionary forces."

Weinbaum urges us to avoid painting a picture of all Poles as pathological anti-Semites: "Some Jews tend to distort history by blaming the Holocaust on the Poles, as Poland was the major killing ground of the Jewish people. But, irrespective of the attitude of Poles, it was the Germans who determined the venue of the machinery of destruction and the Poles were not consulted. Nevertheless, because we lost so many of our loved ones in Poland, irrespective of whether or not our roots were there (Greek, Dutch, Hungarian, Czech, and Slovak Jews were also killed there), and because of the Jews' long relationship with Poland, we are always concerned about events there. Many Jews of Polish origin put their pens to paper to express their views; and we cannot ignore the preponderance of Jews of Polish origin in Jewish public life. If one finds a swastika painted on a synagogue in Lodz or Cracow, the reaction abroad is much stronger than after a similar act in Greece or Estonia."

Communism: The Antithesis of Jewish Culture

"The take-over by the communists did not mean that anti-Semitism had disappeared. Popular antipathy toward Jews remained. This was reinforced by the prevailing notion that the Jews were responsible for imposing communism on the hapless Poles."

Weinbaum offers a perspective: "The percentage of Jews in the Polish Communist Party – let alone among those who were significantly involved in imposing communist rule in post-war Poland – was small. First, there were few Jews remaining in Poland and, second, communism opposed Jewish interests. Communism bitterly opposed Jewish particularism, favoring the assimilation of Jews into the dominant culture, whereas the great majority of Polish Jews did not want this. Nevertheless, at high levels in the Polish Communist Party there was a disproportionately large number of Jews. The communists came mainly from the urban intelligentsia, among which the Jews were relatively numerous. But, even without any Jewish presence in the communist movement, the Polish perception of both communism and the Jews would probably have been little different."

There was no logic to this: "People still associate Jews with communism. One can do very little to dissuade them. Even today many Poles are convinced that Jews pull the strings in Poland, though hardly any Jews remain there. Poland is by no means the only place where this stereotype of *Zydo-kommuna* (Jewish communism) is cultivated, but there it has especially deep roots."

Some Equality, No Future

“Communist rule gave the Jews in Poland some measure of civic equality, to the extent that we can speak of such a concept within the confines of a dictatorship. Jews were now able to work in the civil service and to study in institutions of higher education closed to them before the Second World War. At that time the number of Jews admitted to such institutions had been limited by a *numerus clausus* which increasingly tended toward a *numerus nullus*.”

Still, many Polish Jews felt that they had no reason to remain. “Due to subsequent waves of emigration, the number of Jews in Poland after the Second World War was in constant decline. Both religious and Zionist Jews realized they did not have a future in Poland. The lure of Zionism was especially strong, as was the desire to be reunited with surviving relatives who lived abroad. Those who remained by 1948 or 1949 were mainly very assimilated Jews. Many did not want to be Jews anymore. They changed their names and moved to places where they were unknown and did not have to reveal that they were Jews.

“Jews who elected to stay in Poland and who still identified themselves as Jewish were generally content with what Yiddish culture was available. This was, for the most part, ethnic folklore that would probably have withered away in a generation. Under the communist regime there were a state-subsidized Yiddish theater and Yiddish publications, as well as schools in which Yiddish was taught alongside Polish. The communists tightly controlled all of this. I have a schoolbook which contains tributes to Stalin and the text of the *Internationale* in Yiddish.”

Financial Restitution

“Property rights of the returning Jews were dealt with in a discriminatory manner. The time period in which one could claim past belongings was limited. Inheritance rights were restricted to children and parents or spouses. Since so many families had been completely wiped out, Jews often had limited opportunity to reclaim anything. Part of whatever property was regained was later nationalized by the communist government or sold at a pittance to finance sustenance or emigration.

“Most Jewish communal property was not restored to the Jewish communities, but ended up in the hands of the state or municipal authorities. Today, more than 50 years later, this is being rectified. So if we wish to speak of restitution – to the extent we can apply such a term in the face of the magnitude of the destruction in Poland – neither in a financial nor in a moral sense was there any serious attempt to right wrongs. From the moral viewpoint, this is not merely because Jewish property was stolen, but also because the history of the Polish Jews, especially their suffering, was also appropriated.”

Toward Honest History?

Weinbaum is convinced that the perception of Holocaust history has begun to shift in Poland in recent years: "A major element of this 'evolution of memory' is that the expression 'Holocaust' is being recognized as a distinctly Jewish episode. Until recently, the fate of Jews was tied up in the Polish historiography and popular perception as 'Polish suffering.' Until the collapse of communism, the notion that 'six million Poles died in the Holocaust' was enshrined in stone.

"Today it is generally recognized that some three million ethnic Poles perished, although even that number probably includes many victims of other ethnicities. This number was lumped together with the three million murdered Polish Jews to make up the figure of six million that every schoolchild learned. To us, 'the six million' were our murdered Jewish brethren. To Poles, it was the number of their countrymen killed in the war. Nowadays – at least in intellectual circles and among the better educated – this notion has been thoroughly discredited. Public opinion surveys demonstrate a trend toward recognizing that every Jewish man, woman, and child was slated for physical liquidation and thus that the suffering of Jews was distinct from that of the Poles."

"Dead Jews Make Good Poles"

"In the past, written history always focused on the fate of the Poles. When Jews were discussed it was generally emphasized that they were part of the Polish nation – that they were Polish citizens, and even then they received scant mention. Paul Lendavi wrote an important book on anti-Semitism in Eastern and Central Europe, especially during the 1968 witch-hunt against Jews entitled, *Anti-Semitism Without Jews*. In it he noted that 'dead Jews make good Poles.' He meant that, after their death, the memory of those Polish Jews could be appropriated and capitalized on by Poland. During their life they had never been regarded by Poland as true Poles. In virtually every one of my lectures and articles on this subject, I quote his remark because it describes the situation perfectly.

"The Jewish past was only restituted after the fall of communism. Had one visited Auschwitz in the 1980s, without knowing anything about it, one would have concluded that the camp's primary victims were Poles. One would have to read between the lines to figure out the truth. At the same time, the number of victims there was inflated. The communists spoke about four and a half million dead, while the real number was closer to one and a half million."

Since then, a shift has occurred, culminating in a more honest history. Weinbaum believes the Holocaust message is slowly penetrating Polish society, along with a clear change in overall attitudes: "Allow me to share a recent, if not scientific, example of the development of this perception. I spoke to a group visiting Israel. They gave me a coffee table book about Poland. A page devoted

to Auschwitz-Birkenau said unambiguously that the camp was primarily the place of suffering for the Jews. That would have been inconceivable 10 or 15 years ago.”

Exploding the Polish Myth

“The real watershed in perception was the revelation that, during the Shoah, there were mass murders of Jews by the Poles, of which the town of Jedwabne has become the symbol. What happened there received major attention only in 2000, though it was known considerably before. In June of that year the book *Sasiedzi* (Neighbors) was published. It was written by Professor Jan Tomasz Gross, a Polish-born political scientist from New York University. A film with the same title by Agnieszka Arnold was screened on television. Both caused a furious debate in Poland. Even if the number of Jews killed now seems less than the 1,600 mentioned by Gross his revelation that the murderers were local Poles and not Germans is an indelible stain on the country’s history. Similar massacres happened in other hamlets as well.

“Gross’ book exploded the myth that Poland was a land without quislings – and it did so in Polish for Poles. The Poles had perceived themselves as a nation of heroes, trampled upon by the Germans and Russians. They had not submitted to the Nazis the way other nations did. Poles generally believed that, aside from a handful of blackmailers, their behavior toward Jews was beyond reproach. With this, the Poles wrote a glorious chapter in their history. Poland had a vast underground movement and struggled against German – and later Russian – oppression. It did not produce a native fascist government like almost all other German-occupied or influenced countries. Poles are justly proud that they fielded more troops than France in the struggle of the Allies against Germany.

“Poles are also fond of comparing themselves to the neighboring Czechs, who did not suffer a great deal in the war. Indeed, other than the Jews, relatively few Czechs perished. Poles will gladly offer their view on the difference between the 1945 Czech uprising in Prague and the film about it: ‘The film lasted 20 minutes longer!’ But we must also recognize that Polish nationalism, at least its right-wing variant, the so-called *Endecja*, was traditionally anti-German, and because of German irredentism against Poland, such an alliance between Germans and Poles was simply not feasible.”

Opposing the Germans and Killing the Jews

“Jews, of course, at least the great majority, have a very different perception of the Poles. They see them as enthusiastic helpers of the Germans, who deliberately selected Poland as the killing field of the Jews and located the extermination camps there, because they knew that they could rely on a population of willing executioners infected with the virus of Jew-hatred. We should, however, not exaggerate and keep emotion out of our perceptions. Anti-Semitism in Poland has a

long and multi-faceted history, but we should not generalize. History is sufficiently dramatic without overstating the truth.

“The importance of the revelations about the Jedwabne mass-murder is that they demonstrate how one could perceive oneself as a loyal Pole, opposing the Germans, and at the same time murder or betray Jews. Various Polish underground fighters were also involved in killing Jews. They considered themselves patriotic Poles battling the Germans. Righteous Gentiles in Poland – whose heroism has received too little recognition from Jewish society – tell me that they, and all decent people, consider these people as traitors. The more important question, however, is how the broader Polish society viewed and views them.

“A few years ago it became known that some members of a mainstream underground movement, the non-communist Home Army, discovered Jews during the 1944 uprising and killed them. This was published in the country’s leading liberal daily, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, and precipitated a very emotional debate, in which the author (a non-Jew) was sharply attacked. The public discussion died down after a while. The Jedwabne debate is different. Every day, for several months, many articles were devoted to it. I no longer have enough space to store all the boxes of cuttings and printouts on the subject. When, in 20 or 30 years time, the history of contemporary Poland will be recorded, this debate will be seen as a watershed. Very slowly, Polish society is beginning to understand that its past is more nuanced than it had believed. Poland was not a nation whose wartime history was unblemished by shameful acts. Not all Poles behaved heroically; and some were guilty of genocide.”

The Catholic Church’s Ambiguity

“Another important issue is the Catholic Church’s perception of the Jews. Before the war, the Church was a repository of anti-Jewish sentiment. Many of its publications were full of vile anti-Semitism. The Church, for the most part, encouraged prewar anti-Semitism in Poland, based on propagating ideas such as that the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus and the spread of communism. It also used economic stereotypes, such as the crafty Jewish businessman who would always get the better of the honest Polish peasants.

“The Polish Roman Catholic primate Cardinal Jozef Glemp is still propagating these stereotypes and uses many anti-Semitic invectives. When asked about the sources of anti-Semitism, he said that the Poles could not compete in business against the smart Jews. When in 1989 a media storm erupted around the presence of a Carmelite convent at Auschwitz, Glemp said that fortunately none of the nuns had been killed in the scuffle with Rabbi Avi Weiss, who scaled the fence to lead a sit-in. His remarks made Poles believe that the rabbi had intended to murder the nuns.

“Outrageous statements about Jews – suggesting that Judaism and Nazism are two sides of the same coin and that Jews spread Stalinism in Poland – were

also made by Henryk Jankowski, a well-known priest in Gdansk, who was very active in the Solidarity movement. Apparently he was also Lech Walesa's personal confessor. He has accused the Jews of 'satanic greed' and said that Poles 'can no longer tolerate being governed from Moscow or Israel.' Once, when Jankowski attacked the Jews from the pulpit, Walesa was present and failed to respond. He claimed afterwards that he had not heard the priest's vituperative remarks. Only under great pressure did he condemn those anti-Jewish utterances. Today Poland is a free country and people can choose from the 'marketplace of ideas.' The Catholic Church feels threatened by that and some of its circles blame this on the Jews.

"There are also important changes in attitude. The Church now has an annual day of Judaism, when everybody can come and learn. Some clergymen are building bridges toward the Jews. Archbishop Jozef Zycinski of Lublin is one of them, Father Michael Czajkowski, a professor at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw, is another. Both have condemned what happened in Jedwabne and have called for expiation. Thus, the Polish Church is not homogeneous *vis-à-vis* its attitudes toward Jews. But these clergymen do not speak for the rank and file clergy or their parishioners and, more often than not, the Church remains at best ambivalent toward Jews and Judaism. Significantly, the ostensibly Roman Catholic radio station, Radio Marja, preaches an unabashedly anti-Jewish message and has even engaged in outright Holocaust denial. It reaches an audience of millions of Polish Catholics."

New Perceptions

"Also with respect to museums and memorials there is a positive change. What is told nowadays is mainly honest history. The museum in Auschwitz presents a radically different view of history from that offered years ago. Anyone visiting understands that the primary victims were Jews. If the museum were under Jewish auspices, it would, however, be very different. Still, one must acknowledge that today there is significant Jewish input into what is going on there.

"More attention is also given to the postwar history of the Polish Jews. Non-Jewish Polish historians have written a number of monographs on the subject. There are many books, magazines, and television programs about Jews, some of which are very outspoken. In serious Polish bookstores, the number of books on Jewish subjects is impressive. For a book to break even it has to be published in editions of several thousands. One can only wonder who buys all these books. To what extent the average man in the street accepts what is written and shown is hard to say. Those who are reasonably well educated or well read must understand what happened.

"Yet," Weinbaum adds, "there is still enormous ignorance around. When I was a student in Poland, about 20 years ago, almost nothing was published about Jews. The subject of Jews was taboo. An American colleague of mine found a

Jewish cookbook in a bookshop in the mid-1980s. He was amazed, that in a country where there were no Jews and no food, such a book was published.”

Europe, Israel – the Future?

“As far as Holocaust education is concerned, the situation has greatly improved, even though much remains to be done. Slowly the knowledge is permeating that there was a major difference between the fate of Jews and that of the Poles during the war. While the Germans intended to kill their intelligentsia and diminish the Poles’ status or turn them into slave-workers, they did not plan to wipe them out. In newly-published history books, the emphasis remains on the suffering of the Poles, but the fate of the Jews is not concealed. Perhaps that is the best we can expect from a book about Poles, by Poles, and for Poles.”

Negative stereotypes of Jews remain deeply ingrained in Polish society. Weinbaum notes: “One example I can relate only as an anecdote, though it seems plausible, supports this very clearly. A German friend, a non-Jew, who crossed Poland on a bicycle trip about 10 years ago, told it to me. He was looking for a place for the night in a small town. A very hospitable schoolteacher who spoke good German invited him to his home and they had a pleasant evening. The conversation turned at a certain point to anti-Semitism and the teacher said: ‘Unfortunately, there are still people in Poland who believe that Jews use blood for making matzoth or wine. How shameful. Everybody knows that the Jews stopped doing that at least a hundred years ago.’”

Weinbaum speculates on what influence Poland’s European Union membership may have on the country’s attitude toward the Jews: “A few years ago one would have thought this would be positive, as it would bring with it a certain degree of modernity and pluralism. However, considering the rise of anti-Semitism in Western Europe, such membership is unlikely to be a positive influence on Poland, certainly not in this regard.

“I fear it might, on the contrary, backfire and legitimize anti-Semitism again. A major problem in Poland has always been that it was legitimate to be anti-Jewish. In polite company one could badmouth Jews. In recent years this changed and it was no longer clever to make anti-Semitic remarks in some circles, because it created a negative image. This may now change again. In Western Europe, again anti-Semitism, often camouflaged in disdain for Israel is rampant.”

But, according to Weinbaum, this happily has not extended to all Poles: “Today Israel is presented in a better light in the Polish media than it is in Western Europe. There is some sympathy for Israel as a beleaguered country. During the Six-Day War, the communist state media made extreme anti-Israel propaganda and labeled Israel the aggressor. Yet the Polish perception was that the Arabs were trained by Moscow, while Israel was a country populated by Polish Jews. They saw this almost as a proxy war between Poland and Russia, *‘our Jews defeating their Arabs.’*”

Weinbaum is optimistic that, in the long run, truth cannot be obstructed and a major historical momentum will sweep away the false narratives. He adds: "This is already happening, but the full process may take generations."

Laurence Weinbaum was born in New York in 1962. He is the director of research at the Institute of the World Jewish Congress in Jerusalem and a lecturer in history at the College of Judea and Samaria in Ariel. He received his B.S. (Foreign Service) and M.A. (Russian and East European Area Studies) degrees from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and his Ph.D. (History) from Warsaw University, where he studied under the auspices of the Fulbright Scholarship Program. In 1989 he came to Israel. Among his other publications is a monograph on relations between the New Zionist (Revisionist) Organization and the Polish government in the late 1930s. He is co-author of Die Jeckes – Deutsche Juden aus Israel erzählen [The Yekkes: Recollections of German Jews in Israel.] (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2000).

Shmuel Trigano

France: Memory Versus Truth

After the war the French ignored the surviving Jews. They wanted to wipe out the recent past and start anew from a state of forgetfulness. The philosopher Jean Paul Sartre concludes this in his book *Réflexions sur la question juive*, (Anti-Semite and Jew) a sentiment confirmed by many survivor testimonies.

The memory of the Shoah only reemerged in the 1980s. Sociologist Shmuel Trigano relates its earlier suppression to the myth created by General Charles de Gaulle that the true France was akin to the Free French abroad and the underground opponents of the Nazis. "Accepting the exaggerated tale of major resistance meant that France – *vis-à-vis* its Vichy past – did not need a thorough self-investigation, unlike the Germans."

Differentiation between Political and Racial Deportees

"In post-war France an official distinction was made between the status of racial and political deportees. The latter, often non-Jews, considered it degrading to be equated with racial deportees. They had chosen to resist and as a result were deported. Those who had not resisted were considered passive victims.

"Former French cabinet minister Simone Weil refers to this often. She explains the shock of the camp returnees when they realized non-Jews didn't want to listen to them. The survivors did not protest vocally, but many wrote about it. Annette Wieviorka has published extensively about the memories of the Jews who returned from the camps. Most texts were not widely read, but were rediscovered at the end of the 1980s and during the 1990s. Then the information blackout ended and France began dealing with the memory of the Shoah. The turning point was the election of socialist President Francois Mitterrand and the coming to power of the socialist party in 1981.

"The racial deportees also had difficulties in retrieving their belongings. Some claims could not be presented since there were no heirs. The reemergence of restitution issues in the 1980s was the result of multiple aspects not having been treated properly. Some claims had not been recognized and others had not been received correctly by a French society that sought to efface its collaborative past.

"Renewed interest in war criminals also emerged at a late, though significant, moment. Maurice Papon, a post-war government minister, was the last Frenchman to be condemned on this account. During the war he had been a Vichy functionary and had acted on behalf of the French state. The question thus arose as to who was responsible for Papon's acts during the war: he himself or the French state?

The myth of France largely resisting Germany imposed a cover-up, which made it difficult to answer this question. I think it was reasonable requesting the French state to assume those responsibilities. This was finally done by President Jacques Chirac in 1995.”

A New Dimension of Jewish Life

“Before the war Jews were full-fledged citizens of their respective countries. During the war they were robbed of their citizenship and nationality, and gathered like strangers throughout Europe. Thereafter most were destroyed. Xavier Vallat – in charge of Jewish affairs under Pétain for some time – stated that a foreign people existed in France: the Jews.

“French Jewish life was reconstructed after the war. Some Jews wanted to forget their past and several changed their names. A number kept their very French-sounding names from the Résistance. Nicole Lapierre, a daughter of one such survivor, wrote books about this name changing and the Jews of Ploetz. This is an example of memory resurfacing in the next generation.

“One important lesson from the Shoah for many other Jews – sometimes only subconsciously – was their collective destiny whether they liked it or not. Many concluded that they might as well face it, rather than flee from it. This led to a reconstitution of Jewish life, which was different from that before the war. The wartime past and the post-war environment together created a new Jewish identity, which developed a sense of belonging for the Jews.”

Trigano emphasizes the lack of a Jewish community in France before the Second World War. “Belonging to the Jewish faith was a strictly private matter. Ultra-orthodoxy, as we now know it, hardly existed. The only Jewish community in the contemporary sense emerged around the First World War and comprised Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, many of whom did not want to integrate under the religious umbrella of the Consistoire Israélite de France. They were often secular or anti-religious – such as the Bundists and Yiddishists.”

A New Collective Identity and the CRIF

“A quarter of the Jews in France were murdered during the Holocaust, which claimed proportionately fewer victims than in most other countries. That three-quarters survived enabled Jewish life to be reconstructed relatively quickly. A new collective identity emerged already in the Résistance, represented by the Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France. Better known as CRIF, the Conseil was created in 1944, when there was no legitimate French state, and it represented the Jews just as the National Resistance Council represented the legitimate France.

“The CRIF was a direct consequence of the Shoah, which changed the situation of the Jews everywhere in Europe. It set out to represent the Jews, not only on the basis of their religious adherence, but also politically and communally.

Initially it was meant to be the representative body of French Jews; but this was impossible, since they had not elected it. Thus it became the representative body of Jewish *institutions*, i.e. the organized community.

“For the French this was an alien concept. What is a communal identity in a democratic country? Democracy supposes universal voting. Jews cannot, however, elect representatives in this way as that would imply their being a state within a state. Their only universal representative is the elected president of their country. On the other hand, voluntary bodies can legitimately defend specific Jewish interests. These refinements are far too complex for French public opinion, which is totally confused by it – as are many Jews.”

FSJU and the Paris School of Jewish Thinkers

“The newly found postwar Jewish identity in France also led to the establishment of other institutions, among which the Fonds Social Juif Unifié (FSJU) is particularly important. Created with the help of the American Joint Distribution Committee, and based on an American model alien to the French political tradition, the FSJU fulfils non-religious cultural and social functions in the community.

“The end of the war also heralded a new intellectual experience, the main element of which was the ‘Paris School’ of Jewish thinkers. These intellectuals wanted to affirm a Jewish presence at the universal level. Its core comprised religious philosophers: Emmanuel Lévinas, Eliane Amado Lévy-Valensi and Léon Ashkenazi. In their view – specifically expressed by Lévinas – while the Shoah primarily concerned the Jews, it had a much wider implication for humanity as well.

“They said: ‘We are witnesses that the Jewish people and Judaism have a universal, intellectual and spiritual dimension.’ These thinkers interpreted the Shoah as a challenge to which Jews must respond intellectually and spiritually. With the departure of several leading figures to Israel in the 1980s, the school started to fade away.”

Renewed Interest in the Holocaust

“In 1979, the weekly *L'Express* published an interview with Darquier de Pellepoix, who was for several years in charge of Jewish affairs in the Vichy government. After the war he fled to Spain. De Pellepoix told the interviewer only fleas were gassed in Auschwitz.

“The article provoked a major scandal in France and boosted interest in Holocaust history. Around the same time, in the United States, the televised *Holocaust* series was broadcast. Thereafter, Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah* movie was screened in France. All these events together led to an explosion of articles over many years. Magazines devoted cover stories to the Shoah and Auschwitz, often containing minimal substance.

"A major breakthrough occurred in 1981 when the Socialist Party came to power. This was a totally new situation as for the first time since the war, the French government was unequivocally left-wing. Before the Socialists had only occasionally been government members.

"This changed situation permitted questions about all that had been established. Yet taboo issues remained, such as those concerning French responsibility for crimes committed during the war. Jews never raised these in public, political or historical references. The 'Paris School' Jewish philosophers did so only philosophically."

Questioning Collective Memory

"France then began questioning its collective memory *vis-à-vis* Vichy. It had been able to present itself as not guilty, since three quarters of the Jews had survived. That meant that French civil society had helped when the state betrayed them. Mitterrand however, had a rather ambiguous personality. He systematically refused to discuss this issue, not wanting to admit that the French republic was responsible for Vichy's crimes. He refused to equate the Vichy regime with the French Republic, arguing that the latter should therefore not assume its responsibility.

"This argument – that the Republic cannot be guilty as it did not betray the Jews – was false. The Third Republic's parliament had voted, with a great majority, to give Pétain absolute powers. He thus arrived at the head of the Vichy regime democratically and not by a coup d'état. Yet it remained inconceivable for many decades that the Republic could be guilty, irrespective of whether it was republican, monarchical or fascist.

"After the Holocaust many fundamental issues were not clarified by the time community life was reconstructed. French society only became more aware of the existence of a Jewish community in the 1980s. A major event was the lethal attack on the Copernic synagogue in Paris on October 3, 1980. Ten years later, much indignation was caused in May 1990 by the desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Carpentras which, as it later turned out, had not been aimed specifically against the Jews."

Mitterrand: Creating an Anti-fascist Front

"Mitterrand developed a strategy in which the Jews played a key role. For political reasons, he promoted the idea of establishing an anti-fascist front of all democrats around him against the danger of Jean-Marie Le Pen. He inflated it by designating Le Pen – to whom he gave access to state-owned television – the main enemy. To lend credibility to Le Pen's danger, which was minimal at the time, Mitterrand needed the backing of the Jews. Only they could bear witness to what was anti-Semitic, following their Shoah experiences."

Trigano comments: "At that time, Jews were not threatened by anybody; but they committed themselves totally to Mitterrand's positions. They lacked proper political understanding and fell into his Machiavellian political trap. The Jewish question became central to this debate, gaining much publicity. The memory of the Shoah was also further developed without initially, much new information becoming available. Years later this led to the accusation of the manipulation of the Shoah. Earlier, when it became known during Mitterrand's presidency that he had been a Vichy official, accusations followed that Jews had distorted information about his dark past. Everything got mixed up."

Chirac's Admission: The Republic is Responsible

"One Jewish lawyer, Serge Klarsfeld, fought a lonely fight almost his whole adult life. His moment of triumph came in 1995 when Mitterrand's successor, President Jacques Chirac, declared the Fourth Republic as the successor of the Vichy Government, accepting French responsibility for its actions, implying that eternal France was guilty.

"This was what Klarsfeld had always sought. He had created the Association of the Sons and Daughters of the Jewish Deported, which greatly influenced the debate on this issue. He had assembled the historical and statistical data to prove what Chirac later admitted. The Jews now considered the issue closed, thus eliminating all claims against France. They thought they had found – albeit belated – their own place in the French nation.

"According to some opinions, Chirac made his declaration out of political opportunism; it had no moral or spiritual significance, but was convenient at that particular moment. For example, he attacked Israel violently when he visited Jerusalem's old city some time later. In this way he disassociated Israel from the Jews. Many Frenchmen were willing to recognize whatever was necessary about the Shoah without consequences for Israelis or today's French Jewish community. To some extent, the Jews who died in the Shoah were different in their eyes from those living there today."

Repentance

"The admission of guilt was followed by a period of repentance. Christians wanted to be penitent in the presence of the Jewish community, which meant the CRIF. They addressed God, using the Jews as their witnesses. Developments in the years thereafter raise the question: What value did this repentance have? Today there is a hidden anti-Semitic atmosphere, which wishes to deny the Jewish people's right to exist. The same people also deny the legitimacy of the Israeli state. Yet some of them ask to repent for the Shoah. This attitude has many elements which merit psychoanalysis.

“France today is a post-Christian country, yet the anti-Judaic Christian mindset has endured. Indeed, one finds ancient Christian attitudes more often among secular people than committed Christians. The Church tried to change its positions but, among some of those who remain outside it, the ancient stereotype of the Jews remained. Examples are the demonization of the Jewish people, denying its legitimacy to exist, and a fascination with the purported killing of children by Jews – a profoundly anti-Semitic motif in the Christian conscience, as expressed in the many blood libel stories throughout history. This fascination is current in the media.

“The main image of the Palestinian uprising was the death of the child Mohammed al-Dura. It recalled the anguish of the Middle Ages and its supposed ritual crime. This image of the Jew as a child murderer, is ever-present in Israel’s depiction in the French media. One French television presenter said it overshadowed the image of the little Jewish child who raises his hands in the Warsaw ghetto. It is now known that al-Dura was probably shot by Palestinian snipers.

“A further question thus emerges as to whether Chirac’s and the Church’s repentance may have paved the way to a massive return of anti-Semitism. The French collective conscience has liberated itself from its responsibility by cutting the link between the Jews of the past and the Jews of today. In other words, it is becoming increasingly clear that Europe is only willing to recognize the Jews as Holocaust victims, not as free people in a Jewish State. The specific, supposedly moral demands of Israeli policy negate its political condition.”

The French Inability to Accept a Jewish Collectivity

“The issue of the Jews belonging to a *specific* community remains highly problematic for French society. Such unease implies Jews do not have the right to exist in France other than as abstract individuals. Creating a communal life and a collective identity leads to a confrontation. The French inability to accept a Jewish community is structural.

“This issue has been latent for a long time but consistently reemerges when concrete issues, such as restitution, have to be dealt with. If one sees the contemporary Jewish community as the heir of the heirless deported and robbed Jews, a historic and political continuity is created for the Jews. It also implies that organized Jewry is a permanent and concrete feature of French society. In French political culture, this signifies the opposite of their abstract status as individual citizens, which means that a number of people who are *de jure* individuals in fact form a collective.

“The French cultural mentality is secular, promoting abstract citizenship. In France the state created the nation, not the reverse, as in Germany. This state only recognizes individuals, not communities. But the fact remains that, collectively, as a nation, the Jews were Shoah victims. Later, as Jews, as a community, they reestablished their identity after the war.

“This process repeats itself. It is a typical phenomenon of the last two centuries. The French Revolution turned the Jews into equal citizens. Napoleon reunited them in the form of a church community of the Jewish faith with obligatory membership. As early as the beginning of the 19th century and again around 1840, anti-Semitism exploded and the Jews were accused of plotting to control France behind their official citizenship. This anti-Semitism transformed the Jews into a people, despite both their own desires and official declarations.”

In Trigano’s view, this attitude explains some of the problems Jews encounter today in France. “They reappeared in Europe after the Shoah as a people, irrespective of their national citizenship. This also lies behind the accusation that the Jews use the Shoah for economic interests linked to their Jewish identity.” He wonders whether a Jewish communal identity has a future in France and thinks that perhaps, the last 50 years were a transition period.

New Leftist Anti-Semites

“Similar accusations were found in recent years in the publications of intellectuals such as Tzvetan Todorov and Alain Brossat – distinguished post-modern university professors who identify with the left.

“Todorov wrote *Les abus de la mémoire* (The Abuse of Memory) in 1995, which can be considered as the beginning of the present anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish wave. He became the leader of an ideological trend, which developed during the 1990s. The book starts with a very distinguished, moral and ‘human-rightist’ stance. In a lecture at the Auschwitz Foundation in Brussels, Todorov developed his ideas and addressed the issue somewhat indirectly, elaborating on what he terms a ‘distorted Jewish memory’ – Jews seeking the status of the ‘most-favored victim’ (a play on the ‘most-favored’ nation status of world trade).

“Todorov alleges that the Jews developed a victim’s memory in order to pursue their own identity and interests, and that this is a distortion of the democratic process. Brossat more openly alleges that the Shoah has thus become a political tool both for Diaspora Jews and the State of Israel. Todorov is a distinguished, well-known figure in the United States, seemingly irreproachable, yet his theory concerning this point is basically anti-Judaic and opens avenues for potential anti-Semitism.”

Brossat and Chaumont

“A fundamental claim of the new anti-Semites is that the Holocaust covers other genocides for which the West is responsible. This idea appears much more brutally in Brossat’s book *L’Epreuve du désastre* (The Test of the Disaster), published by Albin Michel, a mainstream publishing house. Half the book’s 500 pages are devoted to violent criticism of the Jewish community and Israel. Brossat elevates

the Palestinians to a position of the chosen people, as opposed to the Jews who are reversed into the role of Nazis.

“Jean-Michel Chaumont applies economic terminology when discussing the memory of the Shoah. He uses words such as ‘to establish the accounts’ and ‘indebted’ in his *La Concurrence des victimes* (The Competition Among Victims). Chaumont has worked at the Auschwitz Foundation and is not an anti-Semite. Yet he helps to put mental anti-Semitic structures in place. The restitution debate sharpens this issue, as the myth of the Jewish interest in money reemerges. It is combined with the accusations of how undignified it is to translate the memory of the Shoah into money.

“Their work helped lay the foundation for the anti-Jewish explosion during the second Palestinian uprising. The French translation of Norman G. Finkelstein’s *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* obtained considerable publicity, although formally it has generally been condemned. It had a major impact on the left-wing intelligentsia and press, the leading left-wing dailies *Libération* and *Le Monde* devoted two pages to it.”

The Profound Penetration of Anti-Semitic Ideas

“A comment from Jean Matteoli, head of the committee, charged with probing the fate of Jewish property stolen in France, indicated how profoundly anti-Semitic ideas have permeated French society. In an interview with the Swiss paper *Le Temps* in March 1999, he said: ‘The French Jews are Jews, but they are also French. To make a distinction for comparable damages between French Jews and French Catholics, or whoever, creates a very facetious precedent of which the Jews could finally become victims themselves. In France there is no difference between Jews and non-Jews... It is the Germans who have made this distinction...’

“The construct of Matteoli, a member of the Résistance himself, is that, while French Jews were killed by the Germans for belonging to the Jewish *people* French citizens died there as anonymous *individuals*. In other words, the French Republic cannot accept the evident reality of Jews having died as such during the Holocaust. Only Frenchmen were supposed to die, not Jews. Even if killed by the Nazis because they were Jews, deprived of their citizenship, they must still be considered only as French citizens.

“While Finkelstein’s book marks the moment one passes from a distinguished soft-spoken accusation to a formal and open accusation, the Palestinian uprising created the explosion. The fire was already smoldering; now the spark that ignited it, gave it different dimensions.”

The Stage Setting for the Explosion

“Today’s violence against the French Jews is mainly committed by Islamists. But they have found, in the global condemnation of Israel, legitimacy for their

anti-Judaism. Anti-Semitism exists in France, which has nothing to do with the Islamists. The new anti-Semitism, disguised as anti-Zionism, is very present in the extreme left and right, each of which collected 20% of the votes in the first round of the French presidential elections of May 2002.

“Furthermore, there is the classical anti-Semitism of the Catholic left, which today is *subconsciously* very influential in both the media and intellectual life. The Catholic left has a humanitarian view of Jewish existence, which amounts to negating its political existence. The same is true of secular ‘new left’ intellectuals who hate both religion and nation states. If one then adds the Islamists, one becomes aware of how many anti-Semitic environments exist in France.

“It is nonsense to say that France today is anti-Semitic, but it is the case that there has been a significant growth in anti-Semitism which could explode one day. Its intellectual infrastructure exists, as does the stage setting. What we do not know yet is the scenario and how it will be triggered.”

Shmuel Trigano was born in Algiers. He is a Sociology professor at Paris-Nanterre University. He is also director of the College of Jewish Studies at the Alliance Israélite Universelle, editor of Pardes, a journal of Jewish studies, and has authored numerous books, especially on Jewish philosophy and Jewish political thought. In 2002 he founded the Observatoire du Monde Juif, a research center on Jewish political life.

Irwin Cotler

Discrimination Against Israel in the International Arena: Undermining the Cause of Human Rights at the United Nations

“The United Nations is singling out Israel and the Jewish people for differential and discriminatory treatment in the international arena. It purports to protect international human rights, but instead gives anti-Jewishness a protective cover.” Irwin Cotler, Member of the Canadian Parliament and Chair of Canadian Parliamentarians for Global Action, has an extensive background in the struggle for human rights, including acting as lawyer for Nelson Mandela and Andre Sakharov. He observes how the human rights ideals he has advocated are being increasingly politicized and manipulated into weapons against Israel and the Jewish people.

Says Cotler: “Traditional anti-Semitism was the discrimination against, denial of, or assault on the rights of Jews to live as equals in their host society. The new anti-Jewishness does the same *vis-à-vis* the right of Israel and the Jewish people to live as an equal member of the family of nations. What is common to each form of anti-Jewishness is discrimination. All that has happened is that it has moved from discrimination against Jews as individuals or groups in their host society – a diaspora-oriented inquiry – to discrimination against Jews as a people, an Israeli-oriented and global inquiry.

“In the past, social scientists developed indicators to identify, monitor and measure traditional anti-Semitism, including discrimination against Jews in housing, education and employment. Based on these indices, one could conclude that anti-Semitism is declining; yet many feel it is increasing. The reason for this discrepancy is that appropriate indices to identify and measure the new anti-Jewishness are yet to be developed.” What is needed, according to Cotler, is a rights-based inquiry, organized around anti-discrimination principles.

Genocidal Anti-Semitism

“Genocidal anti-Semitism, the public call for the destruction of Israel and the killing of Jews wherever they may be, is the most lethal category of the new anti-Jewishness, and is expressed in many ways. The first is the Covenants of the terrorist organizations, like Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hizbullah, which perpetrate terrorist acts in pursuit of this genocidal objective.” Cotler states the

notion of a 'suicide' or 'homicide bombing' is a misnomer. These are genocidal bombings, which the terrorist Covenants openly acknowledge and assert as their intent and objective.

"Another example of genocidal anti-Semitism is the fatwas regularly issued by radical Islamic clerics. These are religious execution writs which not only call for the destruction of Israel and the killing of Jews, but proclaim it as a religious obligation. Israel emerges not only as the Jew among nations, but the Salman Rushdie among them. The silence of the United Nations and the Western world in the face of this genocidal anti-Semitism is worrying. Worse even, there are threats of sanctions against Israel when it defends itself against terrorist bombings for which these fatwas provide the ideological backing. It was Iran, however, against whom the European community threatened sanctions when a fatwa was issued against controversial author Salman Rushdie in 1989.

"The third example is the public call by member states of the international community – Iraq or Iran – for the destruction of another member state of the international community, Israel. This constitutes a fundamental assault on the United Nations Charter principles of universality and equality. This assault is possible because the United Nations' political configuration reflects the 54 Islamic countries among its members. Further, many of the democracies in the UN are not prepared to stand up and be counted. The UN is thus not a forum for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but rather the arena in which this conflict is waged. As the late Abba Eban, Israel's foreign minister, once put it, if the non-democratic blocs wished to pass a resolution that the earth is flat, it would succeed.

"In summary, Israel is the only state, and the Jews the only people in the world today, that is the object of a standing set of threats from governmental, religious and terrorist bodies seeking its destruction. The worst features of this genocidal anti-Semitism are the state-sanctioned genocidal culture of hate on the one hand, and the silence, if not acquiescence, to this genocidal culture on the other."

The Road to Durban

"As one involved in the human rights movement, I greeted the announcement in 1997 of the first human rights conference of the twenty-first century – the World Conference Against Racism in Durban – with anticipation and even excitement. It would commemorate the dismantling of South Africa as an apartheid state; it would give expression to such non-represented causes as those of the Aborigines, the untouchables of India and the Roma of Europe. It would address the African concern for the slave trade as a crime against humanity for which an apology and indemnification were required.

"Regrettably, Durban was converted from a conference *against racism* into one of *racism against Israel*. The commemoration of the dismantling of South

African apartheid became a call to dismantle Israel as an apartheid state. Rather than speaking in the name of humanity and underrepresented causes, Durban spoke in the name of inhumanity. Rather than celebrating the emergence of human rights as the new secular religion of our time, Israel was singled out as the meta-human rights violator of our time – as the new anti-Christ. The United Nations World Conference against Racism in Durban became a festival of hate.

“One has to appreciate what transpired on the road to Durban to understand how this happened. One of the four regional preparatory conferences in Teheran, designed to draft a declaration and program of action against racism, excluded Israel and Jewish NGOs from participating in this preparatory conference. This exclusion was itself a form of apartheid, and at that point the alarm should have been sounded.

“This regional conference issued one of the worst indictments ever registered against Israel. It characterized the Occupied Territories, which Israel acquired in self-defense in the 1967 war, as a ‘crime against humanity, a new form of apartheid and a threat to international peace and security.’ It accused Israel of being a perpetrator of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide – language out of the Nuremberg indictment for the very victims of Nuremberg. This indictment was supported by many European countries shortly thereafter at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. One might call this ‘the Nazification of Israel under the auspices of the United Nations’ in which many of the world’s democracies acquiesced.

“This de-legitimization of Israel and the Jewish people was not new, but it exploded in Durban. The Durban indictments of Israel as an apartheid Nazi state were then used to justifying ‘resistance,’ i.e. terror against this pariah state. Durban and the UN Commission on Human Rights have given expression to a new form of legalized anti-Semitism under the rubric of the UN. Unfortunately, leaders of Western democracies with whom I have spoken do not appreciate how much the United Nations provides a protective cover for this new anti-Jewishness.”

Undermining the Integrity of International Humanitarian Law

“Outside the UN,” says Cotler, “the de-legitimization phenomenon manifests itself in many ways.” In December 2001, the contracting parties to the Geneva Convention gathered in Geneva to accuse Israel of human rights violations and Convention breaching. The latter was adopted in 1949 and resulted from the horrors of the Holocaust and the imperative of protecting civilians in a conflict.

“For 52 years after the Second World War, the most horrific of atrocities continued unabated, including the genocide in Cambodia, the ethnic cleansing and genocide in the Balkans, the unspeakable – and preventable – genocide in Rwanda, and the killing fields in Sudan and Sierra Leone. Despite these horrific breaches of the Geneva Convention, its contracting parties were never convened to address any of these atrocities. The first time they were convened in 52 years

was in reference to Israel and the Occupied Territories. This discriminatory treatment of a member state of the international community undermines the integrity and authority of international humanitarian law.

“This same process of denying Israel equality before the law and international due process was used in Spring 2002 at the UN Commission on Human Rights meeting. Even before the hearing began, the agenda listed as a separate item a country-specific indictment – human rights violations by Israel, while another item was reserved for human rights violations in the rest of the world. The meeting began, therefore, as an Alice in Wonderland human rights charade where the conviction and sentence were pronounced even before the hearing commenced.

“Moreover, forty percent of the resolutions passed were against one member state of the international community, Israel, while the major human rights violators in the world such as China and Iran enjoyed exculpatory immunity with no resolutions passed against them. This moral asymmetry not only prejudices Israel, but it further undermines the UN’s integrity under whose auspices this occurs, and the authority of international human rights law in whose name these indictments are passed.”

The United Nations: A Case Study of anti-Jewishness

Cotler stresses that “Like any other state, Israel is responsible for violations of human rights and humanitarian law. The horrors of the Holocaust and ongoing Jewish suffering over time do not give the Jewish people any privilege or preference before the law. Yet Israel is systematically being denied equality before the law. Human rights standards should apply to Israel, but these standards are not being applied equally to anyone else. Israel must respect human rights but the rights of Israel deserve equal respect.

“By this discrimination against Israel, the United Nations has become a case study of the new anti-Jewishness and the singling-out of the Jewish people for differential and discriminatory treatment. This case study could be illustrated throughout the workings of the United Nations. For example, one could begin with the UN Security Council, the authoritative standard setting body on international law. Despite the killing fields throughout the world, the UN Security Council sat from March to May 2002 in almost continuous session discussing a non-existent massacre in Jenin. It engaged in an obsessive preoccupation with Israel while genocide by attrition was taking place in Sudan, and mass murder was commonplace in the Congo and elsewhere in Africa and Asia.

“Similarly,” Cotler notes, “the United Nations General Assembly annually passes some 20 resolutions against Israel, as many as are passed against the rest of the international community combined. Again, the major human rights violators escape unscathed. While these decisions are not binding, they are important representations of the political culture of the international community.

"Israel is effectively disenfranchised in the UN. It cannot become a member of UN bodies such as the Human Rights Commission because it is not a full-fledged member of any regional grouping from which countries can be nominated or elected to UN bodies. It has been excluded from its proper geographical location, Asia and is a limited member of the Western European and Other Group (WEOG). Its status does not grant it the right to participate equally in the deliberations of the UN or to be nominated and elected to international bodies. While the UN Charter requires it to operate pursuant to principles of the equality of nations large or small, Israel is disenfranchised."

The Indictments of the UN Specialized Agencies

A similar attitude can be found in the resolutions of the United Nations' specialized agencies such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNESCO, etc. The ILO holds Israel to be the enemy of labor, claiming it suppresses Palestinian trade unionism. The WHO considers Israel the enemy of health, arguing it violates the health of Palestinian inhabitants. UNESCO accuses Israel of being the enemy of culture because of alleged desecration of historic sites. Elsewhere Israel is charged with being the enemy of women and children because of its supposed suppression of Palestinian women and children, and Israel is the only country which has been declared a 'non-peace loving nation.'

"In the UN's deliberative forums one also finds the teaching of contempt against, and the demonizing of, the Israeli state. For example, the blood libel – a horrific example of the demonizing of Israel – is still found in the proceedings of the UN Human Rights Commission. A Syrian delegate inserted into the record the book by his country's Defense Minister, Mustafa Tlass, which claims Jews drink the blood of Christian children or use it to bake matzah for Passover. A motion to have this expunged did not succeed and thus it remains on the commission's record. As well, the Palestinian representative to the Commission in 1997 accused Israel of injecting the AIDS virus into 300 Palestinian children.

"Also in the treaty-monitoring bodies of the UN one finds the same preoccupation with Israel as well as similar indictments."

Bomb Factories in UNRWA-supervised camps

"Another corrupted dimension of the United Nations is the United Nations Relief and Refugee Work Agency (UNRWA). This institution is supposed to work for the relief of refugees. Under its supervision and management, the refugee camps became part of the culture of incitement as well as bomb factories.

"Out of 10 emergency sessions ever called by the United Nations, six have dealt with Israel. To summarize one might say: Israel has occupied 60% of the time the United Nations has spent in emergency sessions. In the eyes of its

specialized agencies, Israel is the enemy of all that is good, and thus of humankind. In other words, Israel poisons the international well. This serves as the contemporary analogue of the medieval indictment of the Jew poisoning the local spring.”

The International Criminal Court

One thus wonders whether the new International Criminal Court – that began operating on July 1, 2002 – will also become an instrument of discrimination against Israel. Says Cotler: “I supported the ICC’s establishment as one of the most dramatic developments in international criminal law since the end of the Second World War. The Nuremberg tribunal was not a permanent one. There was a need to institutionalize and implement the Nuremberg legacy of ‘never again.’ Indeed, the 20th century was not only the age of atrocity but also the age of impunity. Most perpetrators of war crimes were never brought to justice.

“It took the almost unthinkable and unspeakable – the ethnic cleansing and genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda – to provide the impetus for the establishment of an international criminal court. This ought to have happened long ago. Indeed, Israel and the Jewish people were among the original proponents of such an international tribunal in the aftermath of Nuremberg. The international criminal tribunals for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda were ad hoc creations and geography-specific. The International Criminal Court was to be the first permanent, international court with a global criminal jurisdiction.

“There is still reason,” says Cotler, “to be hopeful that the ICC will not become yet another international institution subjected to partisan politics and demonizing agendas. One would hope its judges and prosecutors, chosen for their independence and integrity, would ensure fair hearings and judgments. One would hope that the safeguards built into the International Criminal Court Treaty to protect against politically motivated prosecutions would prevail. There is no certainty, however, because the ICC is related to the prejudices and culture of the international community, and its political configurations.”

Cotler says that if the ICC emerges as another arena for discriminatory treatment of Israelis, the international criminal justice system will be further undermined. “The democracies and human rights NGOs stood at the forefront of the creation of the ICC. If they acquiesce in politically motivated prosecutions, they will be acquiescing in the dismantling of the international criminal justice system as a whole.”

Prejudice in Human Rights NGOs?

“The NGO movement can take credit for the ICC treaty. Without its leadership and sustained commitment, the treaty would not have been established. Its major proponents included organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty

International, the International Commission of Jurists and the International Society for Human Rights. Yet it was also many of the human rights NGOs who acquiesced in the Durban hate conference.

“In general, Amnesty International does important work and I have had a longtime association with them. However, when looking at their work in the Middle East, one can discern a false moral equivalence in respect of Israel and other Middle Eastern countries. For example, they will do a one-off study – or perhaps no study at all – of the dictatorial and authoritarian non-democracies in the Middle East while maintaining a sustaining indictment of the only democracy in the Middle East, Israel.

“Their work on Israel may be the result of unawareness and ignorance, but the effect, if not the intent, leads to singling out Israel for discriminatory treatment. In doing so, they fall victim to Voltaire’s dictum that if you take something out of context, you can hang anybody. Their work thus finds expression without sufficiently contextualizing the hostile neighborhood in which Israel finds itself, its democratic polity, its free press, its independent judiciary, and the pervasiveness of its human rights culture.

“Human Rights Watch is another NGO making excellent contributions in several areas. However, it also engages in false moral equivalencies when it ignores the culture of accountability in Israel involving a fiercely independent media, the role of its judiciary with major legal standing in the world, the critical role of Israeli-based NGOs, the critiques of public intellectuals, and the no-holds-barred Parliamentary debates. For example, Human Rights Watch will investigate how the Arabs are portrayed as second-class citizens in the Israeli education system, a discriminatory dimension which has found broad expression and critique in Israeli society. Human Rights Watch has yet to investigate the state and government-sanctioned culture of hate that finds expression in the Palestinian mosques, media, educational system, and summer camps.

“Fuad Ajami of John Hopkins University captured the essence of the dangers of this state-sanctioned culture of hate in pointing out that: ‘The suicide bomber of the Passover massacre did not descend from the sky; he walked straight out of the culture of incitement let loose on the land, a menace hovering over Israel, a great Palestinian and Arab refusal to let that country be, to cede it a place among the nations, he partook of the culture all around him – the glee that greets those brutal deeds of terror, the cult that rises around the martyrs and their families.’

“The human rights NGOs have ignored this state-sanctioned culture of hate, as they have ignored the lethality of genocidal anti-Semitism which underpins it. They have ignored the one enduring lesson of the Second World War: Nazism almost succeeded. In the genocide of European Jewry it did succeed; not only because of its industry of death and technology of terror, but because of its ideology and pathology of hate, and its state-sanctioned teaching of contempt and demonizing of the other.”

The Holocaust Began with Words

“It is not surprising then, that the Supreme Court of Canada, in the trials of Holocaust deniers, affirmed: ‘the Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers. It began with words.’ Tragically, fifty years later, this lesson has still not been learned. The hate trafficking in Rwanda and Bosnia took us down the road to ethnic cleansing and genocide; and the worst arena today is to be found in the Arab countries and Palestinian Authority.

“If the human rights NGOs keep characterizing the state-sanctioned hate and terrorism against Israel which seeks to *maximize* civilian casualties as acts of violence no different from Israeli ‘acts of violence’ against the Palestinians which seek to *minimize* civilian casualties, they are discredited from any analysis of human rights in the Middle East.”

Contributing to the Requiem of Human Rights?

“The leading NGOs have yet to address the systematic discrimination against Israel in the UN, or in particular, in the UN Human Rights Commission in which they play such an active role. They risk becoming part of the problem rather than the solution. For example, they have yet to address the following particulars respecting the denial of equality before the law – and international due process – to Israel before the UN Human Rights Commission:

Israel is the only country subjected to an item-specific, country-specific indictment on the agenda even before the Commission meeting begins.

Israel is the only country to be the object of five annual indictments. No other state has more than one resolution passed against it, and the major human rights violators enjoy exculpatory immunity.

Israel is the only country effectively disenfranchised. It can neither vote nor be elected to the UN Human Rights Commission.

Israel is the only country that is the object of an open-ended investigative mandate by the Special Rapporteur for the Occupied Territories; the mandates of other Rapporteurs are subject to review and renewal.

Israel is the only country that is the object of a special standing committee on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, whose members do not have diplomatic relations with Israel, thereby raising a reasonable apprehension of bias.

Israel is the only country regularly singled out for systematic indictment throughout the thematic deliberations at the Commission.

Israel is the only country that is the object of group vilifying speech delegitimizing Israel and its people.

“Thus, the UN Human Rights Commission is in danger of being converted from a repository of human rights to a body that violates the UN Charter

under the guise of human rights. The human rights NGOs – so central to the integrity and work of the UN Human Rights Commission – cannot acquiesce through silence.”

Restoring all Territories in the Absence of Peace Rewards Aggression

“A central point of discussion in the accusations against Israel concerns its position *vis-à-vis* the Occupied Territories and the interpretation of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. It must be appreciated that the Arab culture of incitement goes back many decades. For example, when I was a student in Israel before the Six Day War, the Arab leadership was proclaiming a new genocide against Israel as their objective. A military pact was entered into between Syria, Egypt and Jordan, with the war to be joined in by Iraq and other members of the Arab League. Finally, Israel exercised its right of self-defense and entered into what became characterized as the Occupied Territories.

“The international community’s approach after the Six Day War is characterized by a sense of moral and legal hypocrisy. For example, as the documentary evidence demonstrates, Israel was the victim of aggression. Accordingly, to restore all territory to the aggressors in the absence of an agreed-upon peace agreement would create an international principle and precedent of not only licensing but also rewarding acts of aggression.”

Cotler affirms that if this were the case, and if UN Security Council Resolution 242 were so interpreted, then nation states would know that they could wage war with impunity with a clear assurance that they could get back all the territory lost in an aggressive war. “In effect, one could argue that the target state should be indemnified with some territory if for no other reason than to act as a deterrent against a future aggressor and as a form of moral restitution to the target state.”

Cotler ends his observations by emphasizing the development of the symbolic and symbiotic relationship between the United Nations and Israel. “Israel is the only country established by the United Nations, in 1948, and regarded then as a ‘light unto the nations.’ In 1948 also, the Genocide Treaty – the ‘never again’ treaty – was the first ever international human rights treaty, and Israel was a state born of that commitment. Fifty-five years later this relationship has been turned on its head.”

Irwin Cotler was born in 1940 in Montreal. He is a member of the Canadian Parliament and serves as special advisor on the International Criminal Court to Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs. He holds an arts and law degree from McGill University and a graduate law degree from Yale Law School. He has been teaching constitutional and international law at McGill University where he directs its International Human Rights Program. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard Law School and the Hebrew University.

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About the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs

The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA), founded in 1976, is an independent, non-profit institute for policy research serving Israel and the Jewish people.

The principal programs of the Jerusalem Center include: Israel's foreign relations, presenting Israel's case, the Israel-Arab conflict, economic policy, local government, Israel-diaspora relations, the Jewish political tradition, and Jewish community studies.

The Jerusalem Center is governed by a Board of Fellows from throughout the world. The late Professor Daniel J. Elazar served as President of the Center from its founding until his passing at the end of 1999. Dr. Dore Gold has served as President of the Center since the beginning of 2000. Zvi Marom has served as the Center's Director-General since 1984. Chairman of the Board of Fellows is Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld. The Board of Overseers of the Center includes central figures from Israel and the Jewish world. Chaya Herskovic is Director of the Projects Department.

During its 27 years of activity, the Jerusalem Center has undertaken numerous studies with the participation of some 300 researchers from Israel and abroad, including 50 Center Fellows. Since its founding, the Center has produced some 700 publications in Hebrew, English, and other languages, which report on the results of research undertaken within its framework, in projects initiated both by Center researchers and by government agencies and other public bodies in Israel and abroad.

In the past decade, the Center has undertaken numerous activities in cooperation with the Milken Institute of Los Angeles and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. In addition, the Center has organized international conferences and seminars with the participation of leading experts from Israel and abroad, which have resulted in publications on numerous aspects of Israeli society.

Research Programs and Publications of the Jerusalem Center:

- **Israel's Foreign Relations** – A joint project involving 18 leading research institutes in the world, including the American Enterprise Institute, to advance Israel's relations with the United States and the European Union.
- **Jerusalem in International Diplomacy** – Analysis of the legal and historic rights of Israel in Jerusalem according to existing agreements and UN documents, including the aspect of illegal construction in the city.
- **Presenting Israel's Case** – Wide-ranging activity on the international scene to present Israel's case with regard to the war on terror. The project includes a daily

information bulletin for the American Jewish leadership (*Daily Alert*), a weekly information bulletin for students on college campuses in the diaspora (*Israel Campus Beat*), and in-depth articles in our *Jerusalem Viewpoints* series.

- **Institute for Contemporary Affairs (ICA)** – A program that presents Israel's case on current issues through briefings to the diplomatic corps and the foreign press, as well as production and dissemination of information materials. The program was founded in 2002 jointly with the Wechsler Family Foundation of the U.S.
- **Privatization and Competition in the Israeli Economy and Public Service** – A comprehensive project spanning more than a decade to study the application and impact of privatization policy in Israel. The project is designed to present models of privatization and economic development in the national and local arenas and to apply the lessons learned from the international experience in this field.
- **Anti-Semitism in Our Time** – A program of research on anti-Semitism after the Holocaust and up to the present day, its roots and lessons, and its manifestations and scope throughout the world. The project includes conferences, lectures, publication of the *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism* series.
- **Israel's Political System** – Including a series of academic analyses of every Israeli election campaign since 1981, as well as studies of referenda, constitutional reform, and changes in the political map of Israel.
- **Society and Welfare in Israel** – A multi-faceted program including such central issues as Law Enforcement in the 21st Century: a multi-year project with the participation of the Jerusalem Center, the Neaman Institute at the Technion, and the Chief Scientist of the Ministry of Internal Security; Health Care in Israel: studying the application of the national health insurance law; Immigration and Its Impact on Israel's Social Fabric; and others.
- **Local Government** – The relationship of local government to central government, functioning of local authorities under conditions of budgetary stress, neighborhood authorities, urban planning policy, and consolidation of authorities.
- **Water in Israel and the Region Toward the Year 2020** – A comprehensive study of water in the region from the hydrological, economic, and strategic perspective, including projections and recommendations for water policy.
- **Education** – The Milken Institute for the Study of Educational Systems, established by the Jerusalem Center and the Milken Family Foundation, was active from 1991 to 2001, and undertook research on a wide range of subjects in the realm of education including financing, pluralism in curricula, the influence of class size on student achievement, mathematics instruction, and others. Today, activities in this area are undertaken within the framework of the Jerusalem Center.

About Yad Vashem

Founded in Jerusalem in 1953 by mandate of the Knesset of the State of Israel, Yad Vashem – The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority – derives its name from the prophecy of Isaiah, promising, "I will give them, in My House and within My walls, a monument and an everlasting name [*yad vashem*]" (Isaiah 56:5).

Serving as both a memorial to those who perished in armed resistance and in death camps, and as the repository of testimonies of survivors and rescuers, underlying all of Yad Vashem's work is the belief that "he who destroys one life is as if he destroyed an entire world, and he who saves one life is as if he saved an entire universe." This becomes more important than ever as over half a century has passed since the end of World War Two: eyewitnesses are dying out and Holocaust denial is on the rise.

This work has many facets. The Eleventh Hour Collection Project is the last effort to preserve memoirs in a race against time, urging people who have been silent to come forward and record their stories. A special commission collects testimonies regarding Righteous Among the Nations describing the actions of men and women who risked their lives to save Jews, studying pertinent documentation and evidence by survivors and other eyewitnesses. Yad Vashem maintains both an art museum and an historical memorial museum, as well as the International School for Holocaust Studies for educators and the International Institute for Holocaust Research for scholars. Yad Vashem is a resource for response to the Holocaust in current news events.

The Yad Vashem Publications Department publishes books and periodicals for the interested reader as well as the scholar, appealing to a diverse range of audiences from students to laymen, study groups, genealogists, educators, artists, child psychologists, writers, and all those who wish to learn about one of the cataclysmic events of the century at whatever level.

The research concentrates on the 20th century, but the Publications Department uses all the technological tools of the 21st. The diverse offerings include books based on archival documentation, many including new material recently opened for the first time since the war, containing different perspectives and documents of many types: administrative records, post-war legal interrogations, memoirs, diaries, testimonies, lists, and sub-collections. Historians use the Yad Vashem state-of-the-art databases organized with indices and cross-references.

Young people's reading lists include study guides and teaching units geared to various levels: elementary, high school, and college. The material incorporates the latest audio-visual learning methods on CD-ROMs to concretize the

experiences and memories, with texts, photographs, recordings, film clips, original documentation and more.

Yad Vashem research publications include research studies, conference publications, and special publications, especially concerned with contemporary reactions to the Shoah. Dealing with current burning issues, authors and editors take a multi-disciplinary approach, consulting and conducting discussions with leading thinkers and scholars. Historiographical, cultural, and philosophical questions have far-reaching social and moral implications. Publications are guided and supervised by an expert staff of specialist teams in advanced studies in history and literature from the International Institute for Holocaust Research, guided and supervised by Prof. David Bankier, Head of the Institute, and Prof. Dan Michman, together with Prof. Yehuda Bauer, Prof. Israel Gutman, and Avner Shalev, Chairman of Yad Vashem.

About the World Jewish Congress

The World Jewish Congress (WJC) is an international federation of Jewish communities and organizations. As an umbrella group it represents Jews from the entire political spectrum and from all Jewish religious denominations. Serving as a diplomatic arm of the Jewish people to world governments and international organizations, it tries to preserve the principle of unity in diversity and always seeks consensus.

The Congress' membership includes more than 100 communities organized in regional frameworks: North America, Latin America, Europe, Euro-Asia, Israel and Asia-Pacific. The Congress has offices in New York (headquarters), Jerusalem (where the WJC's research institute is located), a European office in Paris, a Latin American office in Buenos Aires, and a United Nations liaison office in Geneva.

Since 1987 the WJC sponsors the Israel Council on Foreign Relations, which is directed by the organization's Israel office. The WJC strives to co-ordinate the common interests of its members, and defend Jewish rights and status without interfering in domestic affairs. The plenary assembly, convened every five years, is the supreme authority of the Congress; the governing board meets between the assemblies, and its executive committee conducts the affairs of the organization.

World Jewish Congress

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The monthly JCPA publication *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism* addresses subjects including Holocaust restitution, memory and education, past and present acts of persecution against world Jewry, and anti-Jewish and anti-Israel boycotts, as well as the negative portrayal of Israel in the media.

Furthermore, the JCPA has undertaken research and public affairs activities on the moral and financial aspects of the Dutch restitution process.

JCPA publications related to this program can be viewed at www.jcpa.org and include:

Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism:

- *The Israel Government, Holocaust Issues, and Anti-Semitism – An Interview with Rabbi Michael Melchior* (October 2002, No. 1)
- *Anti-Semitic Motifs in Anti-Israelism – Manfred Gerstenfeld* (November 2002, No. 2)
- *From Propagating Myths to Research: Preparing for Holocaust Education – An Interview with Yehuda Bauer* (December 2002, No. 3)
- *Fifty Years of French Intellectual Bias against Israel – An Interview with Simon Epstein* (January 2003, No. 4)
- *The Development of Arab Anti-Semitism – An Interview with Meir Litvak* (February 2003, No. 5)
- *Anti-Semitism and Jewish Defense at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002 Johannesburg, South Africa – An Interview with Shimon Samuels* (March 2003, No. 6)
- *Anti-Semitism in the Post-Soviet States – Betsy Gidwitz* (April 2003, No. 7)
- *Confronting Holocaust History: The Bergier Commission's Research on Switzerland's Past – Helen B. Junz* (May 2003, No. 8)
- *Anti-Semitism and Terrorism on the Internet: New Threats – An Interview with Rabbi Abraham Cooper* (June 2003, No. 9)
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- *Denial of the Holocaust and Immoral Equivalence – An Interview with Deborah Lipstadt* (August 2003, No. 11)

- *The Academic Boycott Against Israel and How to Fight It* – Manfred Gerstenfeld (September 2003, No. 12)
- *The Resuscitation of Anti-Semitism: An American Perspective – An Interview with Abraham Foxman* (October 2003, No. 13)
- *Restitution: The Second Round – An Interview with Israel Singer* (November 2003, No. 14)

Other Related JCPA Publications:

- *Wartime and Postwar Dutch Attitudes Toward the Jews: Myth and Truth* – Manfred Gerstenfeld (VP412, August 15, 1999)
- *Jewish War Claims in The Netherlands: A Case Study* – Manfred Gerstenfeld (*Jewish Political Studies Review*, Spring 2000)
- *Anti-Semitism Revived: The Impact of the Intifada on Muslim Immigrant Groups in Western Democracies* – Raphael Israeli (VP455, June 1, 2001)
- *Terrorism and Racism: The Aftermath of Durban* – Anne F. Bayefsky (VP468, December 16, 2001)
- *Poison: The Use of Blood Libel in the War Against Israel* – Raphael Israeli (VP475, April 15, 2002)
- *The Perverse Logic of French Politics* – Shmuel Trigano (VP479, June 2, 2002)
- *Durban's Troubling Legacy One Year Later: Twisting the Cause of International Human Rights Against the Jewish People* – Irwin Cotler (Jerusalem Issue Brief 2: 5, August 20, 2002)
- *The Mahathir Affair: A Case Study in Mainstream Islamic Anti-Semitism* – Manfred Gerstenfeld (VP506, November 2, 2003)

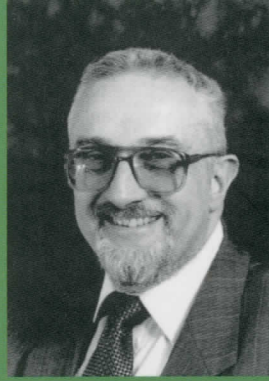
The *Jewish Political Studies Review* appears twice annually and deals with Jewish political institutions and behavior, Jewish political thought and Jewish public affairs. Two special volumes have been devoted to, respectively, Post Holocaust issues and anti-Semitism.

Volume 14, Numbers 3–4 (Fall 5763/2002)
– *Devoted to Post Holocaust Issues*

- *Europe's Bias: From the Holocaust's Aftermath to Today's Anti-Semitism* – Manfred Gerstenfeld
- *The Jews in Plans for Post-War Germany* – David Bankier
- *Ernst Nolte and the Memory of the Shoah* – Sergio I. Minerbi
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Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld is an international business and environmental strategist. His background is in chemistry, economics, environmental and Jewish studies. A former director in a consultancy whose other shareholders included four of the world's largest banks, Gerstenfeld has been a consultant to governments, international agencies and boards of some of the world's leading international corporations in 20 countries over 35 years. He has been a board member of several public companies including a large investment company. He co-authored the best-selling *Revaluing Italy* with Lorenzo Necci. His other books are *Environment and Confusion*; *Israel's New Future*; *The State as a Business - Do It Yourself Political Forecasting*; *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment* and *The Environment in the Jewish Tradition - A Sustainable World*. His next book will deal with the changing attitudes of American Jewry after the watershed events of recent years. Gerstenfeld is Chairman of the Board of Fellows of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, co-publisher of *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism* and *Jerusalem Viewpoints* and an associate editor of *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*.

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Advance Praise for Europe's Crumbling Myths

A must read for anyone interested in understanding how contemporary European anti-Semitism is connected to post-War European attitudes of Jewish exclusion which set the stage for the moral, judicial, and educational failures that followed in the wake of the Shoah.

*Alan L. Berger, Raddock Eminent Scholar, Chair of Holocaust Studies,
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Widespread manifestations of anti-Semitism in Europe (and elsewhere) since the turn of the millennium have shocked Jews (and many non-Jews), who assumed the ancient hatred lay buried in the ashes of the Holocaust. Europe's Crumbling Myths shows how wrong that belief was. Manfred Gerstenfeld and his interlocutors shed light on the dirty secret of enduring animus everywhere in Europe toward Jews. The book is a call for further scholarly research, for honest self-scrutiny by Europeans, and for immediate policy review by governments, NGOs, and Jewish communities.

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